



Nina Mastrangelo: *Structures of Dynafluxian Exuberance*, 2011, installation view

Nina Mastrangelo: *Structures of Dynafluxian Exuberance*, Axle Contemporary, locations vary (670-7612, www.axleart.com); also on view at Kakawa Chocolate House, 1050 Paseo de Peralta, 982-0388; through March 13

You will not find a definition for the term “dynafluxian” in many dictionaries, but a brief description of *Structures of Dynafluxian Exuberance*, an art installation by Nina Mastrangelo at Axle Contemporary, should help us discover one for ourselves. To begin with, the words *dynamic* and *flux* both relate to objects or energy in motion or undergoing change, and Axle is a mobile art gallery (in a renovated step van) that never stays too long in one place.

Mastrangelo's installation — around 400 paintings that are exhibited without taking up a lot of wall space — is a brightly colored, joyous exhibition that maximizes the use of space in clever ways. The artist's structures are hanging strips of paper, painted in watercolors on both sides, that run at slight angles to one another from floor to ceiling. Each strip is made up of a series of paintings held together by monofilament, and each painting appears to be on standard-sized sheets of paper. But a closer look reveals that many of what look like single watercolor paintings are actually made up of even smaller paintings, also held together by monofilament. Like an exploded view of an Abstract Expressionist canvas, Mastrangelo's work seems to deconstruct painting even as the artist engages in it prolifically to achieve that effect.

The long strips of conjoined paintings fill the interior of the gallery, not admitting room for visitors, although you might catch a glimpse of yourself reflected in a mirror along the back wall. There are paintings affixed to Axle's exterior, as well, that offer a taste of what the viewer will see inside. More traditionally exhibited paintings by Mastrangelo can be seen at Kakawa Chocolate House. What is most compelling about *Structures of Dynafluxian Exuberance* is the installation's inherent contradictions. Art hung in traditional galleries is viewed from within the space. Here, the viewer is on the outside looking in. The use of a mirrored interior suggests another contradiction: it gives the exhibit space the appearance of being bigger on the inside than it is on the outside.

Apart from its mobility, Axle is usually like any other gallery in that it has wall space, gallery lighting, and room — not a lot — to walk around. Mastrangelo's exhibit makes us question the nature of the gallery experience itself by taking this experience away and replacing it with another. Mirrors might seem like an obvious device for allowing front and back views simultaneously, but consider that, in this case, they allow you to see the entire show from only one vantage point. You can't move around it, but you know exactly what is in there.

In all its dynafluxian exuberance, Axle Contemporary travels all over town, so be sure to check its website for location updates.

— Michael Abatemarco