

ELIZABETH SILVER

THE BODY ELECTRIC: NEW AMERICAN EXPRESSIONISM

at
art sites

651 West Main Street (Route 25), Riverhead, New York 11901 631- 591-2401
<http://www.artsitesgallery.com>

Date: FRIDAY, August 8, 2008 – Sunday, September 14, 2008

Reception SATURDAY, August 9, 4:30-6:30 PM

Gallery Hours: THURSDAY-SUNDAY, 12-5 PM.
For group tour information and additional hours
call 631-591-2401

Expressionism as we understand the term today refers to the revolutionary work of German, Austrian and Northern European artists prior to World War 1. Schiele, Nolde, Kirchner, Dix, Beckmann, Kandinsky, Munch---artists who now rank among the most important of the early 20th Century---were literally expressing the enormous turmoil of that time. Their work largely comprised social and political commentary in an intensely personal outpouring, using bold new gestures of color and form

The work of the American artist Elizabeth Silver, though unrelated to the topics of European Expressionism, is nevertheless heir to their sheer visual power. Silver's new American expressionism is totally about the intimate and joyful study of the human form, alone and in combinations. She only works from the live model, and insists on new subjects as often as possible - always probing, observing - seeking the new stimuli she depicts so brilliantly. Her works are always untitled. To quote the artist: "Since there are no written guidelines, viewers must project themselves into their responses...their reactions seem to augment the creative process."

This exhibition, titled "The Body Electric," is a selection of more than a decade of work using a figurative Expressionism. Challenging, provocative, and stimulating, its scalding color and restless electric line offer us a voyage into the artist's passionate interior universe.

Ms. Silver's work has been exhibited in Berlin and Munich, Germany and is in the permanent collections of Tulane University, Art Students' League, and private collections in Germany, England, Spain, France, Brazil, Mexico and the United States. We are pleased to be the venue for this significant new exhibit by Elizabeth Silver, an artist deserving of broad exposure.

Elizabeth Silver's paintings and works on paper explore the deep connections between observation and emotion., between surface reality and a more profoundly felt reality. Her practice of drawing and painting exclusively, day in and day out, from live models, has led her very forcefully toward figurative expressionism as opposed to formalist realism. Silver is neither detached nor precisely pure in her means. In her hands, the expressionist approach leads a viewer to feel – almost viscerally – the power of the artist's observation. Where the observing is turned to feeling is literally in the hands – in the movement of the charcoal line, in the laying down of the colors, in the compositions. These choices are largely intuitive - and that is where Silver's intervention becomes the result that we see.

A visit with Silver's work is a bit like a cold shower, a wake-up call, a face to face meeting with something urgent and vividly present, even confrontational. It is a look beneath the surface based on close familiarity with the surface. That is what figurative expressionism should be, and it is rarely more so than in these vibrant, bristling, bracing works of art.

*Excerpted from an essay by
Cynthia Nadelman, Art critic, Poet,
Contributing Editor, Art News*