

Quirky, gentle sense of humour in Miedzinski's work

ROBYN SASSEN – SA Jewish Report, Johannesburg (27.4.-4.5.2007)

THE SIGNATURE “Daniel Miedzinski” might be familiar to readers of Jewish newspapers over the last two decades. His were the gentle social cartoons that illustrated funny stories by Wolfy Matz. Indeed, there is a quirky yet gentle sense of humour at play in his more current work that gives Artists Under the Sun, with which he shows it, a bit of an edge: this is something quite different from the landscapes, wildlife and floral paintings that predominate there. Miedzinski works in acrylic and ink on paper and draws his subject matter from the mystery of rock art and the beauty of plant formations and archaeology, as well as what he considers “nature’s gems”: patterning and contrast revealed in microscopic views of nature.

Having devised his own working methodology, Miedzinski considers himself a draughtsman before he is a colourist. He works in intricate detail with a mapping pen and then applies

colour according to the emotional pull of his works. “It is a form of entertainment,” he blithely comments.

Miedzinski was educated at the Johannesburg Technical Collection under J H Bramham. His family’s artistic genes were always prominent - his father was an actor in Europe, and his cousin, Rene Shapshak was an artist of note.

At college, emphasis was put on an academic approach and he learnt still life and life painting - but tended toward stylization instinctively. Miedzinski learnt woodcarving under David Kagan who had worked for the Tsar in Russia, and gradually as the medium became impractical for him, he translated his characteristically clean approach to the wood or stone, onto paper.

Miedzinski has been working in this approach for close on 40 years, 10 of which were spent as an amateur animator in film. But with advancing

technology in this discipline, he retained his focus on fine art. Since the early 1960s, Miedzinski has hosted seven solo shows. In his work you can see echoes of Yves Tanguy, Cecil Skotnes, Walter Battiss or Alexis Preller. In Western art, selling work or indeed making it out of doors, was considered outrageously radical in the 19th century. With its gallery under the skies, Artists Under the Sun as an institution is stigmatised by the academic art world for a variety of reasons. Looking at Miedzinski’s work in this context brings into question the value of art; art means different things to different people and for more than 100 very serious committed artists, and thousands of buyers, it is not only a platform for their work, but an avenue to a rewarding living. Miedzinski has been exhibiting with Artists Under the Sun at the Zoo Lake for the last 11 years.

Established in 1960, Artists Under the Sun at the Zoo Lake exhibits on the first weekend of every month. See them all day on May 6 and 7.

Illustrations in SA Jewish Report



A work by Daniel Miedzinski in acrylic and ink on paper.



Daniel Miedzinski with one his works.

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