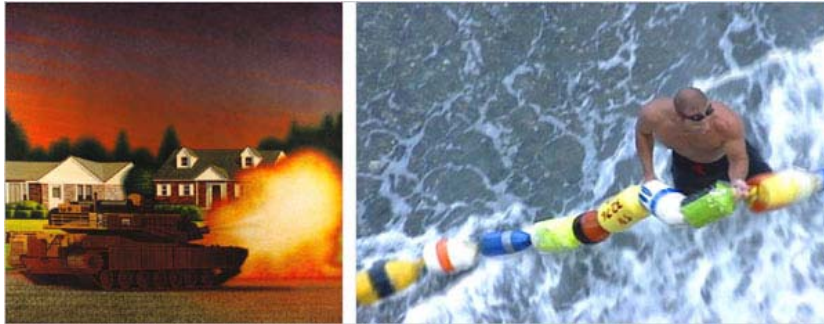


Advertise on NYTimes.com

ARTS | LONG ISLAND

Many Views With a Shared Sense of Place



CONTRASTS Several paintings at the Islip Art Museum, like Peter Drake's photorealist piece "Siege of Syosset," left, focus on suburban scenes. In other media, Chris Coffin's original video "Water Drawing" is a highlight.

By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO
Published: July 24, 2009

Patchy is a good word to describe "My Long Island," a show of work by 75 artists now on display at the [Islip Art Museum](#). It has a few high points, but much of the art is unexciting.

Related

Times Topics: [Long Island Arts](#) | [Long Island Arts Listings](#)

The immediate impression left by the exhibition, organized by Carole Jay, an artist and curator from Stony Brook, is that of a jumble of disparate images, most of them landscapes,

seascapes, suburban scenes and the like. Clearly, for Long Island artists — most in the show are based here — the landscape remains a powerful symbol of place.

There's a great deal of painting, in oil, acrylic, watercolor and mixed media; much of it is pleasing to look at, but there's not a lot of variety. Peaceful images of nature denuded of people are especially prevalent, suggesting that in spite of decades of suburban development, pockets of pristine nature remain. This is an old-fashioned vision of landscape as wilderness.

One such image, Pat Ralph's "Sunken Meadow Dunes: Winter" (2009) is among the best of the paintings on view. I liked it as much for the obvious quality of the artist's technique — done with a minimum of gesture — as for the way she layers the paint to give a sense of snow covering part of the ground. Ms. Ralph draws beauty from a seemingly banal subject.

Although the caliber of drawing in this show is generally inferior to that of the painting, "Sagaponack" (2009), a pencil drawing of a landscape by Patricia Mamatos, is beautifully articulated, with confident, vigorous lines and dynamic contrasts of tone. It also has the

More Articles in New York Region »

Afternoon Update

Sign up for a recap of the day's top stories and business headlines, sent weekday afternoons.



Sign Up

See Sample | Privacy Policy

Did you know that stinging insects send more than 500,000 people to the ER every year?

Emergency

Advertise on NYTimes.com

SIGN IN TO RECOMMEND

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

SHARE

ARTICLE TOOLS

SPONSORED BY



MOST POPULAR

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED

1. Paul Krugman: Health Care Realities
2. Straight Out of Brooklyn, the \$5 Slice
3. And the Pursuit of Happiness: Can Do
4. Not Just the Wine Is Purple: Lavender Wafts Across Sonoma
5. By Degrees: White Roofs Catch On as Energy Cost Cutters
6. A Look at Who Naps
7. Out of the Kitchen, Onto the Couch
8. 'Cash for Clunkers' Car-Rebate Plan Sells Out in Days
9. Film: Once Upon a Time, a Real Leading Man
10. Bankers Reaped Lavish Bonuses During Bailouts

Go to Complete List »



Prepare for retirement

qualities of warmth and depth essential to any good drawing.

Other artists focus on motifs that define the suburbs or suggest suburban sprawl. A Darlene Charneco mixed-media collage is made of clusters of toy houses, miniature fences and trees stuck on wood to suggest the ways in which humanity has reshaped the natural environment. The idea here is of suburbia as constructed nature, along the lines of a golf course.

