

Coming and going: Art at the “Crossroads”

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By Kat Murrell



“Crossroads” installation on the NE corner of 27th & Wells. Photo by Dylan Huebner.

Standing on the corner of 27th and Wells is to be in a hub of urban activity — cars and sirens and people, voices raised high above the din. No one stands still much, unless waiting for a bus or something else. At this intersection, *Crossroads* opened last Saturday under a hot afternoon sun.

The project is the joint effort of the [Haggerty Museum of Art](#) and the Avenues West Association, and shows the work of four artists — some major ones, at that — who created window installations in vacant storefronts wrapping around the street corners.



From Hans Gindlesberger's "Profile of a Fence." Photo by Kat Murrell.

I was there to see the art, but wandered to look at the window of Sunshine Wigs and Beauty Supply, and the mélange of objects on view. Their everyday installation included an array of stuffed animals and a black plaque with the Ten Commandments laid out in prism-colored letters, like a voice of certain authority in the heat and concrete. Next door is Hans Gindlesberger's *The Profile of a Fence*, which runs along the northern corner of 27th Street. It is complemented on the southern side of the intersection by Francisco Salas' *Untitled (Someone Was Here)*. Given the space between, they're not an obvious pair, but in the mind they cross the asphalt divide.

Gindlesberger organizes his black and gray composition in quadrants over a large white expanse. We seem to float over a tranquil old-time cityscape, neat and charming, while in the far corner a lone silhouette stands within the space of an incomplete fence. The fence is not closed, but it is enough to imply a boundary. Another defining line to be crossed is the dark river-like form that separates the fenced figure like a lost sheep in the wild. Is it safety, or seclusion?

Salas works in a similarly somber grisaille palette, but with tenderness in the soft details of the landscape and lines that indicate an old rambling hotel in a rural landscape dotted with fluffy pine trees. You can almost hear the wind blowing lonely through the bare spaces, while in the foreground, dark splashes and colorful dots become stand-ins for energy and activity. They make a border over which we, the viewers outside, look in at this strange, fragile-but-solid place. Both Gindlesberger and Salas adroitly plonk us down where we keenly feel multiple senses of place simultaneously; here, the hard pavement and the whirl of traffic and sirens and voices; and the stillness of other worlds, a silence heavy in our own imagination.

But back to reality...

The real world of the present and past is what engages Rina Yoon in her installation on the northern corner of Wells Street. A giant woodcut print, Yoon's *Sunday in SOHI* blends images of life in a cityscape that telescopes the liveliness of the street in social realism and abstract details. Look closely, as though walking through the streets, and you'll recognize buildings and landmarks. The Sunshine Beauty sign peeks out from the edge of a building, like a neighborhood touchstone.



Detail from Michale Velliquette's "Chroma Souls 1-5" Photo by Kat Murrell.

Across Wells Street is Michale Velliquette's *Chroma Souls 1-5*, the most abstract of the installations, and far and away the most colorful. These individual forms are sort of figurative, somewhat totemic, seemingly shamanistic and described as being charged "through a ritual practice to manifest wealth and prosperity upon all who view them." Up close, they're multilayered extravaganzas of small bits and pieces, colorful paper and wood and paint compiled into shimmering guardians.

Do they work, Velliquette's talismans of artistic goodwill? Behind the plate glass they are silent and watchful, observing the street and the people that come and go. In cahoots with three other installations, they alter the concrete landscape, just a little bit, for a little while.

Crossroads is on view through July 30, 2011.