art
MUSEUMS • GALLERIES

Paintings by Neil Anderson.

Abstract images focused on nature

By Victoria Donohoe
FOR THE INQUIRER

Looking at a Neil Anderson painting can be like listening to the waves breaking — always different, always the same. The rhythms of his lines evoke for me an image of natural phenomena that is, at the same time, steadfastly abstract.

An odd mixture of refined elegance and rigorous constructivism is what gives his paintings their edge in the Bridgette Mayer Gallery exhibition by this Lewisburg, Pa., artist. Lots of colorful incident prevents them from being read too simply; Anderson's goal, I think, is to entice the viewer into a closer examination of things there to be discovered. His capacity for minute description disguises a more private vision, and the loose richness of his painterly methods is his signature, showing a continuing interest in interpreting light in terms of color. This show offers a direct contact with an artist helping shape abstract painting today.

Also at Bridgette Mayer are Leslie Wayne's abstract paintings — remarkably "now" though outside any trend or groove, and imbued with a strong physicality. These fairly small, sculpted works pack real volume, color adding to their sense of heft. The bulk you see is all paint, its dense handling rich in color changes and improvised surface. Works by this New Yorker tend to be bold, a trait heightened by her use of radically cropped foreshortening. Wayne stresses physicality by her uncommon attention to edges of shapes, giving them a heavy paint buildup. These craggy, clean-as-a-whistle creations help explain why some of us have a deep attraction for levels of sensuous beauty devoid of use but, as is the case here, not devoid of meaning. Unyielding artwork, pleasingly ornamental.

Neil Anderson's "Summer 2011," an oil-on-canvas painting that is part of an exhibition of his work at Bridgette Mayer Gallery.

Bridgette Mayer Gallery, 709 Walnut St. To May 26. Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 215-413-8893.

709 Walnut Street 1st Floor Philadelphia PA 19106 tel 215 413 8893 fax 215 413 2283
email bmayer@bridgettemayergallery.com www.bridgettemayergallery.com