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The many meanings of 'painting'

The theme and the artists make the Falling Cow Gallery's show a winner.

By Edith Newhall
For The Inquirer



"The Golden Moment of Realization" is what Bruce Campbell calls his wall-mounted circle of yarn, at the Falling Cow Gallery. Three other artists are also taking part in the show.

Since last April, when it opened, the Falling Cow Gallery has had some good shows and some less than mesmerizing ones, all densely packed with work.

Its current exhibition, "The World Is Flat," bodes well for its future. The gallery not only has come up with a topical, sophisticated theme - all the things a painting can be besides paint on a stretched canvas hanging on a wall - it also has chosen a copacetic group of four artists to illustrate its point. And it has installed their works to perfection.

The first smart move was to give Mauro Zamora, who's been appearing in a variety of Philadelphia galleries recently, an entire wall. Zamora's Surrender, combining a watercolor mural of a drive-in movie theater in a depressing, war-torn landscape with a digital animation of the words Be Aware Beware continuously projected across the theater's otherwise blank screen, is a sublime marriage of painting and video. The second smart move was to get Ben Will to construct his amusingly aggressive Burst, a wall-to-floor lava flow of colored duct tape and cardboard, directly across from Surrender. Duct tape really is good for everything.

Two other works that stayed with me long after I left were Bruce Campbell's wall-mounted circle of orange-yellow yarn, The Golden Moment of Realization, a lovably modest, optimistic piece that trails out onto the floor and brings to mind a warmer, fuzzier Bruce Nauman, and Chris Lawley's wittily titled The Gloaming, an amazingly awkward, intentionally sagging dark blue enamel-on-PVC painting supported tepee-style on wooden sticks.

It's nice to see Falling Cow spreading its wings.

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