

Artists Making Their Mark

There is a lot of superb art being made these days; this column shines light on a trio of gifted individuals.



Lauren Amalia Redding (b. 1987)
Bellona with Flowers
 2012-13, Silverpoint and silver leaf on panel, 19 1/2 x 16 in.
 Collection of the artist

LAUREN AMALIA REDDING (b. 1987) is pursuing a passion ostensibly out of step with her times. In an era when 20-somethings are more likely to draw on computer screens with a mouse (or a finger), Redding makes marks with a stylus designed centuries ago, into which she has inserted a sharpened piece of silver. “Silverpoint,” she confides, “is a medium with which you have a relationship. I do not know if it is more like driving a luxury car or finding the perfect lover, but it responds to you immediately, gives back fully, and divulges secrets.”

Drawing on paper with this tool is apparently an addictive thrill; the particles of silver snagged by the paper’s rough surface catch light as graphite, ink, and charcoal cannot, and of course the silver tarnishes over the years to produce mellower effects that will always look different from

the last time you saw them. Before the 16th-century ascent of graphite, most artists relied on metalpoint, which then tapered off in popularity but has lately been enjoying a renaissance: Redding was one of several surprisingly young artists participating this December in a popular exhibition at New York City’s National Arts Club, co-curated by the silverpoint champion Sherry Camhy with Michael Gormley.

Redding came to silverpoint on a distinctive path. Born in Naples, Florida, she earned her B.A. from Northwestern University and then her M.F.A. in painting from the New York Academy of Art, which has nurtured the Renaissance tradition of drawing in metalpoint (sometimes involving gold, brass, copper, platinum, or aluminum). Now based in Queens and working as a security officer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Redding draws compelling portraits of her mother’s family, who fled Cuba in 1968. “I want to ensure,” she explains, “that their faces are recorded, that their history is remembered. Once despondent, they emerged victorious, and I wish to pay homage to their journey and inherent beauty.” She captures them with silverpoint’s distinctive capacity to evoke line and shadow, resulting in images of both deep sentiment and psychological insight.

Redding will next exhibit work in *Who We Aren’t*, a national juried show curated by Paul Klein and Patrick Earl Hammie at the Union Street Gallery in Chicago Heights (through March 29).

ALEXANDER KLINGSPOR (b. 1977) paints large, unnerving scenes with no readily discernible narrative or moral. “My work is very much based on visions that come to me,” he explains, “either in dreams or in my waking life. They are reflections of my experiences ... led by my intuition and my subconscious. It is only years later that I myself fully realize their meanings.”

So how did Klingspor arrive in this intriguing situation? Born and raised in Stockholm, he did not pursue formal artistic training, but rather the more traditional (and often more effective) apprenticeship system. In his late teens, he headed to Kansas City to apprentice with the illustrator-painter Mark English (b. 1933), whose technique is generally more expressionistic but reflects similar flights of imagination. Back in Stockholm, Klingspor joined the workshop of Magnus Bratt, who is well-known for making superb copies of historical masterworks for such clients as the Nationalmuseum. The young man went on to illustrate for *Playboy* Scandinavia and the publishing giant Bonnier Fakta.

Today Klingspor maintains studios in both Stockholm and New York City. One could argue that both are cities of the night — Sweden endures long winters with only occasional glimpses of the sun, while Manhattan famously never sleeps, coming alive when the sun goes down. Klingspor says, “The night and the twilight have mostly been my hours of operation. During that time, the world vibrates.” Not surprisingly, his enigmatic, usually dark-toned compositions have been compared with



Alexander Klingspor (b. 1977)
The Flood
 2012, Oil on linen, 28 x 36 in.
 Collection Stellan Skarsgård

mid-20th-century noir films and pulp fiction novels, and with the surrealistic visions of Magritte, de Chirico, Hopper, and Dalí. These forerunners also prized deserted cityscapes or landscapes, or, when people do appear, they seem peculiarly disconnected, as if they don't see each other standing there.

This distancing silence pervades Klingspor's canvases, which are generally large, smoothly finished, and well composed no matter how many figures he packs in. All are studied from life, including animals, which recently have come to include fish and shellfish. Klingspor finds the latter beautiful, though he also perceives "something strange and brutal about a marine creature, pulled out of its natural environment and served on a dinner plate." Surely the surrealists would agree, and we look forward to seeing what parallel universe Klingspor brings us next.

Klingspor is represented by Albemarle Gallery (London) and A Gallery (Gothenburg). Several of his paintings are on view regularly at Lord Willy's, a menswear boutique in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood.

LORI PUTNAM (b. 1962) is well known in the tight-knit community of American plein air painters, and she surely deserves greater recognition in the wider world of art

enthusiasts. Working on location as often as possible, Putnam makes vibrantly colored, expressively handled oils that convey not only the lights, shadows, and tones of her chosen scene, but also its very atmosphere. "I capture," she says, "the expression of a person, the feeling of a place, or the effect of light. Rather than copying the subject, I use paint to interpret the essence of it. If I express beauty in something that may seem ordinary, then I have succeeded."

Originally from Nashville and now living in nearby Charlotte, Tennessee, Putnam owned and managed a successful graphic design agency for 13 years, always making art on the side. In 2008-09, she and her husband, Mark, sold all of their belongings and headed to Italy to live for seven months. They spent some of this time in Peschici, a remote and remarkably well preserved Apulian town of whitewashed buildings and blue domes overlooking the Adriatic. Being in so different a context delivered exactly the "breakthrough of self-study and artistic growth" Putnam had hoped for, and her career has flourished ever since, thanks in part to ongoing advice from such mentors as Scott Christensen, Quang Ho, and Dawn Whitelaw, among others.

Today, Putnam travels abroad regularly, though she is also a fixture at many U.S. plein air events. In May, she will lead a workshop in Positano, on the Bay of Naples, surely offering students tips from her book, *Demonstrations in Modern Impressionism*, as well as exhortations to explore and absorb the Italian landscape for themselves.

Putnam is represented by Brazier Gallery (Richmond), Deselms Fine Art (Cheyenne), Galerie on Broad (Charleston), Illume Gallery of Fine Art (Salt Lake City), LeQuire Gallery (Nashville), Nicole's Studio & Art Gallery (Raleigh), and Richland Fine Art (Nashville). ■

Lori Putnam (b. 1962)
View with a Room
 2014, Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in.
 Richland Fine Art, Nashville

