

GALLERIES

Gueorguieva's collaged paintings at Samson

By Cate McQuaid | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT MAY 13, 2014



“Stale Mate,” one of Iva Gueorguieva’s paintings on exhibit at Samson.

There’s nothing soothing about Iva Gueorguieva’s dense, elastic, collaged paintings at Samson. Many of them have the look of a city imploding. Lines tangle, planes twist and bend; forms shatter. With colors, collisions, and veering angles, she sends a viewer’s eye ricocheting.

Look for a place to rest. Sometimes you'll find pockets of airy color. Gueorguieva's often opulent hues seduce, even as the wild action and thrusting, rickety construction of her pieces push you away. If paintings were lovers, these would be the irresistible but dangerous kind.

CONTINUE READING BELOW ▼

Cool, pale blues and greens fill the center of "The Owl's Failure," but even these passages of quiet resemble broken glass. The painting pivots around sketchy verticals; they look like an overturned horizon line, marking a sideways cityscape along a harbor. To the left, the palette is hotter, with a sloppy red grid and crumpling, crystalline orange forms. To the right, splayed lines in deep brown read like aftershocks.

Gueorguieva further interrupts her narratives of interruption with strips of collaged, painted fabric. Sometimes they move seamlessly through the painting, nearly invisible, like water currents; sometimes they stand out, like shrapnel.

Comical little cartoon characters appear in "Stale Mate," facing each other over a chessboard in a shadowy compartment near an upper corner. Other figures — gray, pouchy, clotted with black — appear amid shifting planes of blue, red, and gray. They give us a scale by which to measure their environment, and make it seem less threatening and more simply urban, although it still rushes, spins, and heaves.

These are not necessarily cityscapes — they're too abstract to be anything so precise. The way Gueorguieva layers and structures her work feels as organic and haphazard as urban development, but it just as likely simply depicts the artist's daring and problem-solving as she confronts space, color, and a world tearing apart at the seams.

Iva Gueorguieva

Samson, 450 Harrison Ave., 617-357-7177. <http://www.samsonprojects.com>

Closing date: May 31