Artist's experimental style grounded in classic sensibilities

BY MARK JENKINS

There are several doors into the gallery of the Mexican Cultural Institute, which is hosting Anamario Hernandez's "The Force of Fragility," but most visitors will probably first encounter "Meditation." The large painting is an apt beginning, for it exemplifies the Mexico-bred local artist's outlook. The picture is both land-scape and still life, and contrasts the view outside a window with a chair inside. The vista appears ancient while the chair is mod-

ern, but they are linked by vivid blue and precise depiction. In addition to paintings, the show includes drypoint prints, terra cotta sculpture, silver jewelry and a video-based installation

Hernandez is not a traditional ist, even in her approach to still lifes, which she paints from memory rather than models. Yet a classical sensibility tempers even her more experimental works, such as the video of surf and shore projected through two dangling, transparent humanoids that produce multiple shadows and reflections.

The artist's recent work includes two-tiered pictures which painted linen panels are partially pulled back to reveal what's rendered beneath: sets of male and female figures, or just a pair of eyes.

There also are small pictures inside boxes, which integrate painting into the sort of everyday objects that might be subjects of still lifes.

These painting-sculpture hybrids highlight not only the artist's craft, but also the limits of our perception. One of the most modern things about Hernandez is that she, although painting in a realist style, forgoes the omniscience of the Old Masters. Whether partially hiding an image behind a linen flap or dividing a landscape across three windows, Hernandez emphasizes a finite individual perspective.

Anamario Hernandez: The Force of Fragility On view through Jan. 30 at the Mexican Cultural Institute, 2829 16th St. NW. 202-728-1628.



Elizabeth Peak

The title of Elizabeth Peak's show at the Washington Print-makers Gallery, "Landscape Through Multiple Lenses," under-plays the Charlottesville, Va., artist's abilities. She doesn't simply detach one lens and affix another. Her work demonstrates mastery of three different modes: collage, line etching and three-plate color

printing.

Peak spent much of her child-Peak spent much of her child-hood in the Great Plains, which she recalls in such detail-rich monochromatic etchings as 'Ap-proaching the Rockies," a wide-screen vista that stretches a cloud-stuffed sky across four sheets of paper. Peak also uses this process for vivid portraits of animals, notably a slumbering

The three-color works, which meld pigments with the subtlety of watercolor, include an expressionist vision of a rainforest in Washington state. (It's similar in tone to an exuberant collage, "Large Pond," in which slivers of

the tricolor print for small-town scenes, such as a view of Charleston, S.Ć., at what may be dawn or twilight. In mood, these unpopulated cityscapes are akin to the depictions of lonely prairie vignettes. Yet they were crafted with techniques that are, impressively, worlds apart.

Elizabeth Peak: Landscape

Through Multiple Lenses On view through Jan. 31 at Washington Printmakers Gallery, 1641 Wisconsin Ave. NW. 202-669-1497. washingtonprintmakers.com

Duly Noted Painters and Jack Warner

Duly Noted Painters Matthew Malone and Kurtis Ceppetelli work together, and sometimes even simultaneously, on large scenes of everyday life. They recently took their collaboration to Cuba, where they stayed in a small fishing village. The result is "Cuba," at Hillyer Art Space, whose pictures are as rough edged as the canvas beneath

Charcoal sketches underlie the

"Dos Hermanos" is one of the charcoal sketches by Duly Noted Painters, a Washington duo consisting of Matthew Malone and Kurtis Ceppetelli, in the "Cuba" exhibition at Hillyer Art

chains, sand bags and metal ca-bles. Warner's pieces aren't over-whelming in scale, and bar access to only small areas of the space. Metaphorically, though, the barricades are formidable.

Duly Noted Painters: Cuba and Jack Warner: Heuristic Defenses On view through Jan. 30 at Hillyer Art Space, 9 Hillyer Ct. NW. 202-338-0680. hillyerartspace.org.

Fred Zafran

D.C. duo's neo-expressionist style,

whose looseness always appears open to one more brushstroke or

paint splash. The sparest of these

pictures is little more than a drawing, accented by some fluid

blue that suggests water. A darker shade of the same color domi-nates the show's magnum opus, a

landscape in which a storm seems to be massing in the right-hand

corner. The potential violence of tropical weather is an ideal sub-

ject for the pair's tumultuous

painting titled "Denial" has a similarly agitated character: thick black drips dominate one

side, and a warhead-like shape bristles at the center. The canvas

is part of "Heuristic Defenses," a show by Jack Warner, who is not

primarily a painter. A former Ma-

rine, the local artist uses military-like elements in assemblages that

represent both physical and psy-chological bulwarks.

carved from wood, as well as a crutch, feature in these brawny

pieces, which also incorporate

A helmet and a pentagon

In the adjacent gallery, a large

The cult of the selfie makes a snapshot's human subject the measure of all things. More sub-tly, and artfully, Fred Zafran's photographs demonstrate that the world exists even when no one's eying the camera.

The exemplary image in Zaf-ran's "Memories of the Present" depicts a street occupied only by depicts a street occupied only by shadows, including the heads and elongated forms of two out-of-frame persons. In other pictures in the Multiple Exposures Gallery show, faces are obscured or turned away, even when in the foreground. Only the photographer is looking. pher is looking.
The settings of these large-for-

mat photos are mostly urban, and occasionally include recognizable places or things: a D6 bus, the C&O Canal, the corner of 14th and G streets NW. But Zafran is not concerned with documentary value. The gallery calls the series "an allegory of being, time and mem-ory." It chronicles moments that happened, yet weren't seen.

Although that may sound more philosophical than visual, Zafran is attuned to color, composition and juxtaposition. The heavily gray and tan pictures are punctuated by hot colors and flashy gear, including a red coat and orange sneakers. Even when no one seems to be paying attention, people still want to be noticed.

nories of the Present: New **Photography by Fred Zafran** On view through Feb. 14 at Multiple

Exposures Gallery, Torpedo Factory, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria 703-683-2205. multipleexposuresgallery.com.

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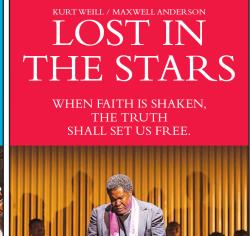


Staging and additional choreography by Alexei Ratmansky, assisted by Tatiana Ratmansky Music by Peter Hyitch Tchaikovsky

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