

Art Lot on Sackett and Columbia explained

by Abigail Savitch-Lew

A frozen lake dangling from the hook of a crane. Plastic and mesh curtains tied to a chain-link fence with pink string. Music speakers made of expanding foam and cast in ice cube trays.

These are a few of the things in "POP Paradigms," a new exhibit showing from May 26 to July 22 in the outdoor lot at 206 Columbia Street. The corner art lot is a beloved fixture of the neighborhood and drew a crowd to its opening reception on May 26.

For the last two decades, Jim and Bobbi Vaughan, owners of the lot, have turned the space over to curators for the display of sculpture. Artist Jim Osman of Union Street has managed the space since 2003. He invited Brooklyn artist Natalia Zubko to guest curate in the summer of 2011. Zubko and Aimee Burg of New Haven, Connecticut selected the work of five artists for this year's "POP Paradigms."

The exhibit features bold colors and eye-catching textures. Zubko said that on closer look, the sculptures share a "pensive" quality and a preoccupation with time. Some of the pieces emphasize permanence. Others will evolve as they are affected by the weather.

"Food will be decomposing, things will be shifting," said Burg. Summer's rain, while rustling against Nate Heiges's "Curtains," will blur the chalk drawing by Kyla Chevrier. Catherine Telford-Keogh's sculpture, which includes lumps of yellow mayonnaise, will begin to rot. Many of the pieces share a "yearning to kind of capture an experience or a moment," as well as a combination of distancing and inviting elements, said Zubko.

Artist Marin Abell is conscious of the interplay between the catchy colors and deeper implications in his work.

"Children's toys are often made in vibrant colors to get kids to play with them," said Abell. "I like to use vibrant colors too as a way to give people an entry point to get into the work—as a sort of a lure to get them closer, to get them engaged."

Abell drove three days from Alabama to set up his piece. "Frozen Lake" models a landscape with snow-covered hills and evergreen trees. A miniature crane made of welded metal lifts a "frozen lake" — a giant green block of resin fringed with dried flowers.

"I was in Michigan and I heard about some sort of odd-ball trying to lift up a giant chunk of ice...that just sounded so absurd and so difficult," said Abell. He used an imitation of this event to explore traditional themes, including landscape and the traditional technique of casting.

"I'm trying to uproot a frozen pond as a way to make a cast of the landscape, as a way to study the landscape."

Artist Lorraine Dauw flew from Chicago to Red Hook, shipped her sculpture in pieces and rebuilt it in Brooklyn. She constructed an object shaped like the base of a piano and attached it to a block of expanding foam with the texture of waffles. Cast in ice cube trays, the foam looks like a jet engine or boom box speakers.

"I'm taking points of reference and converging them," she said. She wanted viewers to think about sound and melting simultaneously.

Several of the artists know Aimee Burg through Yale's MFA program in sculpture. Natalia Zubko found Abell's work through mutual connections.

An upcoming solo exhibit, "Psychic Excavations," will open in September and features the work of Jessica Cannon. Cannon will create paintings, adhere them to the lot wall, and continue to develop the paintings over time. They will explore the history of Red Hook's



Marin Abell working on the current installation, called POP Paradigms (photo by Savitch-Lew)



The completed POP Paradigms, available for public viewing through July 22nd at the corner of Sackett and Columbia Street (photo by Zubko)

changing landscape.

Curator Jim Osman said that the art lot has made an important contribution to the community since tougher days in Red Hook. The lot allows the community to not only view a final product, but also engage with artists and watch the installation process.

Meanwhile, the art lot has introduced artists from far and wide to Red Hook. Abell said he would consider moving from Alabama to Brooklyn and that the art lot was in a perfect location.

"Being situated on that street corner just allows people...to engage with members of the community that are just so friendly and welcoming."

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