



Editorial: Recommendations

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Cheryl Calleri / Thekla Hammond

Vessel Gallery, Oakland, California

Recommended by DeWitt Cheng



Thekla Hammond, "Me - Invisible Doubt," 2013, oil on canvas, 67 x 77".

Continuing through October 26, 2013

The mixed-media works of Cheryl Calleri and the oil paintings of Thekla Hammond, together exhibited under the unifying title "Coalesce," complement each other well enough. But the two artists went beyond that level of dialogue and coalesced — or, more prosaically, collaborated — on a joint project, a video installation, "Co-Motion," with music by Armando Mafulo. It's in the downstairs gallery, but consider going there first. This collage of fleeting black and white images, exploring "the poetry of motion," features what appears to be solarized live film footage of dances, marathons, and microbial life. Projected onto a scrim of panels, the video is set to a propulsive beat that sets the tone for the silent but immersive works back upstairs in the main gallery.

Calleri shows two bodies of work. Eight paintings made between 1977 and 2000, present organic forms superimposed on layers of silk. These form dazzling cryptobotanical organisms that seem to have been caught and preserved in amniotic fluids, glass slide mounts or CT scan models ("Black Neuron," "Mossy," "Green Ghost"). A second series of new work consists of six digital prints of mixed-media sculptures constructed expressly to be photographed is titled "Gathering Symmetry." Her work may be modestly sized, but it is extremely suggestive and poetic, infused with a sense of the cosmic contained within the microcosm. Her energizing interest in neurology all but injects this teeming but entropic world into our skulls.

Hammond's seven oil paintings depict psychic or emotional states in a painterly, non-narrative mode. Their appearance is abstract, with color and texture sumptuously interwoven — until you notice the faintly adumbrated human contours emerging from the matrix, like evaporating water 'shadows' by a sunlit swimming pool. These mist-swathed, silent standing figures ("Me-Invisible Boundaries," "Me-Invisible Mortality," "Me-Invisible Doubt") are reminiscent of Alberto Giacometti and Nathan Oliveira and, in terms of the merger of woman with landscape (and earth), the installation photographs of Ana Mendieta. Some are transected at midpoint by trios of horizontal lines suggestive of the magical and mythic. They strike a balance between affecting universal archetypes and unrevealed ambiguity.

[Vessel Gallery](#)

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