

## The Weight of Waiting - Steven Levenson



On the way to Broadway Gallery's newest group show, "Waiting," I couldn't help but reflect on the serendipitous correspondence of my own situation. Waiting for the bus. Then waiting for the subway. Waiting for the walk light. Waiting for the elevator. Waiting and waiting and waiting.

As co-curators Raluca Corjan and Victoria Mayer—as well as the stellar assemblage of artists in this show—recognize, waiting forms the very structure of our lives. And the work in this show demonstrates the diversity of the waiting experience, along with the rich aesthetic opportunities to be found there.

In their piece, *Lights Out*, collaborators **Sophie Hedderwick** and Jonathan Girling have forged an electric tapestry of light and sound, a shimmering multimedia neon sculpture that vividly evokes the experience of waiting. Like a visual metronome, the delicately woven panels of thread and light go on and off intermittently. The piece's gentle rhythm lulls us into a sort of hypnotic state, and time dilates and expands as we stare at the pulsing lights before us, waiting for them to change.

ArtMatysik gets at the experience of waiting in a more purely formal sense. In the sensually charged oil painting, *Jazz Session*, we see a naked woman in the foreground. She clutches her unruly hair, her arm muscles taut, poised. In the background, a mysterious figure, shadowed in darkness, plays a saxophone. Everything in the piece suggests the exquisite tension of a moment frozen in time. We stand before the painting and wait for something to happen, for the woman's arms to relax, for the saxophone player to step forward, for *anything*. But nothing, of course, will ever happen, no matter how long we wait.

Iliyan Ivanov directly references the show's theme in the title of her playful, richly imagined *Waiting For the Mayflower*. A kind of cubist crossword puzzle, this mosaic scrambles images of picturesque, archetypal American landscapes and suggests a fractured, mis-arranged country. In the title, then, Ivanov implies a longing for an original national unity. But in the fissured, splintered nature of the work itself, Ivanov perhaps suggests that the idealized notion of a utopian beginning—the Mayflower as our national Garden of Eden—is itself a myth.

In his provocative, haunting sculpture, *Embarazada*, Daniel Pezzi Gorriaran has produced a slyly menacing, otherworldly creature that resembles nothing so much as a Saran Wrap-mummified, pre-historical shark roaring forth out of the ground. The Spanish title, which translates into "pregnant," implies a number of possible meanings. Is this creature some kind of horror movie monster baby waiting to be born? Or is it instead a skewed, expressionistic attempt to capture the personal experience of being pregnant—the sense that a tumescent alien being is growing within oneself?

Kurt Rostek's mixed media pieces, *Bodhi Lion* and *Predation* are simple, contemplative companion pieces. Both are color-blocked, deceptively straightforward paintings of everyday objects: a duck, an owl, a hat and a Buddha statuette. Together, these otherwise mundane images take on the magnetism of icons, and form a meditative collage. Rostek's deft ability at realistic painting renders these still lifes thoughtful and unadorned tributes to the simple and often unseen beauty around us. Blanca Ruth Casanova's abstract paintings, *Loose Rope* and *Getaway*, are bold and muscular works. Fusing found objects like blue jeans and rope, and a dripping, Pollock-like painting style, these paintings are three-dimensional whirls of color and texture. They exemplify Casanova's evident ambition to wrest paintings out of the flat, two-dimensionally bound world in which we're used to seeing them, and to create active and daring pieces that blur the boundaries between painting and sculpture.

Finally, the gallery exhibited the exciting, masterfully assembled sculptures of Pamela Jane Goldman. In works like "Sea Romp," Goldman borrows the techniques of the Duchampian readymade, mixing elements and ideas borrowed from the everyday—in this case, seashells and stacks of flower vases—and combining them into strange, surprising constellations. Particularly fascinating is her *Moroccan Woman*, in which Goldman has constructed a disturbingly anthropomorphic being out of Victorian era plates and locket. A fanciful artistic Frankenstein, *Moroccan Woman* attests to Goldman's imagination and humor.

The distinct, adventurous artistic voices and visions that comprise "Waiting" offer us new lenses through which to view that most common of our experiences. ®