

Art review

2018 Members Exhibition of the Society of American Graphic Artists at J Wayne Stark University Center Gallery

Very bleak, even depressing colorless picture of debris of a wooden construction on a background of a grey sky happened to be an unexpectedly appealing scene. Left wall survived the most, around what was the right wall placed the almost biblically bowed cruciform mast on the horizontal bar that supported by a massive beam. What can this be? Was this beam a central column that held the next floor of a ship, or was it decayed support of the elaborate construction of a shipyard? The answer does not really matter. What does matter is that the undefined and unsightly central detail seems to be the last piece that holds the whole composition together.

The further decoding of the artwork brings up the observation that these wooden remnants seem wet, like after a big storm, especially when notice the already calm flat-water surface behind. The line of the horizon is close and shows that it is not an open sea, rather a river or a bay area. And the result of the storm - the edges, sharp offcuts, nails everywhere...

The Bill Murphy's artwork "Staten Island Stonehenge" sending invocations to the famous British sightseeing place, which, alike to this New York-based debris, nobody really remembers when and why was placed there.

The masterfully done etching and aquatint on wove paper is surrounded by monochrome pieces of the New York urbanscape with more traditional for the city scene of pizza and NY taxi on a corner of a street placed next to the portrayed subway bridge in Harlem. The pictures are part of interesting and full of surprising highlights exhibit of the "2018 Members Exhibition of the Society of American Graphic Artists".

The SAGA promoting the talented artist from all over the country brought the art collection from Syracuse University to expose in the J Wayne Stark University Center Gallery in the Memorial Student Center of Texas A&M University. Here at the exhibition, one can see the artworks that were done in mostly printmaking techniques of Graphic arts, which alongside with printmaking encompasses any form of visual artistic expressions, such as painting, drawing, and photography. The exhibit is parading all kinds of intaglio printmaking from etching to engraving, as well as lithography and different kinds of linoleum and woodcuts that results in spectacular art pieces.

It's important to note that the artworks represented at the Exhibit are expectedly not unique, the artist creating the etching can print some number of similar artworks and spread them all around the art world. For example, intaglio is a technique when a print is done from ink that is rubbed into the incisions or grooves below the printing surface of the cut, scratched or etched design. The etching is usually done by bitten a design into a metal plate with a variety of acids. The design of the print, as I identified at the exhibition, can incorporate a variety of topics from intimate portraits and home scenes, to public venues; from exotic flora and fauna to landscapes and nature. All the images in the Exhibition are not large, but every each of them attracts attention and desire to rest a gaze on.

My attention was dragged to one of the smallest pieces in the collection. Etching done by Steven Katz looks like a 3D image. Classical look of the front entrance of the Carnegie Hall portrayed from the left angle seems moving with the viewer's gaze. The artwork looks like a photo negative, that creates a feeling of an evening turmoil, with its traffic lights, parked cars and people's contours in their usual fast-pace crossing. The simple contrast of white ink on a black wove paper skillfully conveys the glow of the big city windows and creates an exciting feeling of big city life.