

‘From Beijing to Atlanta: Ling, Bo and Hong Zhang’ at Whitespace



Hong Zhang, "Three Graces" charcoal Photo: courtesy of gallery

“From Beijing to Atlanta: Ling, Bo and Hong Zhang.” Through April 3. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays. Whitespace, 814 Edgewood Ave. 404-688-1892.

www.whitespace814.com.

By Catherine Fox

Ling Yan Zhang sites her “Butterfly Series” in a world somewhere between the ideal landscapes of traditional Chinese painting and a dream, inhabited by giant butterflies and Tibetan monks.

Bo Chun Zhang’s “Treasures” are immaculate lithographs in which antique Chinese bowls decorated in colorful traditional designs are juxtaposed with the utilitarian fixtures of American bathrooms.

Hong Chun Zhang makes hyper-real, large-scale charcoal drawings of disembodied tresses, which might flow Rapunzel-like on long vertical scrolls or cover a rectangular one like an abstract painting.

But for their last names, a viewer might not even notice that the three artists who share Whitespace are sisters. The connections born of shared experiences and DNA add another level of interest to an already satisfying show. The Zhang sisters’ parents both practice traditional Chinese arts, and each trained in those traditions at their Beijing art academy.

The academy also required training in Western techniques, and the sisters either earned advanced degrees in the United States or have lived here a long time. Hence, their assurance in both and the fluidity with which they move back and forth.

They reference their heritage in different ways, from Ling’s quotations of Chinese painting and Bo’s use of the scroll format to Hong’s Ming and Qing bowls. Shades of Surrealism, Realism, even Pop also inform this work.

The sisters build their work on metaphor to convey their thinking, which, though filtered through similar experiences, is all their own. In the end, their work stands alone, as it should.

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