



The Deep Sleep by Jennifer Salzman

Living in a Dreamworld

Gods and lock-boxes at DIVA

I don't usually read comment cards at gallery exhibits, but in this case I wanted to be sure my personal taste wasn't way off the mark. Yep, "Very magical. This is the most inspiring room [in the gallery]" pretty much sums up what I feel about R. Schofield's photography show, "The Silence of Light," on display at DIVA. Magical, sensual, extraordinary, lush and, oh, most definitely full of life, Schofield takes the underwater photography and studio portraiture genres and collapses them onto each other in a wonderful, playful series of god and goddess portraits.

Shot in lakes and rivers throughout Oregon, the finished prints were all captured using natural light in what appear to be quite lush underwater environments, full of freshwater algae casting many of the photos in green aquatic hues. *Last Labyrinth* peeks through a river-sculpted spiral rock formation with a figure relaxing in a fetal position at the end. The birth canal metaphor is not lost on the artist; detritus floats in the frame like the many skin cells in a placenta.

I could hear the muted underwater world — the relative silence compared to the striking light — in the exquisitely captured air bubbles on the mossy rocks in *Did Reason Sleep?* Schofield allows the foreground elements (detritus, plant matter, algae) to get between the camera and the subject, making the vegetarian elements as important as the meat ones.

Schofield heavily references the academic painters of the late 19th century, especially the work of William Adolphe Bouguereau, whose art has been described as "photo-idealist" for his photorealistic oil paintings of nude female bathers. But the Bouguereau work that instantly sprang to mind while viewing Schofield's show was *Nymphs and Satyr*, which depicts a gaggle of nude nymphs who have captured a spying satyr and are playfully attempting to pull him into the water with them.

The Yearning for Truth is perhaps the closest correlation to *Nymphs* because it is the most narrative-driven photo. In *Yearning*, two females recline in seductive poses — one has her hand placed mischievously near her genitals — while a nearby

male shakes his fist in frustration at the simultaneous invitation and denial (these are sexless gods, after all). Sex, birth, rebirth, fear, desire, contemplation: Schofield's exhibit is one small story told large over a series of panels, similar to religious altars, and it is a show you must see.

Also on display over two of DIVA's galleries are the sculptural work of Andreas Salzman and the black-and-white photography of Jennifer Salzman (partners for more than 20 years) in a show titled "perspectives." Perhaps as a result of the stunning photography I'd witnessed earlier, I was more drawn to Andreas' sculptures in this show. These are not lightweight works.

Andreas Salzman's harrowing *Hope Chest #4* opens up to reveal a small pool of hand-molded female figurines in exaggerated faces of agony, as if each is in a deep sleep nightmare. The message here is feminist and/or familial, depending on whether you see children or adult females in the chest, and speaks of women's (and mother's) hopes, dreams and nightmares unrealized.

Andreas has a fascination with body shapes, both simulated and real. While *Vessel* juxtaposes the pliability of long strips of wood with the curvature found along the spine, opening up the possibility of a common shape, *Spine Box* locks a human backside inside a pinebox coffin as if to ask, "Where is your metaphorical spine when you need it in these troubling times?" and answers "Oh yeah, it's safe and secure in a box."

Also check out Jennifer Salzman's familial portraits of her mother and daughters, particularly, natch, the four-in-a-series *My Mother, My Daughter*, which depict the artist's mother and daughter walking and dancing together in a wooded setting. The images are double-exposed to give the figures ghost-like appearances and to further reveal the hand of the artist. Jennifer herself is the missing link in the photos, but she bridges this gap with her art, the proverbial stand-in double.

"The Silence of Light" and "perspectives" continue through Dec. 22. See blogs.eugeneweekly.com for more pictures and context for the show. **EW**



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November 16-18, 2007



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Workshop Friday, Nov. 16, 7-9p.m.

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Stupas: Sacred Monuments Symbolizing Awakened Mind—Stupas liberate our minds when we either see, touch or remember them. In this lecture/slideshow, Dawa Tarchin discusses various historical types of stupas, their forms, functions, blessings and benefits, as well as the underlying meaning of their symbolism for our understanding of awakened mind.

University of Oregon, 115 Lawrence hall; suggested \$10 donation

Meditation Class Sunday, Nov. 18, 10-12 p.m.

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