

Color and Cheer...
Pippin Meikle Gallery's Artists Shun the Monochromatic

By Kate McGraw

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Anyone looking for the light that art can bring to darkened times could do worse than a drop-in at Pippin Meikle Fine Art on Delgado Street.

"We do specialize in cheery and uplifting paintings and sculpture," co-owner and artist Aleta Pippin told the Journal. "There is just a lot of color in this gallery." Currently, the gallery has hung a show of gallery artists' work that will run until June, when a one-woman show by co-owner Barbara Meikle will go up.

The current show features paintings by Meikle, Pippin, Robert Burt, Henry Isaacs and Martha Kennedy, and sculpture by Bob Hillman, Marianne Hornbuckle and Gilberto Romero.

A former trading post



Radiance by Barbara Meikle, oil on linen

The two painters teamed up to own their own gallery in the summer of 2006, opening in August that year. "I pestered her to do something on our own," Pippin said. Meikle, a founding partner of the Artistas de Santa Fe Gallery, has a gallerist background in addition to her thriving art career. Pippin has the business background.

"We're both ambitious and dedicated to our art, and it seemed like a great fit, although we didn't know each other all that well," Pippin said. "We opened the gallery and then ended up being really close friends. We agree on a lot, but we temper each other, too. She provides a voice of sanity when I set some wild idea."

Pippin Meikle Fine Art occupies an old adobe house that originally was a trading post in the Canyon Road neighborhood. "A neighbor who is in her 80s told us that when she was a child, she used to see Native Americans sitting under the tree in the front breaking up turquoise to polish and use in jewelry," Pippin said. "When her grandchildren were younger, she'd bring them over to hunt for shards of turquoise. After a rain, I still find slivers and chips," the artist said.

The gallery previously was owned by the one-named glass artist Jezebel, who moved to Madrid, NM, to open a larger venture. Jezebel had made some improvements, and Pippin and Meikle put in more, including stairs to access the lower level. The two artists share the work four days a week and pay a gallerist to keep the business open the other days. "Both of us paint all the time; we're disciplined that way," Pippin said.



Everyone's Gone to the Moon by Aleta Pippin, oil on linen

Five painters

Meikle's art generally features horses or donkeys, although she does landscapes, too. She paints the simple world outside her Tesuque home. The shades of pink, purple and blue are mitigated by ochre and brown as she paints the horses she has loved since childhood in New Mexico. Meikle has



Red Roof Adobe by Robert Burt, acrylic on canvas

in oil and pastels as well—came when he moved to Santa Fe in the 1990s. Today his paintings are of the sleepy and yet colorfully vivid peace of the New Mexico countryside. His representational paintings have garnered international acclaim.

Isaacs lives in Vermont and spends summers in Maine, but his vibrant impastoed paintings are of a landscape of the heart. Many seem to contain the myriad hues of New Mexico. He rejects labels like impressionist, or plein air—"I begin paintings on-site, and then decide in my studio which ones I will complete," he said. "My paintings are a synthesis of pictorial notes that I make while out in the landscape."

a bachelor's degree in art from the University of Colorado and studied watercolor at Cambridge University. She calls the art that has evolved into her primary passion "expressive impressionism."

Pippin's art has been called "a synergistic explosion of emotion on the canvas." Her oils, mixed in a unique medium that she then layers into thin glazes, are done mostly with palette knives. Her intuitive images are usually painted to music ranging from Pink Floyd to Gershwin. She is, she said, an explorer, dissatisfied with standing still, painting abstracts that reach for an innate reaction to "color, passion, joy and possibility" in the viewer.

Burt paints acrylic works that present both drama and serenity. His most definitive shift in medium—he has worked



Bridge at Pilar, Henry Isaacs, oil on linen



Copper River by Martha Kennedy, oil on panel

Kennedy's paintings, concentrated-color still lifes and landscapes, have an almost iridescent glow. She can take a simple yellow bell pepper and reduce it to color, shade, light and shape, while being entirely representational. Kennedy laughingly refers to her paintings as "contemporary realism with a surrealistic twist." She's an artist who moved from California to Santa Fe to paint full time and said the combination of New Mexico's natural minimalism with her own need for color gives her joy and inner peace. Her paintings express that "dynamic calmness" that she enjoys every day.

Three Sculptors



Balance by Bob Hillman,
stacked fabricated steel

Hillman's balanced sheet-steel constructions reflect the balance in his own life. After 45 years of psychiatric practice, he retired to make art full-time, solving the problems of steel— clean, physical, immensely strong but malleable with the right tools. "Steel bends as people won't. It may fight you, but won't ask why you are trying to change it. It's an amazing medium to work with," Hillman said. His colorful, tip-tilted and stacked sculptures can be found in the exterior gardens of Pippin Meikle.

Hornbuckle is known worldwide for her watercolors and drawings, featured in other galleries including the Pojoaque Valley studio she shares with her husband, William Preston. Her latest passion, however, is the small bronze nudes she's sculpted with a life-sculpting group that meets regularly in Santa Fe. For her, she said,

sculpting is drawing in three dimensions. "What results is a classic life sculpture specific to... a unique individual, awaiting immortalization in bronze." Hornbuckle joined the Pippin Meikle stable almost accidentally, Pippin said. "We knew her through Artistas and she brought her sculptures by to show us what she'd been doing and we begged her to let us show them."



Cher by Marianne Honrbuckle, cast bronze



Harmony by Gilberto Romero,
fabricated bronze

Romero is a fourth-generation Santafesino, discovered by Pippin at the annual Spanish Market. He has been making art—and learning techniques from other artists—since he was a child. He said he finds it easy to express himself in fabricated and bronze sculpture and iron pieces commissioned for specific placement. Tiny birds, reflecting his upbringing in an outdoor environment, often are found on his abstract swirls. "Mother Nature and a close Hispanic family are reflected in my artwork," Romero said. "My sculptures are fabricated because it allows me to produce a cleaner line than cast bronze. The patinas are applied by my wife, Davery.

"I look forward to a life of making art and with a beautiful and supportive family by my side, I see no lack of inspiration." he added