

ART REVIEW

Sublime INK

'Limited Edition' exhibition features must-see prints by more than 25 artists

BY WESLEY PULKKA
FOR THE JOURNAL

Those longing for the day their prints will come need wait no longer. The New Mexico Art League is hosting "Limited Edition," an extravaganza of more than 25 print artists.

Because each artist is exhibiting more than one example of his or her work, this review will focus on a handful of outstanding pieces among many others.

Curator and New Mexico Art League director Buffy Nelson had to scramble through artist studios, workshops and classrooms to put together a stone-soup show that truly is a very tasteful cross section of printmaking in Albuquerque.

Denise Liberty began his career as an abstract expressionist painter who also worked with figurative elements. Along the way, he executed hundreds that were not abstract.

Currently, Liberty is building a collection of realistic landscape paintings with an abstract twist titled "101 Views of the Sandias" some of which have been used on television for the "Breaking Bad Series" and have found their way into major collections.

In "Limited Edition" we find three beautifully rendered dry point etchings by Liberty that quietly prepare the jaw muscles for a sudden drop.

His gorgeous "Runway 3-5 Clear" etching of Pegasus ready for takeoff, "Buffalo Girl" a corral setting with a semiclad female figure, and "Spiritur Mundi" a nude female figure playing the role of Gaia in a shoreline landscape, rank with the best in printmaking.

All three unapologetically romantic compositions combine mythology with fine drawing skills and a subtle modicum of creative imagination. That formula produces an unbeatable narrative content.

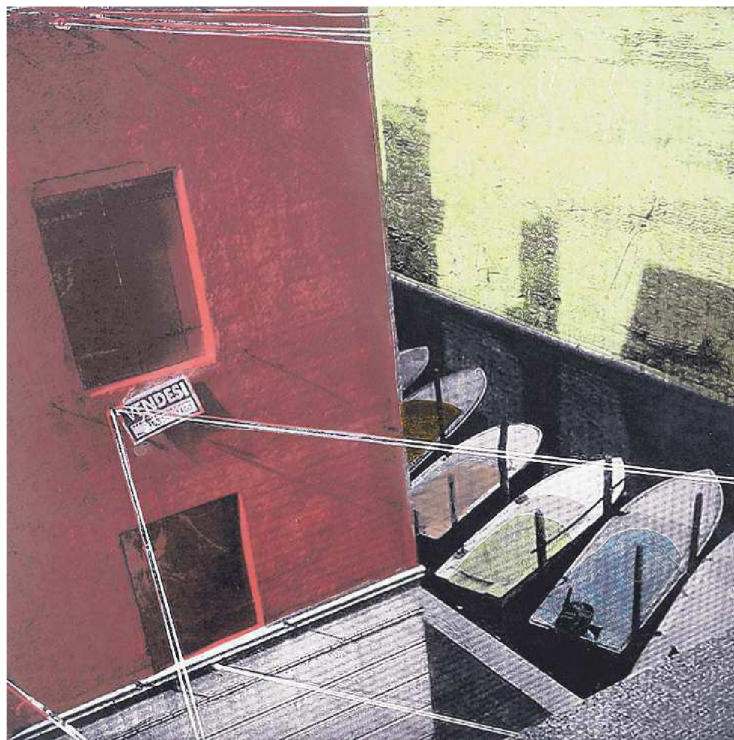


"Runway 3-5 Clear" by Dennis Liberty is a masterfully executed dry point etching of Pegasus that resides among the best quality prints.



"Tootie Fruity" by Mary Sundstrom brims with delightful colors and an insouciant composition reminiscent in feeling of works by painter Sally Condon.

Cat pictures can be yawn-inspiring clichés, but in the case of "Jack" by Dinah Swan, we find a very painterly black-and-white print that easily stands up as a nicely done piece of fine art. The



"Vendesi" by Ruth Cohen blends architecture, small boat moorings and surrealism to create an richly layered combination of content and techniques.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: "Limited Edition" with prints by more than 25 artists

WHEN: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays through August. Information, call 273-5034.

WHERE: New Mexico Art League Gallery, 3409 Juan Tabo NE. Behind the Juan Tabo Public Library

HOW MUCH: Free

strong composition and wonderful use of darks make this a must-stop-and-look image.

In "Tootie Fruity" by Mary Sundstrom, I can hear the megahit "Tutti Frutti," written by Little Richard and Dorothy LaBostrie and first recorded in 1955. Sundstrom's alternative spelling may indicate a different inspiration for her print, but I like the connection with not only a major rock 'n' roll star but modernist Wassily Kandinsky, who was inspired by music while he painted.

Sundstrom's palette could have taken cues from Kandinsky, but the quietude

of "Tootie Fruity" and others like it lean my thinking toward the paintings of Sally Condon.

Mary Sweet is an Albuquerque stalwart who consistently produces and exhibits high-quality paintings and prints. Among several in this show, my favorite is "Phantom Canyon" a ghostly woodblock that celebrates the contradictory relationship between rigid stone and fluid water.

Canyons are generally formed through erosion of heretofore impermeable layers of stone that despite their apparent strength eventually succumb to the relentless nature of flowing water that wears them down grain by grain until huge rifts appear. Sweet beautifully expresses that dichotomy.

Joyfully experimental multimedia artist Fred Yost wades in with "Whitman's Gaze" a well-designed and well-executed woodblock that exploits the grain structure of wood while paying homage to a great American poet.

There are even more walls full of well-rendered ideas, real places, things, people and flights of the imagination. "Limited Edition" is a solid exhibition.