

THINGS TO DO

'Patterns of Paper' exhibit in Haverford features 8 artists

By Victoria Donohoe
INQUIRER ART CRITIC

Seven area artists and one New Yorker working from different sources and backgrounds are featured in the show "Patterns of Paper" at the Main Line Center of the Arts.

Organized by guest curator Paula Marincola of Gladwyne, the exhibit is most effective in conveying new approaches to drawing and the invention and control of flat patterns. It is also effective in spotlighting new attitudes about abstraction.

Ardmore's Neysa Grassl uses pattern only to subvert it, and in this way cunningly achieves a shifting, contradictory spatiality.

She proposes a vision that is both vulnerable and delicate, something appealing to see and touch.

Mary Murphy of Elkins Park investigates the issue of overlap in swirling patterns, the surfaces appearing to sway before our eyes.

The struggle I sense in these works isn't one of conceptual strategy but of visual syntax.

Murphy has found something in her vocabulary worth pursuing with a startling, down-to-earth ardor.

Darwin Nix of Philadelphia uses small shapes in his paintings to create a mobile space in which scale and depth function as dynamic elements, producing a sense of boundless energy and movement. This effect is heightened by subtle modeling and brushy use of watercolor.

Works by the five other artists convey the eeriness of the mundane.

A map is a map, except to Philadelphia's Perry Steindel. He keeps hundreds of maps of cities in his head, and puts quite a few on paper, too, with gossamer lines.

Concerned with how nature inscribes itself on present-day society and vice versa, Steindel is one of the broader and more deeply engaged of these artists.

There is a directness, simplicity and vulnerability about the ink droppings on wet paper and other paper trails of Philadelphia's Bruce Pollock.

Philadelphia's Tom Hatton and his wife, Maria Kocot, provide a quirky, mutant pleasure in their posterlike conceptual renderings of the international color code, printed with plastic bubble wrap yet giving the appearance of ultra-high-tech methods.

With Brooklyn's Carl Fudge, the method may be mundane, but the source is not.

The Arts

The real point of his Xerograph series lies in the fact that the basic image and idea he chooses (German Renaissance master Albrecht Durer's *Resurrection* print) are famous. His series here achieves superiority over Durer only by virtue of the reductive violation and selective duplicating of this old master print.

His Xerographs thus become a container for pristine abstract passages that are both photocopied products and objects of perception. These intricate patterns come forward with great clarity.

At our present eclectic moment, thankfully, there are few party lines and few signature styles.

Here, the real subject becomes the experience of making the work, the information derived from it, the set of values interconnected with and refined through the work.

Having the pencil, brush or pen as mediator between the artist and the paper-ground sets these artists free.

And it leaves intact our belief in the potentialities of abstraction. The excitement of the show comes from the cacophony of insights it provides.

Main Line Center of the Arts, Old Buck Road and Lancaster Avenue, Haverford. Tomorrow through Jan. 21, with a Jan. 10 public reception, 3-5 p.m. Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Phone: 525-0272