

Visual Art Review

‘Where’s Your Hat?’: Reflecting on hats, other apparel or absence thereof

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Maggie Neale: “Where is My Hat?”/Photo by Jeb Wallace Brodeur, Staff

A red hat peeks out of the pocket of a yellow mackintosh, another one revealed in the bare-headed figure’s handbag, and more hats float dreamily by in Maggie Neale’s oil painting, “Where is My Hat?”

Linsey Brunner’s acrylic and mixed media “Louie the Leg” dazzles with patterns — a girl with dark-brown braids wears leopard-spotted leggings under a pink skirt with red and white floral print, topped by a fluffy orange sweater with clouds. In her quilted teal slippers she stands on a fabulous bright rug on a wooden floor.

A boom box with its big black speakers sits by a fence in a green field under a blue sky — the scene embroidered in hundreds of tiny glass beads on one side of the boot of a roller skate in Cari Clement’s spectacular “Roller Disco NYC: Metropolis, Roxy.”



Cari Clement: “Roller Disco NYC: Metropolis, Roxy & Central Park”/Photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur, Staff

Neale, Brunner, and Clement are among the 26 artists in Studio Place Arts’ Main Floor Gallery exhibition “Where’s My Hat?” In artworks in a range of media, artists reflect on hats and other attire — and occasionally, the absence of apparel.

SPA’s Second Floor Gallery is temporary home to a menagerie of creatures — real and imagined, fanciful and formidable — in Kristin Richland’s “Tales Yet Untold.” A toothy

unicorn to a hedgehog sprouting mushrooms to a cottage with chicken legs and so many eyes peering out — Richland’s paintings and drawings invite viewers to imagine their stories.



Kristin Richland: “Mushroom Ramble”/Photo by Jeb Wallace-Brodeur, Staff

SPA’s Quick Change Gallery (a converted telephone booth) features a beautiful mini-exhibition of pigment paintings and wood-fired ceramics, “Youghiogheneey Scour,” by Pamela Wilson. These were done by Wilson last fall in western Pennsylvania, where she had gone in the aftermath of Vermont’s floods with an eye to immersing herself in beautiful aspects of water-carved landscapes.

“Black Lives Matter — A Portrait Series” with mosaics by Mary Tapogna” fills SPA’s Third Floor Gallery (see sidebar).

The Art Social for these exhibits is 4 to 5:30 p.m. today (Feb. 1). All four shows continue to March 1.



Linsey Brunner: "Louie the Leg"/Jeb Wallace-Brodeur, Staff

“Like many of our group shows, ‘Where’s My Hat’ is chock-a-block with many great examples of high-quality work,” said Sue Higby, SPA executive director, about this show focused on apparel and adornment.

Some artists responded to the hat theme, some to other attire, and some to a lack thereof.

“I love hats. I have been doing hats around 40 years. My mother and grandmother were sewers, knitters, fiber people — and hat people,” said Neale, of Montpelier.

A founding member of SPA, who also has her studio there, Neale is well known for her abstract painting — her colors drawn from nature and blending tones, the movement in her work. She is also well known for her woven and silk-painted hats and scarves.

Some of Neale’s actual hats are in the show, as is her oil painting, “Where Is My Hat?” The painting, she explains in her artist’s statement, “is about the confusion that can be roused when the hat is not in sight when ready to go outside.”

Julia Pavone, of Chelsea, also addressed hats, and family experience, in “Here’s Your Hat, What’s Your Hurry?” In her mixed-media assemblage, a hand reaches out from a line of hat-filled cubbies, proffering a wide-brimmed black fedora. Pavone explains that during her childhood, as boisterous family get-togethers drew to an end, her grandmother would stand by the back door, holding a coat, and say the words now the title of this work.



Marcia Vogler: “Time Traveler’s Coat”/Jeb Wallace-Brodeur/Staff

On SPA's second floor, a bear tenderly holds a pot with what appears to be a jade plant, smiling frogs leap toward the moon, a crowned cat looks out from a purple bramble in Richland's fantastic and intriguing paintings and drawings. Rabbits, dragons, felines, fowl and more — all unusual creatures full of character — invite us to wonder about their stories.

“My creatures are both whimsical and a little dark. Balancing actual observation with imaginary attributes, expressive marks and tight details, I am pulling from half-remembered dreams and untold stories,” says Richland in her artist's statement.

“I love portraying animals that possess characteristics of fragility and strength,” she notes.

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