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Galleries

NoHo Gallery LA celebrates multiculturalism and The Black Arts

BY ANA KACZMAREK

The NoHo Gallery LA, a unique combination of the historic Lankershim Arts Center and the establishment of contemporary art, is a space just big enough to showcase ten artists without overwhelming patrons.

The gallery is the brainchild of curator Daniel DeBevoise, a South American by birth, who has traveled and lived all over the world. "NoHo Gallery LA was created to give artists of all mediums a platform in which to promote their work," says DeBevoise. "Our goal is to see art in every home and artists successfully immersed in their art."

"The Black Arts" exhibition, featuring Dr. Allen Bearden, also includes the U.S. debut of special guest artist Metellus Bekens -who was exiled from Haiti. The exhibition is a mixture of U.S. and international artists who have dedicated their lives to their art, using it to better the lives of many.

As a tribute to Black History Month, the ten chosen artists specifically focus on articulating the Black experience. The diverse group ranges from well-established artists to "people who can't even get to the point to be in a gallery here."

The featured artist, Dr. Bearden, is also an arts educator. With 30 years in the field, his dual perspective combines the analytical with the creative. He calls himself an "interpretist," a word of his own invention.

He explains by saying, "I am influenced by current events, stories I hear, things I



"The Black Arts," a tribute to Black History Month, currently at NoHo Gallery LA features paintings by "interpretist" Dr. Allen Bearden.

feel, pictures I see, and things that awake me at night that I don't always understand. I try and capture these things on canvas and allow/enable others to form their opinions about the work."

Bearden stresses the effects of the creative process: "I feel that visual representation is critical to the creation of identity of any community; but especially in the Black community. It documents the history and culture of a people that has long been ignored."

That is something that DeBevoise hopes to encourage at his gallery, and particularly at this upcoming exhibition. An evening reception on February 7 will not only show visual expressions of Black culture, but also various other forms of Black art.

There will be a dance performance by Brandy, an entertainer who has performed African, Jazz, Haitian and Samba dance for 15 years. Jazz/Blues guitarist and lyricist Scott Detweiler will perform his single "The Angels of New Orleans" and other songs from his album. The

guest emcee is Latin jazz legend, Pete Escovedo, who will also have artwork displayed.

A self-described "muralist," Escovedo finds multiculturalism essential to the art world. "I think it's important to create work from all races and religions, to use one's background and history to remind all of us where we come from," he professes.

The evening reception is bound to be vibrant, with space for a dance floor and the type of eclectic mix of art and culture DeBevoise is excited to bring together. He will also be exhibiting some of his own photographs, along with the

works of lone Citrin, Jimmy Cross, Jo-Ann Page, Marci Hill, Pamela "Frison" Robinson, Susan Matthews and Toni Scott.

Dr. Bearden expresses his appreciation of this space and showing: "It gives black artists a forum for showing/expressing/sharing their own racial or ethnic identities. However, I look forward to a time when there is no specific month or place to do that. Art should be appreciated for its beauty, its meaning, and the feelings it creates in the viewer. If, however, most collectors and galleries continue to exhibit a decidedly 'Eurocentric' bias in support of non-black art, then we will continue to need the Noho Galleries of the world." *

The Black Arts runs through February 26 at NoHo Gallery LA. An artists' reception with music and dance will be held on February 7 from 6 to 10 pm. (818) 761-7784 5108 Lankershim Blvd, NoHo Arts District. Gallery Hours: Thurs - Sat 2-8pm Sunday 1-6pm.