

In the galleries: Putting flat art into perspective

By Mark Jenkins

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It was a Renaissance when 15th-century Italian painters began to use vanishing-point perspective. In our age of 3-D flicks and virtual-reality goggles, such techniques have been aggressively upstaged. Yet there are 3½ perspective-teasing paintings in “DIY Laser Eye Surgery,” Rives Wiley’s Hamiltonian Gallery show.

The puckish centerpiece, which shares the show’s name, combines painting, video and stage-set sculpture. In the video, a parody of YouTube tutorials, a girlish off-screen voice instructs do-it-yourselfers on how to physically modify their eyes for the digital age. Gallery visitors watch the small screen from behind the silhouette of a long-haired person who appears intent on the video. The hair is genuine, not painted, and there is actual space between the sculptural viewer and the video. Yet some of the distance is simulated with painted imagery.

Also depicted in the Washington artist’s diorama are translucent colored shapes that represent lens flare. These take on a separate existence in resin forms that hang in spots in the gallery. From the proper angle, perhaps, looking through these oversize spheres can imitate the effects of digitized eyesight.

Wiley’s more traditional paintings are entirely flat, yet just as concerned with vision and depth. The artist employs a sort of photo realism, crisp yet sometimes blurry edged, that emulates Internet imagery. The pictures depict a dinner party, a paint-and-sip venue and a wheat field that inspires women to jump for joy, all rendered precisely but disorientingly. Some objects are rounded naturalistically, while others are as flat as, well, pictures. The composition might flow or be chopped into vignettes. Wiley has classical skills, but the world she depicts owes less to Botticelli than to Instagram.

Rives Wiley: *DIY Laser Eye Surgery* On view through June 24 at Hamiltonian Gallery, 1353 U St. NW. 202-332-1116. hamiltoniangallery.com.

Bloodlines

In Rives Wiley’s video at Hamiltonian Gallery, an X-ACTO knife inserted into a photo of an eyeball yields trickles of pink liquid. Most of the hues are redder in Transformer’s “Bloodlines,” a four-woman show that includes Iman Person’s wispy drawings made with ink and dried menstrual fluid. More vivid are Samara Paz’s large, bloody abstractions, whose pooling crimson is the product of an inkjet printer.

The show’s theme isn’t simply menstruation, notes curator Martina Dodd, but bloodlines of family and heredity. Tsedaye Makonnen’s installation, which consists of candy, fake flowers and candle-like LEDs,

appears ready for an intergenerational ritual. The largest piece is Lisa Hill's "Regeneration: 93 Days," whose hanging, partly draped roll of raw-flax paper is meant to evoke "the shedding, scarring and regeneration of skin." The cycle commemorated by this immense yet fragile construction is of both birth and rebirth.

Bloodlines On view through June 24 at Transformer, 1404 P St. NW. 202-483-1102. transformerdc.org.

Greetings From Adams Morgan

The entity represented by "Greetings From Adams Morgan" is more of a sensibility than a location. There are no evident images of the neighborhood in the District of Columbia Arts Center show, which also includes work by artists based in adjacent precincts. Indeed, the most urban entry is Zarina Zuparkhodjaeva's "Coming Soon 2," which is mostly a misty-gray abstraction, but with a fleet of orange construction cranes lurking in a corner. The grouping's other trickster is Yaroslav Koporulin, who has trapped a classic mime routine inside a designer handbag.

Among the realist works are several that hint at underlying structures. Rita Eisner's mountain scape was drawn with pastel on assembled brown paper bags, whose seams and text show through like cracks in the universe. The printed-on-metal photographs by Michael O'Sullivan (a Washington Post writer and editor) accentuate natural patterns in trees and vegetation. Both Ellyn Weiss's small wax-and-pigment pieces and Betsy Stewart's exuberant large painting suggest microbiological entities writ large.

The title of Maryanne Pollock's "Double Helix Silver Cells" also implies something glimpsed through a microscope, but what makes this monotype stand out is the potent contrast of silver and black geometric forms with looser aqua ones. The effect is both rigorous and splashy.

Greetings From Adams Morgan On view through June 18 at the District of Columbia Arts Center, 2438 18th St. NW. 202-462-7833. dcartscenter.org/exhibitions.htm.

40 Out of One Million

The photographic portraits in Goethe-Institut Washington's "40 Out of One Million" are almost mundane. Syrian refugees gaze at the camera, most of them solemnly, but a few younger ones with a hint of a smile. Kai Weidenhofer's crisp, large-format pictures neither flaunt nor conceal the thing his subjects all share. Only occasionally does the Berlin photographer engage in irony, as when he depicts a boy under a poster of a child who is about the same age. The poster boy is being nuzzled by playful puppies; the real one is missing an arm and a foot.

Made in Jordan or Lebanon in 2014-2015, the photos document children and a few adults who left some of their blood and flesh in their homeland. Several are in wheelchairs, others wear elaborate medical apparatuses, and many are amputees. The perhaps luckier ones display grisly scars. The pictures are

accompanied by short biographies that convey the same sense of ruptured ordinariness as the images. These are simply people who couldn't get out of the way fast enough when war came to town.

40 Out of One Million On view through June 16 at Goethe-Institut Washington, 1990 K St. NW (entrance on 20th Street). 202-847-4700. goethe.de/washington.

Trish Palasik & Trix Kuijper

Sculptors Trish Palasik and Trix Kuijper each craft tapered humanoids, although the results on display at Studio Gallery are quite different. Palasik's are chunky and primal, with vestigial craniums. Kuijper's are conical bases for baby-doll heads differentiated by such accessories as goggles and antlers.

Palasik's "Looking Forward: States of the Union" is larger and more diverse. The materials include ceramics and twisted wire, and occasionally pinpoint LEDs. But the most striking pieces are groupings of neo-primitivist clay people, especially the largest one, whose three figures appear ancient yet universal.

The idea of Kuijper's "Familiar Faces 2" is to summon the brew of feelings when meeting someone new. Seemingly emerging from cocoons, the mixed-media creatures are surreal, yet their visages are unthreatening and essentially identical. Both artists' streamlined figures evoke complex responses.

Trish Palasik: Looking Forward: States of the Union and Trix Kuijper: Familiar Faces 2 On view through June 17 at Studio Gallery, 2108 R St. NW. 202-232-8734. studiogallerydc.com.

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