

# THE ART CAPADES

## Art of Women, by women, and for everybody

BY CATHERINE WALWORTH

San Antonio Current, March 10-16 2005

It's National Women's History Month and there is no shortage of strong shows by women artists. I hit openings that were full of surprises last weekend. Mars and Venus will appreciate these works made with, among other things, wood, stickers, and ballpoint pens.

**Betsy Dudley's** sculpture show at Joan Grona Gallery (112 Blue Star, 225-6334) features carpentry pieces of raw wood in Constructivist forms and accordion shapes. Free-standing sculptures twist and bend, their angles jutting like gaunt elbows from spindly frames. Wall reliefs steal the show; some tightly condensed like Rachel Whiteroad's plaster works and some with spaced intervals like Madelaine O'Connor's wooden aviary series. One piece is a direct homage to Louise Nevelson's wooden wall assemblages. With references like that, I'd say we've moved beyond the old feminist debate, "Why are there no great women artists?"

**AmieAdelman's** show *Good Work!* opened at REM Gallery (117 Blue Star #3, 224-1227). At first I thought, "Oh, super- Slacker art with stickers." It turns out her compositions are actually functional weaving patterns made with stickers. Adelman is fibers coordinator and assistant professor of art at the University of North Texas. Describing the piece "You Did It!" she points out a ziz-zagging line of red smiley faces that bounce along the edge, an indication for the weaver to lift with the pedal. Step back from the works and they are dense abstractions. Close up, however, they are simply playfully embedded with brightly colored stickers. Many are composed of affirmations such as "Way to go!" "1<sup>st</sup> Rate," and "Cool." These are childhood artifacts; remember how we used to get affirmations left and right? In this setting, they seem to override criticism with enthusiastic praise. You go, girl!

**Mostly Bic** at Three Walls (106D Blue Star, Bldg B, 212-7185) is a sumptuous display of ball-point pen ink. **Judith Cottrell** creates "paintings" by covering Latex-painted panels with swarms of networked lines. The result looks like London fog etched on top of subtle gradations of color. These are worth obtaining entry. (Call for an appointment or stop by neighboring San Angel Folk Art and ask for admittance) into Three Walls, so don't be shy.

A visit to the little house off South Alamo, El Sol Studios (936 South Alamo, 226-9700) is a treat for the senses. The lower level is packed with boutique items with Mexican flair. Incense and music waft in the background. El Sol's March exhibition, *9 Brushes*, celebrates National Women's History Month with nine female artists. They fill the upper story with a range of media, as well as quality, but it's nice to get a break from high-falutin contemporary art and bask in personal expression.

The show features a range of folk, kitsch, and fine-art nuances, sometimes in the same pieces. **Rachel Delgado** struts out lumpy clay as high-heel shoes. These ankle breakers are her way of capturing the fun and sexy aspects of dating. **Ana Salinas'** paintings are full of symbolism- owls, planets, confined spaces- that continues a tradition of artists such as Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo. **Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez** makes handpainted huipils out of canvas and embroidery scraps then decorates them with images of female relatives. Check out her solo exhibition the Esperanza Center while you're at it.