



ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

Review: Where the landscape painting takes some imaginative turns



Iliodora Margellos, "Doing" (detail) 2018. Handmade embroidery, mixed media on metal grid sheet, 39.4 inches by 59.1 inches (Iliodora Margellos and Baert Gallery)

By DAVID PAGEL

FEB. 23, 2018 12:45 PM PT

Landscape painting was invented to give urban viewers some respite from city life. Today, pictures of nature still elicit daydreams, letting us get lost in all sorts of reveries.

But if you've ever wondered what landscapes see when they dream, head over to Baert Gallery in downtown Los Angeles, where seven cut-paper pieces by Francesca Gabbiani and six mixed media works by Iliodora Margellos form one of the best two-artist exhibitions in recent memory.



Francesca Gabbiani, "Dead Nature With Bathtub," 2017. Colored paper and gouache on paper, 38.5 inches by 52 inches (Jeff McLane / Francesca Gabbiani and Baert Gallery)



Francesca Gabbiani, "Synecdoche 2 (Destruction of a radical space)," 2017. Colored paper and gouache on paper, 18 inches by 24 inches. (Jeff McLane / Francesca Gabbiani and Baert Gallery)



Francesca Gabbiani, "Series Leaves (Meadow)," 2016. Colored paper and gouache on paper, 19.75 inches by 17.75 inches (Jeff McLane / Francesca Gabbiani and Baert Gallery)

Gabbiani uses razor-sharp blades to cut the silhouettes of leaves, branches and trees from brightly colored sheets of paper.

Sometimes she glues bouquets of these shapes onto nearly square sheets of paper she has painted a solid color: purple, fuchsia or mint. To some leaves she adds another layer of cut paper, giving them the lacy veins they have in reality.

At other times Gabbiani glues a wider range of flora onto pages painted black and white, their high-contrast compositions depicting dense forests while calling to mind zebras and boldly patterned fabrics.



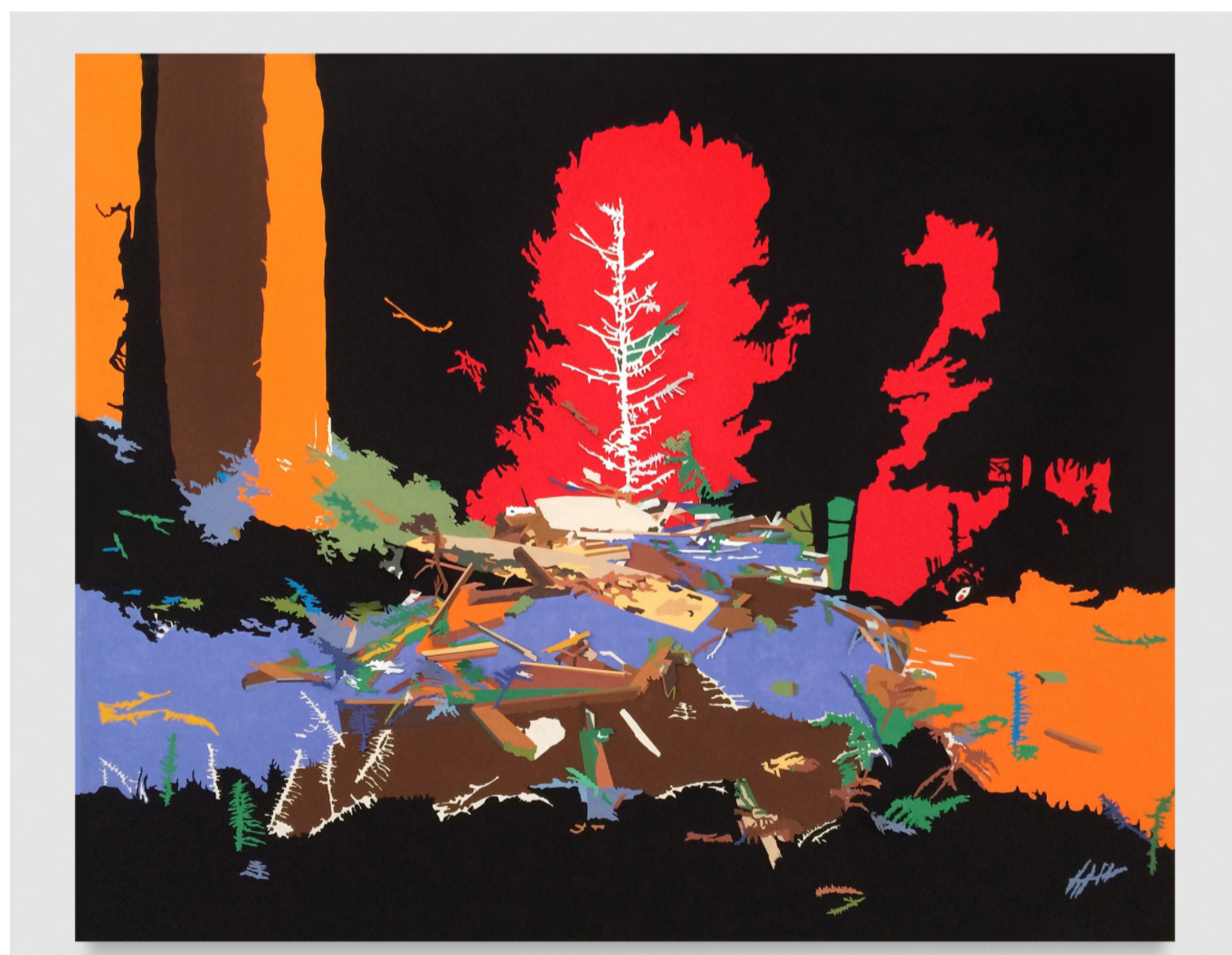
Iliodora Margellos, "Doing/Undoing (4)," 2018. Handmade embroidery, thread on canvas, 18.5 inches by 24.4 inches (Iliodora Margellos and Baert Gallery)

Margellos also works in two ways. Sometimes she embroiders scenic snippets onto placemat-size swatches of unstretched canvas. You feel as if you're looking into airy aquariums, their fractured patterns and pictorial hints floating freely.

Fine-mesh screens form the foundation of her two largest works. Each has the presence of a painting, despite not having a lick of paint. Instead, Margellos has strung brightly colored thread and yarn through the mesh. Sometimes she has embroidered taut passages. Others she has left loose, suggesting that the position is temporary and that things might move any which way. She has also added puffy tufts of tulle, strips of decorative stitchery and glass beads strung so that they resemble fake flowers.

In both artists' works, artifice never looked better, or brought the fantasies of landscapes down to Earth, where we can experience them up close and in person.

Baert Gallery, 2441 Hunter St., L.A. Through March 24; closed Sundays and Mondays. (213) 537-0737, www.baertgallery.com



Francesca Gabbiani, "Destruction of a Radical Space IV," 2015. Colored paper and gouache on panel, 36 inches by 44 inches (Jeff McLane / Francesca Gabbiani and Baert Gallery)