

ARTS | WESTCHESTER

Hudson-Inspired Art, Popping Up All Over



COURTESY OF DANIEL PHILLIPS AND THE DODGE GALLERY



ALVARO CORZO

By SUSAN HODARA

PEEKSKILL, N.Y.

THE space is dark and damp; its unfinished floor rutted. But the far wall of this approximately 6,000-square-foot vacant warehouse is illuminated by three floor-to-ceiling projections — an overgrown cemetery, abandoned architectural ruins and the ever-changing Hudson River — all mirrored in a man-made pool below.

This is “Warehouse Reflections,” an installation by Daniel Phillips that is part of “Peekskill Project V,” a gathering of contemporary artwork in pop-up galleries, parks and empty lots in 15 locations throughout the city, as well as in the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art.

Organized by the center, “Peekskill Project V,” which takes place in three iterations through July, presents paintings, sculptures, photographs, videos, installations and performances by more than 100 artists, all responding to 21st-century life in the Hudson Valley.

“The romantic scenery of the Hudson River trail has inspired artists for hundreds of years,” said Livia Straus, the center’s co-founder and director and one of 14 curators of “Peekskill Project V.” “Our concept was to reconsider the work of the 19th-century Hudson River School painters, and to look at how contemporary artists are interfacing with this landscape.”

Not far from Mr. Phillips’s piece is another vacant building, this one housing the work of eight artists. Inside the three-level space, visitors will find installations and paintings like Andy Piedilato’s “Antagonist,” a more than 20-foot-long canvas of a black form in a swirling sea of hatch marks — a whale, perhaps, or is it a submarine? In a darkened room, Chantel Foretich’s “Untitled” is a whimsical collection of dangling miniature buildings modeled after structures in Peekskill.

“Peekskill Project V” continues through July 28, 2013. For more information, contact the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, 1701 Main Street, Peekskill; hvcca.org or (914) 788-0100.



COURTESY OF LEON REID IV

PEEKSKILL SIGHTS

Clockwise from above left: One of three simultaneous projections from “Warehouse Reflections,” by Daniel Phillips; “The Golden Mean,” by Carole A Feuerman, at Riverfront GreenPark; “Swarm,” an installation by Diana Cooper; and “Pedestrian Shuffle,” 10 foot tall metal stick figures by Leon Reid IV. They are part of “Peekskill Project V.”



HOWARD GOODMAN

“I’ve got Oley and Chuck’s bar, the dry cleaner across from the train station and a rather gigantic Walgreens,” Ms. Foretich said. “It’s like taking a shrunken stroll through town.”

People taking a stroll through town will encounter art at every turn — nestled in storefront windows, adhered to the ceiling of the gazebo downtown, erected between a church and a pharmacy. In front of the Field Library, the two 10-foot-tall metal stick figures in Leon Reid IV’s “Pedestrian Shuffle” seem to saunter along the sidewalk.

The muscular bronze diver in Carole A. Feuerman’s “Golden Mean,” one of five sculptures installed in Riverfront Green Park, balances upside down on two hands, his body arching more than 16 feet into the air as if ready to spring into the Hudson. The message is clear to viewers of the graphic mural created by the twin-brother duo Skewville along the facade of the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art: its blocky blue letters proclaim, “It’s what’s outside that counts.” Nevertheless, “Peekskill

Project V” continues inside the center, with paintings, sculptures and installations by 40 artists. “Untitled: Crushed Boxes,” an installation by Phyllida Barlow, a British sculptor known for her use of mass-produced materials, fills a section of the gallery the way construction blocks the sidewalks of Manhattan.

“This piece was part of her response to the New York City landscape as a place that’s constantly in flux,” Ms. Straus said.

While most of the artists partici-

pating in “Peekskill Project V,” who range in age from their 20s to their 60s, live and work in the Hudson Valley, almost a quarter of them arrived here from other countries.

Ouattara Watts, who is based in New York City and whose boldly colored painting “Les maîtres fous” depicts a snakelike creature slithering across the canvas, was born in Ivory Coast. Ran Hwang, also based in New York City, was born in Korea; her “Healing Blossoms” is a two-wall installation consisting of thousands of beads and paper buttons pinned to a turquoise wooden panel like a web of delicate blossoms.

In the center’s mezzanine gallery, two Hudson River School works — “The Oxbow,” from 1836, by Thomas Cole, and “Twilight in the Wilderness,” 1860, by Frederic Edwin Church — served as the starting points for Purdy Eaton’s two identically named paintings.

While similar in composition and palette, Ms. Eaton’s images incorporate contemporary references. Her “Oxbow” includes cookie-cutter suburban houses along the shoreline, while on the riverbank in her “Twilight in the Wilderness,” she has added tiny lettering, phrases taken from Bruce Nauman’s 1984 neon “One Hundred Live and Die.” Back downstairs, Diana Cooper’s “Swarm” is a room-size installation composed of hundreds of small, black arrowlike shapes attached in clustered patterns to the gallery’s white walls. Ms. Cooper, who grew up in Hobbs Ferry and lives in Brooklyn, described the work as addressing the relationship between the natural world along the Hudson River and the densely urban environment that borders it. “It’s a conflation of the organic — the birds and insects — and the inorganic — aviation, architecture, technology,” she said.

Ms. Cooper was standing beside her piece in the museum; she had taken Metro-North from New York City to Peekskill. “On the train today, I actually saw a swarm of birds over the river,” she said. “I couldn’t believe it; it was like a sign. At first, they were scattered, and there didn’t seem to be any order. But then, they started coming together, and miraculously they formed this one sinewy structure.”