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Painting Intricacies @ The Annex | Nave Gallery

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The Nave Gallery Annex in Davis Square opened a new show, *Painting Intricacies*, on Friday, April 18. Curated by Resa Blatman, the exhibit features 30 artists' work spread between three rooms. The paintings vary in size, medium, composition, and subject, and I could never do justice to the entire exhibit in one article. Instead, I'll highlight a few pieces and leave the rest for the reader to discover.

Candice Smith Corby's *Forest Bed Den* shows excellent workmanship and surreal content. The forest bed occupies the center of the large space, detached from nearly any semblance of background. A fort of thin branches shades the bed lying on the ground, with a brightly patterned blanket reminiscent of a tropical sea mollusk mussed below pale pillows. A tea cup and one red flower flank the bed, while the only movement in the piece is a surprisingly subtle chandelier swaying from the top of the fort's supportive tree. The finely painted den exists in a vacuum, suspended in a dreamscape where forest shelters are decorated with fine light fixtures, and sparse evergreen trees grow in the absence of any surroundings.

In the same room, David Palmquist's *Green Ranch House* competes for the viewer's attention. While *Forest Bed Den* focuses on a surreal and finely detailed space, *Green Ranch House* is a hazy scene, muddled across its huge canvas. Streaked as if the viewer were speeding past the subject without the chance to carefully examine it, the titular green ranch house blurs the distinction between subject and background. The stationary viewer feels the motion captured in Palmquist's painting, trying and failing to discern the details hidden by the clouded flight of the work.

In the gallery's main room, Elizabeth Menges's three portraits hang on the back wall. Ilyana, Magda, and Natalia Mou are minuscule profiles framed in elaborate radial frames. Each one is a locket-sized likeness of a woman, contained within frame that dwarfs it, and asks to also be considered as a carefully crafted work of art. The women are radiant against a gold leaf backdrop, and each shows a unique expression, captured by Menges's skillful brushwork.

Many more paintings grabbed my attention: Jordan Stabile's hyper real *Paper Series #5 and #7*, Nicole Duennebie's fantastical *Bearded Tooth and Golden Sac*, John Campbell's mythic *War*, and Bea Modisett's deep and dripping *Climbing the Hill*. Although I was awed by the pieces of the exhibit, I felt a bit confused by its overall theme. While no one could dispute the skill with which each painting was created, some fit the theme of meticulous detail better than others. Overall, the immense amount of pieces included in the show might cloud its specific intent, as the varied works bring so many different perspectives and elements into consideration. However, *Painting Intricacies* absolutely succeeds in providing its viewer with a host of masterpieces, a diverse selection of pieces to compare and contrast with each other.

GET THERE: Take the Red Line to Davis.

SEE IT: On view through May 4th.

MORE INFO: <http://navegallery.org/wp/>

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