

VAN DER PLASGALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

All Art +: A New Beginning

Jan. 8–14, 2018

Opening Wednesday, January 10, 6–8 pm

When the New Year comes calling, it's time to suit up and invigorate the force field that surrounds our chilly lives. What have you done so far to warm it up? All Art + is here, as always, to cook up some new images for the public's delectation. This time around, we've got serious new imports as well as our favorite characters lighting up our space.

Normally, if you want great fiber art, you go to Philadelphia, because Philly is home to the Fabric Workshop and is increasingly known for independent artists who work in craft materials. We're ecstatic that Melissa Maddonna Haims has come to us instead. She works in yarn, fabric, and felt, organizing natural chaos where she fits it into paradoxical landscapes of softness and sharpness.

If you went to Governor's Island last fall, you probably ran into the telegenic Gregg Vance Emery and his giant dragged-paint circles, which he shows elsewhere (all over the world, in fact). These could be instant mandalas, or evocations of the movement of time, and translate readily from canvas to pavement to fabric.

Straight-up pure drawing is Tom Cox's specialty, and we've got some strange creatures from his studio to show you. This is drawing in the best sense: the material (crayon, oil, graphite) is stretched out to the limits of its physicality, and makes a still refuge of the artist's mind that the viewer can enter at will.

At first glance, Anna Dora's paintings look like splashed liquid, diaries of pre birth, or the world viewed from underwater. Yet a closer examination reveals a layering of materials that makes the surfaces repel one another. These paintings actually contain lava dust, and the turmoil they depict is geological. They're volcanoes, seen frequently in the artist's native Iceland. These are "passionate paintings influenced by the mysticism of my home country," Anna Dora writes, noting a secret ingredient: salt. Its crystallization flowers across the canvas, evoking the black falls, bubbling mud pools, and ethereal water cauldrons of Iceland's stern and lovely landscape.

Even in this raucous atmosphere, Dinesh Doshi, an African-born artist from India, will summon much more than a glance. His oil painting called “Ego And Identity Has Destroyed All Beauty!” is a call to arms for anyone who has dreamed that the power of painting can liberate human souls. There’s much more to Doshi than making mere statements in paint. He started a charity, “Draw Your Dreams,” to supply children in Africa with art supplies.

We’re still not sure how we got lucky enough to land James Juszczyk on our walls, but we’ll take his luscious constructivist paintings as evidence of a right-time, right-place continuum. This is hardcore painting à la Rothko, Mondriaan, and Reinhardt, and it stirs the pot with its assertion that pure painting, and pure color, are everything we need.

Finally, the maximalist in any of us can have a field day either with Alejandro Caiazza’s whiz-bang character paintings or Konstantin Bokov’s trash-can fantasies. Bokov’s irrepressible wall pieces are reminders that whatever’s thrown out, or overlooked, can be rearranged to tell a story about the world we so desperately want to understand.

Here in the Lower East Side, we’ve got treasures right under our collective nose. Fred Gutzeit, a sort of philosophical-intellectual-naturalist-wavemaker, has been working around the corner for longer than we’ve been here. Here’s his autumn tour-de-force, “Tree, Field, and Minnows” to draw you into deeper layers of the play of light in water—a metaphor for vision. Look through the surface of this painting and you’ll find snaking vines, floating berries and leaves, and a school of fish like tiny jets of flame. Sally Eckhoff’s meditative animal paintings have a place right alongside Gutzeit’s work. Here’s a small image of an owl and a coin-op telescope, the kind you used to be able to find at any scenic overlook on a highway. Are we seeing or being seen? Ideally, both, and we’re taking this work and this new All Art + as evidence that simultaneity is not only possible, it’s fun.