



For the latest LAND/ART exhibit, *Air cube + a global perspective*, the Richard Levy Gallery reaches far and wide across the globe to pull together a show featuring a wide variety of artists and styles. From left: "Camellia+Countessa" by Nicole Dextras, 2009, archival pigment print; "Robert Smithson's Floating Island" by Matthew McConville, 2009, oil on panel.

Very large array

The latest LAND/ART exhibit at Levy Gallery casts a wide net and invites the environment to participate in the artistic process

BY SOPHIA CARVLIN MILLER

Don't get distracted trying to find a common thread between the seven international artists of the *Air Cube + a global perspective* LAND/ART exhibit at the Richard Levy Gallery. It would be a futile exercise.

On the surface, these artists seem to have nothing in common save for their inclusion in the exhibit. Those familiar with LAND/ART will understand that this diversity enhances rather than detracts from the merit of the collection. The 27 works in the exhibit, all of which have some connection to the natural environment, reveal a rich variety of artistic technique and style. This is a successful example of how talented artists approach land art, the movement that spawned the creation of the organization LAND/ART.

According to gallery director Viviette Hunt, diversity was an important aspect in choosing which artists to include in the collaborative LAND/ART exhibit. She and gallery owner Richard Levy selected seven artists

REVIEW

Air cube + a global perspective

Through Aug. 28

RECEPTION:

6-8p, Sat., Aug. 1

Richard Levy Gallery
514 Central SW, 505.766.9888

Hours:

11a-4p, Tue.-Sat.

levygallery.com

from nearly 200 applicants who answered a call for submissions. Besides looking for things they liked, they also hoped to give a wider perspective to the local event.

"We do a lot of art fairs where we see anywhere from 40 to 120 other galleries from around the world," said Hunt in a recent interview with *Local iQ*. Using what they

knew of the international contemporary art world, Hunt said she felt the gallery could enhance the scope of LAND/ART events in Albuquerque. "We wanted to bring in a global vision."

Hence, the second part of the show's title. The first part comes from French architect Ben Delevoe's conceptual sculpture, "Air Cube," that is exactly what it sounds like. The piece is composed of a hanging light and a pedestal, between which there appears to be nothing. Of course, there is something there, as the text reading "Air cube" on the wall behind reminds you.

Most of the pieces in the show take a similarly light-hearted approach to exploring the relationship humans have with nature. Unlike traditional approaches artists take regarding the environment, such as recording impressions with paint or a camera, these artists do not seem to take a stance with their art.

One word descriptions of nature are not contained in these works — none portray nature as simply beautiful or frightening or boring. Mostly, these works play with ideas

we have about nature and the ways in which we interact with it. The sculpture "Roundabout" by Diagram, a two-artist team, depicts a toy car driving on a small circle of road at the base of a tree in a snow-covered forest. Another featured artist, Matthew McConville, presents idyllic Hudson River School-style landscapes that appear to be fine examples of Realism until you take a closer look. McConville's landscapes are populated with incongruous elements, such as a giant, gray cube jutting out of a forest, the exhaust trail of a rocket against the Wyoming skyline or a circular waterfall.

In all of these pieces, the viewer has the sense that nature is not just a subject, it is a participant in the artistic process. Whether the artist is using actual natural objects, as Nicole Dextras does with "Yucca Prom Dress," or recording real or imagined natural elements, the works respect nature's course by manipulating nature without controlling how nature operates. And while *Air Cube +* features many artistic methods, they all share a common spirit of collaboration with nature.