

## IN THE GALLERIES

## The eclectic art of the Dominican diaspora

IDB Cultural Center exhibition reflects many influences and cultures

BY MARK JENKINS

Like all of the countries this side of Europe, the Dominican Republic is a patchwork of peoples and cultures. That's represented by the many mash-ups in "Resilience: Reclaiming History and the Dominican Diaspora," at the IDB Cultural Center. Its newspaper collages, Warholian silk-screens and stark found objects recall 1960s pop art at its darkest.

The 15 contributors are rooted, yet not necessarily resident, in a nation that has sent many emigrants to the United States and elsewhere. Among the most striking pieces is Pepe Coronado's hanging sculpture, soft and seemingly abstract; below the limp shape is the material from which it was carved, which reveals that the cutout is in fact the outline of the continental United States.

That emblematic contour is one of many objects that dangle. Miguel Luciano built a scarlet box that frames a suspended machete — a tool (and weapon) almost as common in this show as the color red. Ezequiel Taveras fills a wall with "Tied Heart," in which rough ropes simultaneously wrench and bolster a crimson ceramic ticker. The assemblage is both delicate and brawny, and conveys a tension between affection and obligation that could be romantic, familial or ideological.

The political significance of some entries will escape viewers not versed in recent Dominican history. The twinned themes of home and exile, though, transmit clearly from creations such as Fernando Tamburini's "Escape." A paint-smeared papier-mâché ship topped with small houses, it depicts a temporary refuge in



FERNANDO TAMBURINI/IDB CULTURAL CENTER

search of a lasting one.

**Resilience: Reclaiming History and the Dominican Diaspora** On view through Feb. 3 at the IDB Cultural Center, 1300 New York Ave. NW. 202-623-1410. [iadb.org/en/topics/creativity-and-culture/exhibitions,19955.html](http://iadb.org/en/topics/creativity-and-culture/exhibitions,19955.html).

**Fernando Tamburini, "Escape" (Escape), 2016. Acrylic on papier-mâché, on view at the IDB Cultural Center.**

## Heat + Light

All six artists of the Washington Wax Works collective employ encaustic techniques, combining pigments with heated wax. That doesn't limit the range of "Heat + Light." The Studio Gallery show mixes media cannily and ventures confidently into the third dimension, even if just by a millimeter or so.

David Evans's "Depth of Field" arrays black lines and color blocks, but the Mondrian-like crispness is blurred by the layered effect of burying elements under varying thicknesses of wax. Katie Dell Kaufman goes deeper, interjecting 3-D objects such as teacups into abstract pattern paintings or including encaustic accents in primarily sculptural pieces. Marty Ittner adds another level with etched glass atop encaustic monotypes that incorporate text and photos.

Collage is equally central to Nancy Hacksavlo, whose rusted-paper collages in green and brown evoke earth and forest, and to Kathleen Anderson, whose "Cityscape" conjures skyscrapers with lengths of handmade paper. Kevin Milstead adds such heavier materials as silver and lead, matching melted-wax color to molten-metal circles. His pictures freeze the effects of heat to enshrine its primal force.

**Heat + Light: Washington Wax Works** On view through Jan. 28 at Studio Gallery, 2108 R St. NW. 202-232-8734. [studiogallerydc.com](http://studiogallerydc.com).

## Maintenance

The title piece in Heather Clark's "Maintenance" is a machine for living. Or perhaps that should be "over-living," seeing as Clark's statement about the Hillyer Art Space show challenges "the human tendency to over-consume, over-build, over-groom, etc." An uneasy resident of exurban Loudoun County, Clark

makes art grounded in her education in environmentalism and land-use planning.

Made mostly of wood, "Maintenance" includes a platform, stairs and a bellows that inflates a large concrete-cloth sphere. The platform supports a length of railroad track, and a working fountain circulates water. Above all this is a bird cage with four live canaries, like the ones coal miners used to detect toxic gases. The overall vibe is ominous, yet the installation celebrates Clark's satisfaction in working with her hands — "in defiance," she writes, of mass-produced commodities.

The show's other built object is "There Is More," a wallpapered partition that contains a vortex-shaped recess. The opening leads, perhaps, to a world beyond the tastefully decorated tract home. The path is more clear, if hardly easy, in "Exurban Roulette," a flipped-photo video in which three women scurry across a pedestrian-hostile Nova highway. They're human canaries in an environment as dangerous as any coal mine.

**Heather Clark: Maintenance** On view through Jan. 29 at Hillyer Art Space, 9 Hillyer Ct. NW. 202-338-0325. [hillyerartspace.org](http://hillyerartspace.org).

## Michaela Pilar Brown

The personal is archetypal in Michaela Pilar Brown's mixed-media artworks. The South Carolina artist's nude form appears in several pieces in "Things Get Lost," a Honfleur Gallery show that melds photography, installation and collage. Brown's goal is not to reveal herself, but to represent — and sometimes mythologize — what she calls "issues attendant to the black body."

The results can be prickly, at least visually. The subject of "Cut You" has horns on her head and sharp spines on her back. "In Defense of an Offering" includes a glittery red heart, penetrated

by nails and a key. "Keep My Name Outcha Mouth" includes two dozen braids of synthetic hair hanging from the wall, and are among the many items here that dangle.

The everyday things include dolls, hair, fish skeletons and the ceramic plates (embellished with photos) of the title assemblage. Brown doesn't simply combine and catalogue, though. As that image of the barbed woman indicates, the artist seeks to transform heirlooms and herself into something uncanny and powerful.

**Things Get Lost: Michaela Pilar Brown** On view through Jan. 28 at Honfleur Gallery, 1241 Good Hope Rd. SE. 202-365-8392. [honfleurgallery.com](http://honfleurgallery.com).

## Dee Levinson

Most of the paintings in Dee Levinson's "Looking Back: Across Time and Culture" depict ancient Egyptian gods and royalty, but the Virginia artist's style reflects a much later moment. The pictures in her Touchstone Gallery show suggest the pre-Raphaelites, eminent Victorians who were also keen on looking back.

Levinson's color schemes, dominated by earth and metallic tones set off by intense blues, evoke the land of the pharaohs. Her use of shadows and modeling, however, draws from the European medieval and Renaissance masters whose styles the pre-Raphaelites endeavored to revive. The artist's subjects include European, Chinese and American Indian figures, some historical and others mythical. What they all share are vivid renderings, saturated colors and a sense of mysterious, vanished grandeur.

**Dee Levinson: Looking Back: Across Time and Culture** On view through Jan. 28 at Touchstone Gallery, 901 New York Ave. NW. 202-347-2787. [touchstonegallery.com](http://touchstonegallery.com). [style@washpost.com](mailto:style@washpost.com)

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r-Evolution, Dream. (Hope Boykin)  
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