

Detroit painters showcased at Scarab Club, D Gallery



Michael Hodges, The Detroit News 12:51 p.m. EDT July 22, 2016



(Photo: Michael H. Hodges / The Detroit News)

Bored in the dog days of summer?

Four shows around town of Detroit painters would make for entertaining viewing styles that range all over the artistic map.

Three of the shows are at Detroit's Scarab Club — "The Magical Realism of V" solo shows for Charles Alexander and Michael Crane on the second floor.

The other, "Summer Selections," is a group show up at the David Klein Gallery in August.

The late Detroit painter Whitney Snow worked in large, amusing canvases here:

But Snow stocks his tableaux not with lounging Roman gods, but with a kooky "Gentlemen, Time," includes a fire-and-brimstone preacher, a statue bent on suicide

in suicidal mode and an angry Raggedy Ann dominating a chastened Raggedy Andy.

It's cute. It's funny. And, clearly by design, it's also a little creepy.

Upstairs, painter and AIDS activist Charles Alexander has filled the club's second-floor lounge with his crowded, meticulous energetic doodles and geometric speculations that gently reference Wassily Kandinsky.

Works like "Simile and Medallion" have an explosive energy, not unlike a tightly coiled watch spring in the process of un-

coiling. In the adjacent gallery, Michael Crane's flat, bright cartoons are an amusing change of pace. At once giddy and hysterical show, with apologies to Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar, "Cartoons on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown."

Meanwhile, up in Birmingham at the David Klein Gallery, a number of the metro area's strongest painters are spotlighted.

Realist landscape painter Stephen Magsig has several pieces, all of which underline the artist's gift for distilling a complex geometry and color.

Magsig's subject is usually Detroit, as with "Eastern Market," but he also paints New York on occasion.

His canvases are hung next to Robert Gniewek's "Pemex Station, Agua Prieta," and it's a wonderful pairing. Where Magsig uses dull colors and rectilinear forms, Gniewek's rendering of a Mexican gas station at night, with bored men filling up their Ford cars under a fluorescent glow.

Robert Schefman's large canvas at the back of the gallery, "Wonderland," features two young women sorting through ch

Schefman is intrigued by memory and forgetting, permanence and loss, and the power of artifacts to invoke all of those.

Stylistically, his human figures are of particular interest. They're perfectly rendered in a realist fashion, but are possessed of monumentality — in the case of "Wonderland," Roman goddesses temporarily robed in cotton print dresses.

'Whitney Snow, Charles Alexander & Michael Crane'

Through July 30

Scarab Club, 217 Farnsworth, Detroit

Noon - 5 p.m. Wed.-Sun.

(313) 831-1250

[scarabclub.org](http://www.scarabclub.org) (<http://www.scarabclub.org>)

'Summer Selections'

Through Aug. 31

David Klein Gallery, 163 Townsend, Birmingham

11 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Tue.-Sat.

(248) 433-3700

[dkgallery.com](http://www.dkgallery.com) (<http://www.dkgallery.com>)

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