

# ART REVIEW: First Friday Art Walk, September 20

## In search of indigenous art

By Isabelle Ringer and her sidekick "Tick"

It was clear from the onset this past Friday night, at the First Friday Art Walk through the art spaces of the Uptown District of Oakland, that Tick was on some kind of mission.

"I'm on a quest to find indigenous art," she admitted as we stepped into the Joyce Gordon Gallery (406 14th St.), where we found ourselves surrounded by an impressive show of abstracts titled *Surface Strata*.

Joshua Dildine, who curated this show, greeted us warmly perhaps because Tick and I raved about his Bay Area debut in June – a show of his gestural abstracts at the Alphonse Berber Gallery in Berkeley. Featured in *Surface Strata* are

artworks by 7 artists, 6 of whom – including Dildine – are currently MFA students at The Claremont Colleges.

I was immediately pulled into the paintings of Berkeley-painter Chris Trueman, who seems to have caught the abstract bug since becoming chums with Dildine. Yet, I have no complaints on this trend. So airy were Trueman's multi-dimensional shards of brick red, cream, black and sky blue, that I deduced this body of abstracts could not have been his first.

Tick, on the other hand, was more taken by the paintings of Kevin Scianni, who enjoyed his playful studies that contrasted perspective and architectural detail.

"It reminds me of Southern California in a very good way," she said measuring her words carefully, "... but that's not the indigenous art I am seeking."

Apparently, Tick's quest for artwork must originate from a location closer to home.

After a drive in the Lexus, Tick and I arrived to the galleries on San Pablo Avenue -- the Northern tip of the Art Work. At Blankspace (6608 San Pablo Ave.), we were mildly pleased by a group show of Mills College MFA artists. Next door, at The Compound Gallery (6604 San Pablo Ave.), Tick and I took a second look at *Object Oriented*, this time with the guidance of the show's curator, Oakland-artist Steven Barich. His explanation of this group show made all the differ-

ence. Suddenly, Tick and I were enthralled by Dan Nelson's unique take on time: 3 wall clocks that he manipulated significantly, but in combination, still told the hours, minutes and seconds of the day. There also were the brilliant portable man hole covers rendered in jet black rubber by Dee Hibbert-Jones.

"I forgot that manhole covers at Stanford are so fancy," said Tick giggling.

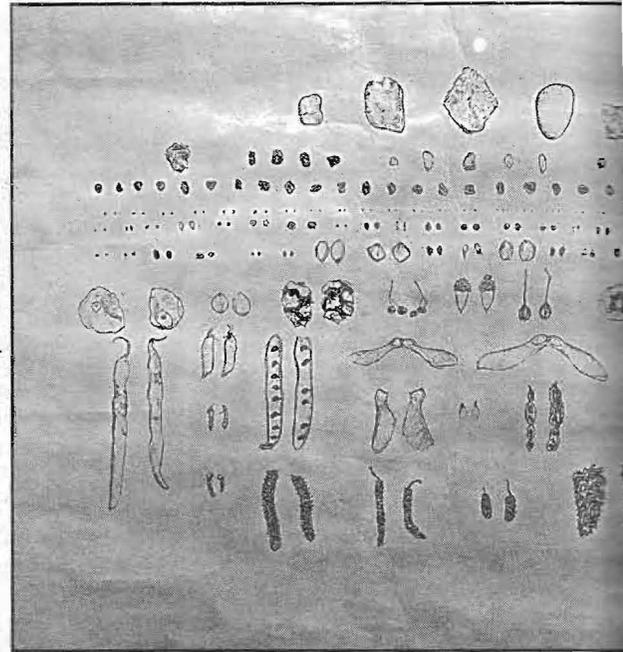
There at The Compound Gallery, with the assistance of Barich, Tick and I discovered an aesthetic explored by a show of local artists. Even so, Tick was not satisfied.

"But what makes this show indigenous to Oakland?" Tick demanded as we rode the Lexus back to 23rd Street for the final phase of our Friday night adventure. I was almost ready to wave the white flag on Tick's behalf, when we marched into Hatch (492 23rd St.), just as the gallery was closing. There, we discovered drawings of local landscapes by David Wilson, a Bay Area transplant from Wooster, Mass.

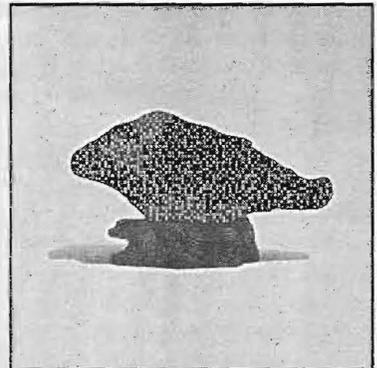
I fell in love with Wilson's drawings immediately: they were perfectly detailed, concise and yet bubbling with life, and terribly familiar without being cliché. Moreover, Wilson's drawings capture some of my favorite vistas in the Bay Area: Rodeo Cove in the Marin Headlands, for instance. Sigh...

Tick, however, was not as excited with Wilson as I had become. And later, she explained. "They are gorgeous drawings of local scenes," Tick asserted, "but that does not make it indigenous art!"

So, the quest continues for indig-



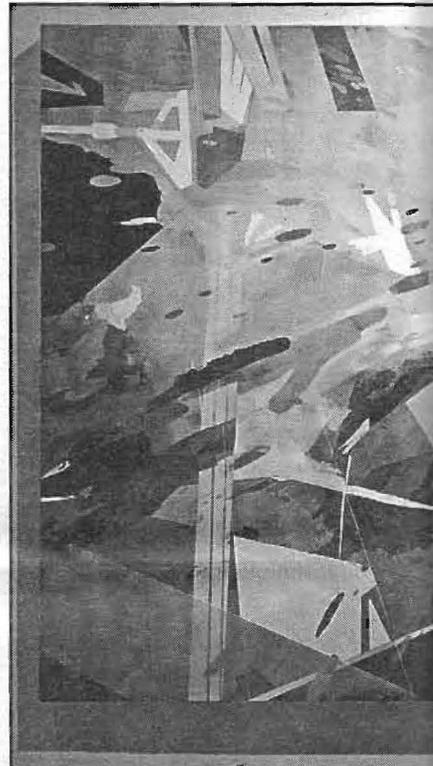
stones, seeds, carriers (51 x 37 inches, ink on paper, 2000) by [Artist Name] draws what he collects while on walks. Now at Hatch Gallery show of landscapes and landscapes.



Prehistoric Position (14 x 14 inches, ink on paper, 2009) by Steven Barich. This drawing is Barich's digital interpretation of ancient Chinese scholars' rocks.



Translation: "Let the American Empire, Source of Evil, Die!" (36 x 48 inches, oil on canvas, 2009) by Jake Hout. Part of a group exhibition titled *Object Oriented* at the Compound Gallery (6604 San Pablo Ave., Oakland).



Collider (48 x 48 inches, acrylic and flashe) by Chris Trueman, now at Joyce Gordon Gallery (J)

enous art next month, on the First Friday of October, in the art spaces of the Uptown District of Oakland. In the meantime, do yourself

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