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ART REVIEW

Those Who Teach, Can

By [BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO](#)

The art world can be an unforgiving place to make a living, forcing many artists to take secondary jobs in museums, galleries and educational institutions. Many become teachers, helping to train future generations of artists. It is a vital role, though one that is often underappreciated.

With this in mind, Randy Williams, who teaches studio art at [Manhattanville College](#), has assembled “Artist as Teacher” at the Studio: An Alternative Space for Contemporary Art, in Armonk. It brings together the work of 12 artist-teachers, some Westchester residents, like Mr. Williams, who lives in White Plains and whose wall-mounted decorative assemblage of seemingly random objects is being shown at this exhibition.

The work of four artists — Yayoi Asoma, G. George Girard, Mary Ting and Laurel Garcia Colvin — dominates the display, though several other pieces are also worth mentioning.

Masha Ryskin, an adjunct lecturer in studio art at the State University of New York College at Brockport and at Buffalo State, paints soulful, delicate abstract gouaches. Tim Ross, an associate professor of studio art at Manhattanville, makes an engaging kind of portraiture that is humorous in a horrible sort of way.

Working in various styles, Mr. Ross combines elements of tribal art with expressionism. His contribution to this exhibition, “3 Sisters Green Head” (2006), an etched monotype highlighted with oil stick, depicts a deformed figure with a big green head. The composition doesn’t feel entirely resolved, though it is hard to remain indifferent to its presence: You are either excited or repulsed by it.

Ms. Asoma, an assistant instructor of painting and drawing at [Rutgers University](#), paints her own environment, and things that are important to her. “Garage” (2006), an alluring diptych, depicts the interior of her garage at her home in Chappaqua, packed with objects and mementos, including lamps, furniture, paintings and suitcases.

Ms. Garcia Colvin, an education consultant for the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art who also lives in Chappaqua, is showing a pair of color pigment ink prints from her lovely “Intersect Series” (2006), for which she took photographs of a figure floating underwater. They are about transcendence, about exploring states of mind and experience beyond the usual.

Mr. Girard, a teacher in the visual arts program of the New York State Summer School of the Arts, suffered from deformities as a child and turned to art as a means of expressing his pain, fear and embarrassment. He continues to paint on this theme, making pictures of an innocent but slightly deformed figure — often blue-faced and dressed in a red-and white striped muumuu — navigating a barren landscape. Part fantasy, part autobiography, the paintings are touchingly honest.

Ms. Ting, who teaches drawing, sculpture and design at [John Jay College of Criminal Justice](#) and book art at the Pratt Institute, offers a particularly strong group of works: four delicately beautiful drawings made of cut paper, ink and soot. The drawings are essentially abstract, though here and there you can make out human, animal and biological forms — sometimes faces, fingers, toes and other body parts. But whatever they depict, they are bold, vigorous and alive.

Ms. Ting has a varied art practice, making installations, photographs, videos and works on paper. Her sources of inspiration are equally varied, from Chinese folk painting to personal family history to Mexican literature, in particular Juan Rulfo's novel "Pedro Páramo." It is many years since I read Rulfo's book, but I recall it as a dreamlike tale tracing a man's search for his family history and identity.

In the art world's search for quality and relevance, the importance of nonprofit alternative art spaces like the Studio, staffed mostly by volunteers, should not be underestimated. They help promote young and emerging artists before galleries and museums take them up. They are, in many ways, the lifeblood of the arts community.

"Artist as Teacher," The Studio: An Alternative Space for Contemporary Art, 2 Maryland Avenue, Armonk, through Nov. 19. Information: (914) 273-1452 or www.thestudiony-alternative.org.

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