

## Returning to the White Room: Assembling the Intense

July 22, 2015



Andrea McCafferty, gallerist of The White Room, is curating a new show featuring Barbara Bilotta and Mark Zimmerman through July 27, 2015. You should know where this gallery is every time you pass by Bridgehampton, as artist Franco Cuttica's wooden sculptures are propped up on the front lawn of Konner Court. Yes, those are the horses.

There are fascinating acrylic pieces in this exhibition, of course, as Bilotta and Zimmerman take the stage. The entrance of the gallery becomes a peaceful cave of colorful splashes on the wall, thanks to Zimmerman: cue the tentacle-like, curly, bold shapes on white backgrounds flirting with harsh, perfect lines.

Although the artwork may not be regarded, at first glance, or at any glance, as specifically emotional, the artist assures that the emotions brewing just below the surface rise into the work, affecting the thousands of decisions that need to be made which graphically influence form, content, and composition.

As you walk around you'll find Bilotta's works pinned against the labyrinthine walls of the gallery. You'll recognize her by the glaze carefully administered in her acrylic paintings, producing a serene effect among like color tones. Bilotta considers herself an abstract expressionist, and her vibrant paintings certainly have the visual and emotional power that is so much a part of that school of painting. Her love of nature animates those patterns found in her work, forging a connection between pure abstraction and organic forms. The artist, who has shown her work widely, divides her time between Long Island and Miami, and there is plenty of natural inspiration to draw from each area.

You may notice Nadine Daskaloff featured in the back, but it won't come so easily. Instead of doll-like portraits, Daskaloff indulges in paint, and lots of it this time. "XOX" is a somber, dark, yet spontaneous piece that gives off industrial vibes in a most uncanny manner.



And then this week there's Nicole Franz with "Free Spirit" and "Bohemian Beauty", two pieces composed of mixed media and recycled paper that fit in with the spirit of the exhibition—is arranged in a clear process: there's a lot of seascapes, and the colors ebb from those pieces and create a current of refreshment.

Here is McCafferty's artistic formula on the sculptors and artists that she features. "Instead of one theme, we try to keep it eclectic. Mixing it up, all the time. This way the gallery accommodate to all interests, all walks of life," she says, standing in front of Ruby Jackson's "Coral Swirl" and "Roots" sculptures, which are made of fired clay and fired slip. The latter is a technique sometimes employed on the exterior surfaces of pottery works to achieve thin, skin-like surfaces. Slips are related to glazes, but they are comprised primarily of kaolin (the product of the breaking down of worked clay) and will record the nuances of the kiln's flame, combustion and atmosphere. That skin-like result worked wonderfully in "Roots", as fleshy, mushroom-like sheets were tangled up in the piece. Meanwhile, "Coral Swirl" is a pale pink object that receives the warm studio lights as naturally as it would rest among seaweed in the ocean. Daniel Schoeheimer, McCafferty's gallery partner, adds: "The gallery is currently showing works in collage, photography (Seidenfeld) and graffiti. They're all kind of abstract and representational, so that's the only link between them. We try to stress the 'no like works'." McCafferty chooses two to three local artists for every exhibition and keeps her own artist collective circulating in the back. Those members are Eleanora Kupencow (creator of the blue metal sculpture on the lawn), Paton Miller, Dennis Leary and Franco Cuttica, among others. "Curating a show is like creating a larger piece of art," she says.

McCafferty asserts that there will be themed shows in the future. She already has one in mind — a risqué show in January to heat up the East End. Like in her previous gallery, The Crazy Monkey, McCafferty will cover her windows with bags and hang up signs demanding an adult audience only. It was her most popular show back then, inviting a dialogue about the line between fine art and pornography. Let's see how her audience will respond in '16.

The White Room Gallery. 2415 Montauk Hwy, Bridgehampton. 631-237-1481, [www.thewhiteroom.gallery](http://www.thewhiteroom.gallery)

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