Peter Drake's "Siege of Syosset" (2006), a luridly colored photorealist painting of a tank firing on a row of quiet suburban houses, the sun setting in the distance, is challenging, vital and invigorating; the strong suggestion is that the way of life represented by this affluent American neighborhood is under siege.

Not surprisingly, several artists in the show have made work in response to contemporary environmental issues. Much of it is wearily moralistic, purporting to educate us on topics we are already familiar with, like [global warming](#) and pollution. Social relevance in art has to be matched by some sort of conceptual freshness and clarity or aesthetic merit.

Among the better works reflecting an environmental consciousness are Diane Lennea's "Clouded (Cloud Machine)" (2008) and Tom Steele's "Strong's Potato Barn III" (2008), both visually striking photographs. And Barbara Roux's conceptual project, "Clear as a Bell" (2009), is an engaging study of the dangers of invasive plant species that combines living plants with text and images.

Along these lines, but even more interesting, is Chris Coffin's video "Water Drawing" (2001), the highlight of the exhibition. It shows the artist swimming in the ocean with a line of floating lobster-pot buoys attached to his leg. His movements define shapes, though not intentionally; anything specific is a product of the viewer's imagination.

What is special about Mr. Coffin's video is the way in which a prosaic activity, swimming, is cleverly used as an enlivening riff on conceptual art. It's a refreshingly original entry in what is by and large an uninspiring show.

*"My Long Island," Islip Art Museum, 50 Irish Lane, East Islip, through Sept. 6.
Information: islipartmuseum.org or (631) 224-5402.*

[Sign in to Recommend](#)

A version of this article appeared in print on July 26, 2009, on page L18 of the New York edition.

[More Articles in New York Region »](#)

Times Reader 2.0: Welcome to the future. Your newspaper is here. Click here to try it free today.

Ads by Google what's this?

[New York Gallery Openings](#)
NY's comprehensive calendar of art openings, events and exhibits
NY.ARTslant.com

[Plan Your Day at MoMA](#)
Explore the world's best collection of modern art. Plan a visit now.
MoMA.org/summer

[Chris Duke Art](#)
Classic Oil Portraiture in Connecticut
www.ChrisDukeArt.com

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

Past Coverage

- [ART REVIEW; Artworks With Pages to Be Turned and Savored \(March 15, 2009\)](#)
- [ART REVIEW; Where Fashion Meets Its Artistic Match \(January 11, 2009\)](#)
- [REVIEW | ISLIP; Messaging With Text, But Without Electronics \(September 28,](#)

ALSO IN BUSINESS » ◀ ▶

How does "Mad Men" find advertisers?
Managing an online reputation

nytimes.com BUSINESS

ADVERTISEMENTS



Learn how to make your aching feet feel better. ▶

nytimes.com
Where the conversation begins.

Ads by Google what's this?

[Dr. Sketchy's Anti-art](#)
Art school drop-out Molly Crabapple set up Anti-art School in Brooklyn!
www.Babelgum.com

[BlackBerry® Tour™ 9630](#)
Go Places. Take Your Life On Tour. The New BlackBerry Tour 9630.
www.BlackBerry.com/Tour9630

[The Museum of Modern Art](#)
Visit your favorite artists this summer at MoMA. Plan a visit now.
MoMA.org/summer

2008)
ART REVIEW; Married to Art and to Each Other (April 27, 2008)

Related Searches

[Islip Art Museum](#)
[Art](#)
[Museums](#)
[Long Island \(NY\)](#)

[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)
[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)

SPORTS »



[Easing the Risks of Freestyle Motocross](#)

TRAVEL »



[36 Hours in Glasgow](#)

OPINION »

Out of Iraq: Sooner or Later?

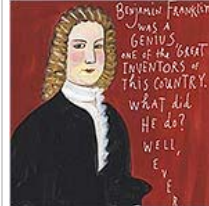
A Room for Debate forum on whether the U.S. should "declare victory and go home."

ESCAPES »



[A Cottage of Straw. Handmade in Texas](#)

OPINION »



[Maira Kalman: Can Do](#)

MOVIES »



[Stand Up and Deliver](#)