EXHIBITION REVIEWS

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Ian Findlay

Nathan Slate Joseph and Taylor Kuffner at Sundaram Tagore Gallery

The decision to bring together Nathan Slate Joseph's painting and sculpture and Taylor Kuffner's elegant sound installation, a stimulating combination of traditional Balinese gamelan music and robotic technology, was an inspired one. A first thought was that the works of these two artists wouldn't fit together in any meaningful way. A second thought was that traditional Balinese gamelan music would be too claustrophobic in the enclosed gallery space. A third thought was that between these two artists' works there would be nothing complementary, nothing that would help the viewer to make a lasting aesthetic connection.

Any worries on these matters for their exhibition, entitled Eye to Ear, dissolved as soon as one entered the gallery, which re-minded one surprisingly of the restrained ambience of a small temple in an idyllic spot. The cacophony of the city's streets just a few steps beyond the windows was of no concern. Both artists' works have their own distinctive meditative, aesthetic, and narrative qualities, but placed together these qualities are strikingly enhanced.

Joseph's American painter and sculptor Nathan Slate Joseph has, over four decades, made art that speaks to a wide variety of aesthetic, cultural, and personal concerns. He has done so with a directness that immediately engages the eye and the imagination, subtly turning one's attention to the paintings and the imagination, subtly turning one's attention to the paintings and the origins of some of Joseph's best early art were made beside the sea in Israel. Kuffner is clearly concerned with how his music or sounds will be affected by the spaces in which his installation will be placed. The space here, which is relatively small, is ideal for his work. By studying the space and in many ways

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life and memory with equal ease and amusement. One such artist is the young Chinese painter Zhou Ying. The oil paintings that make up her exhibition, entitled Tale of Fairies: Flowers, have a lightness about them and are immediately engaging. At the same time, there is an un-canary sense of danger lurking behind her intimate narratives that possess the familiar dark tenor of the three Top Story movies that began in the mid-1990s.

What strikes one immediately about Zhou's art is its bright pastel colors and the clearly delineated make-up objects that fill each of her pictures. Here is a world of adult charade. Here is a young female world of tiny dolls all of which are dressed and posed in a variety of clothes, at work and at play, but which speak to a bold, sexy future. Zhou melds her teenage dream world around large lip-stick holders, perfume bottles, mirrors, and a variety of other fancy make-up products that tumble out of cosmetic pouches and across tabletops.

Zhou's word is also one of measured disorder that suggests that a hand has just left the scene, good to go into the world with a freshly made-up face, a new identity that will last only until it wears off over time. Zhou's fantasy is indeed a rich one, a singularly pleasant, quirky, surreal one that trembles with anxiety.

First glances into this world suggest that it is a place both of safety and pleasure but in works such as Dance in Paradise – Summer No.5 and Dance in Paradise – Summer No.4 (both 2007) there is a sense of menace present on land and in the water. The bright shiny world of things and the hush delight of fruit and cool water suddenly become threatening environments.

The search for beauty among girls begins early in life, as does the desperate sexualization of girls imposed on them by others, long before they realize that they are being tricked, brutally persuaded by peers, advertising, and adults that their own natural beauty is not enough, that it is somehow wrong. People praise this natural beauty but are quick to imagine the subtle sounds of distant boats upon the water, as the origins of some of Joseph's best early art were made beside the sea in Israel. Kuffner is clearly concerned with how his music or sounds will be affected by the spaces in which his installation will be placed. The space here, which is relatively small, is ideal for his work. By studying the space and in many ways

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