

Bad vibrations in Tache Gallery



Eternity.

By **Mariam Hamdy / Special to Daily News Egypt** June 9, 2011, 5:38 pm

Currently in Designopolis, Tache Art Gallery is exhibiting a new show titled "Good Vibrations" by Nadia El Tatawy. A staff member with a PhD in economics at the American University in Cairo, El Tatawy has been painting since the early 90s parallel to her academic career.

With an impressive number of participations in local and international group shows, one was somewhat surprised to have not heard of the artist prior to this exhibition at Tache.

Named after the Beach Boy's classic tune of the same name, the collection of paintings exhibited follow a musical theme: each painting depicts a facet of music from the point of the view of the artist. Ranging from dance and instrument playing to listening and singing, the paintings present predominantly figural representations abstracted enough to appear interesting.

There are several elements wrong with this show; some related to the exhibition, others to the work itself. The exhibition is not properly curated with the work hanging on the walls in a somewhat disorganized manner.

Rather than creating a dialogue between one painting and another, so that the eye of the viewers move seamlessly from one piece to the next, the work is put in a way that looks as if it's placed in a private home.

This is a curatorial mistake, one that heavily depends on the taste of the curator rather than the best way to show off the work at hand. The end result leaves the paintings looking as though they were hanging to be sold, not to enjoy — a dire wrongdoing on behalf of both artist and gallery.

The work itself offers nothing to get excited about: forgettable pieces surrounded by a few paintings with genuine artistic merit. This is not to say the work is bad, it isn't, it's simply average.

The style in each painting varies considerably from the next, making the body of work feel like a group show of artists expressing a single concept rather than an individual artist with a particular style and rhythm for which she would be distinguished. There is nothing wrong with an artist presenting several stylistic approaches, but in applying this approach in one exhibition with a single theme, the artist sacrifices the consistency of his show. This is not a retrospective of this artist's work over the years, where stylistic variations and progressions are welcome.

The central compositions of the paintings are uninventive: highly abstracted figural representations huddled predominantly towards the center of the canvas, depicting dancing, singing and other musical themes. The subject matter of 'good vibrations' is to an extent naively represented here (it is a somewhat naïve theme in and of itself), and not in the charming kind of naïveté.

With paintings lacking in originality in composition and subject matter, the only thing that saves the works is the employed texture. The use of thickly painting strokes means a strength and confidence in application, which translates into rich colors and almost three dimensional textures. Without these, the entire collection wouldn't deserve a chance.

Despite the abstract and experimental nature of the exhibition, Nadia El Tatawy's "Good Vibrations" at Tache Art Gallery...



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Despite the elaborate and energetic slew of exhibitions under Nadia El Fatawy's belt, "Good Vibrations" feels decidedly amateurish. This may be due to the chosen theme itself, but even the theme could've been handled with a more solid and original approach. Unfortunately, this is not the case with this show.

"Good Vibrations" runs until Jun. 17 at Tache Art Gallery: S-139 El Sahara District, Designopolis, Sheikh Zayed, Sixth of October City. Tel: 012 2168 420.



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