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BY SOPHIA LOUISA LEE

NoHo Gallery LA celebrates women



Courtesy www.nohogalleryla.com

“Death of a 20th Century Housewife” — oil on canvas by Lola Scarpitta.

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As the NoHo Arts District continues to flourish, NoHo Gallery LA is a centerpiece of visual arts in the community. This month the gallery celebrates Women’s History Month with its third annual “Woman” exhibition with *Woman III*.

With three featured artists — Melissa Leslie, Lola Scarpitta and Irena Jablonski — the exhibition itself has an international, eclectic visual flair of color and storytelling.

“My figurative paintings are purely impressionist or influenced by the American post-impressionism or just classical realistic. I paint with all I know and all I feel. I paint with my very being,” says Jablonski. Her paintings capture this essence about her. There is a truth to her work that is very calming and satisfying.

Although Jablonski enjoys experimenting with painting, she remains loyal to her technique. “My experimentation is different each time and sometimes I go back to a technique I had once created before to achieve the look I am going for,” explains Jablonski.

Lola Scarpitta steps out of her father’s shadow (the renowned artist Salvatore Scarpitta) into her own edgy style, discovering her own abilities and strengths in her works. “Art is about the spirit,” says Scarpitta. “It’s one of the things that unites humanity as a whole.”

Many of Scarpitta’s paintings have a strong message, such as *Death of a Housewife* – a beautiful young woman is lying on the floor with a cleaning towel in one hand and a Brillo box next to her — an empty prescription bottle tossed next to her. The cleaning towel and box are almost illuminated, while the young wife lays dead.

“Painting is my mode of transportation,” explains Scarpitta whose paintings take the viewer on a journey of profound thought.

Melissa Leslie rounds out the trio also with figurative, but more illustrative, painting more in a contemporary than traditional style.

“Art is an extension of an influence from the spiritual realm,” says Leslie. “You can either pull from the dark side or from the light.”

Leslie states, “I am currently working on several series at one time.” She seems all the more charged with the more she does. “I am always excited to discover the way the paint and thinner reacts to other materials and sometimes I mix in other liquids to see the reaction.”

Through her “experimentations” she creates an urban, street feel that seems to be popular with the under 40 crowd. However, her painting *A Cup of Jazz* is more of a cubist style of work, while her piece *Corinthians* goes in an entirely different style. Her works of female “characters” with long necks and big wide eyes look more surreal and are ultimately quite interesting.

Other artists who make up *Woman III* are Milenna Saraiva, Sandra Sarmiento, Margaret Blanchett, Nicole Waldron, Daniel Quinones, Bryan Fair and W. Michael Bingham.

Woman III runs through March 28. NoHo Gallery LA is located at 5108 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood. For more information, visit www.nohogalleryla.com. (818) 761-7784.