

# The New York Times

## ART REVIEWS; Making the Ordinary Extraordinary

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Published: May 29, 2005

'This Dream, America'

Art League of Long Island, 107 East Deer Park Road, Dix Hills; (631)462-5400.  
Through June 19.

What exactly do we mean when we use the term "the American dream"? Clearly it means different things to different people, but just how different, and often how contradictory, is the theme of this group show.

Upward mobility is one of the dream's enduring clichés, symbolized by the suburban home. In Sheri Rose Warshauer's "Modern Makeover," a large acrylic painting, that environment is a sterile design, a poster of itself rather than a place in which life is actually lived.

In Whitney Stolich's "Landuse" photographs, distorted scale and centralized focus blur the distinction between the real and the artificial. Mark Marchesi steps back to take a longer view of the same sort of housing seen in Mr. Stolich's shot of cookie-cutter condominiums, but now it is an aberration in an already blighted landscape.

Americans are supposed to be able to build their own identities, to move in any direction within a classless society -- at least that's the dream. The reality is that people are more often typecast, by themselves no less than others. Alix Smith's formal portrait photographs of people in their homes virtually require the onlooker to judge them according to society's preconceptions, knowing only what is visible in the picture.

Football's status as a symbol of aggressive power and a celebration of team spirit is critiqued by Brian Finke and William Crump. Mr. Finke's photographs of an earnest young player and an equally absorbed cheerleader are far from rah-rah homages to high school sports. Both look somehow warped by their devotion to the game.

Mr. Crump's paintings use sports iconography as a kind of brand-name imprint, but with dark significance, as in "All Star," in which a pattern of skulls reminds viewers that even the greatest quarterback can't win against death.

### 'Rendering Space'

Art League of Long Island at Bryant Library, 2 Paper Mill Road, Roslyn;  
(516)621-2240. Through June 25.

In this two-person show at the league's satellite gallery, Kristy Caratzola's paintings create illusionary space by translucent tonal layering, while the equally translucent surfaces of Philip Ciancarelli's sculptures capture and reflect light in three-dimensional space.

Ms. Caratzola's canvases are classic stain paintings, employing washes of color to suggest atmospheric effects, but without literal references to specific locales. While they may allude to phenomena like light diffused by fog or the surface of a pond, they are deliberately generalized, allowing the viewer the broadest possible interpretation.

The down side is that sometimes the visual evidence is all there is; there seems to be no deeper significance. But as Mark Rothko showed, luminous color can have emotional and spiritual as well as visual resonance. In her most recent paintings, "Little Less" and "Condiffusion," with their delicately modulated tones and inchoate floating forms, Ms. Caratzola has moved in that direction.

Mr. Ciancarelli's day job as a surfboard builder evidently provides the raw material for his "Origin" series of fiberglass and resin sculptures. Curved steel strips form an armature over which a plastic skin is stretched, like a tent caterpillar's nest woven around twigs. The semi-clear resin coating is stained with watery blue and green pigment that enhances the impression of shimmering as light hits its surface. Six of these pieces are grouped in a display case, which has been backed with black satin to amplify the effect.

Nos.4 and 5, the smallest pieces in the series, are by far the best. Perhaps because their compression adds a sense of contained energy lacking in the larger works, or because their basic shapes are more graceful, they seem more resolved than the other examples.

'Extraordinary'

DM Contemporary, 148 Roger Canoe Hollow Road, Mill Neck; (516)922-3552.  
Through June 3.

The gallery, in a private home overlooking Mill Neck Bay, is open by appointment only and is not easy to find. But that should not deter anyone interested in contemporary art -- specifically, as the show's title indicates, work in which the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

The common safety pin is Tamiko Kawata's medium, or rather the building block of her free-standing sculptures and wall reliefs. She seems to have found numberless ways to reconfigure safety pins, in organic curves and geometric grids, simply by pinning them together. The process is fascinating, and regardless of what they are made of or how they are assembled, the end products are also inherently appealing. "Twelve Arms" suggests a plump starfish, "Crevice" has anatomical overtones, and the variations on the "Pueblo" theme have a strong architectural character.

Sally Shore uses grosgrain ribbon to weave intricate geometric compositions that recall Op Art canvases by Vasarely. As with Ms. Kawata's safety pins, the ribbon has a unique character that defines the works' texture and structure, but the fact that they are made of a common craft material rather than paint in no way detracts from their formal excellence. The rich blues and reds of Ms. Shore's three-part "Winter Village, Dusk" and the subtly modulated transition from dense to open forms in "Dislocations" show how adept she is at both color and structure.

Eung Ho Park reclaims old serrated-edge bottle caps for his clever "I'm Looking at You" reliefs. Nailed to panels and painted with iris motifs (think eye, not flower), they could be Big Brother's low-tech surveillance modules or maybe a taste of what the iris-scan storage system for Homeland Security may look like. But his panels covered in twisted stainless steel flatware are by no means ambiguous. Their title, "Sperm Spoons," says it all.