

Art Now... APRIL 25, 1991

A guide to what's worth seeing in and around Mendocino

By CINDY SWAN
For the Beacon

I went looking for the Daring and Unconventional last week — and found some very daring work in some very unconventional locations....

Completely unexpected, and yet capable of capturing my attention each time I encountered them, were Ilya Tinfo's colored sculptural assemblages in the Mendocino Bakery.

Of all places, out of the commonest of materials — "airbrushed driftwood" just doesn't capture the spirit and life exemplified by these true works of art.

This week, the Mendocino Bakery is featuring some of Ilya's paintings, explorations of three dimensional themes in two dimensions.

My breakfast completed, I headed over to the Bookloft on Albion Street, another unconventional spot where I, once again, expected the obvious — a copy of a book I'd recently seen reviewed — and

instead was entranced by one of Judy Hale's latest paintings, "Might Be Omens," which was perfectly illuminated by natural light in its setting.

Yes, I had seen this painting before, but this time I really saw it as the artist intended it to be seen — the sky opening up, a ray of light diffusing into abstraction that inspired, and, yes, illuminated.

In a town full of representational art that is so photographic in its rendering that one can practically read the license plate numbers on the cars in street scenes, it always astonishes me how simply and clearly Judy can capture the essence of this place, its light and colors, in her very excellent, yet unconventional, style.

What a morning; all this art and I haven't stepped foot in a gallery, or hit the main street of Mendocino.

It reminded me of the glorious sunny day last month when Bill Stoneham hosted a one-day event in the lot across from the Post Office with over forty artists participating in all media, the theme being their

"Gut Reaction Middle East.

What amaze this show w allusions to another Hir reality of the c seeking mis Stoneham's p ful prayers fo by "George ar First Commur painted by E graphic "Pra produced by (of course, W "Nuclear Fa become a clas

Each artist effort in t approaching from their ov reaching a per inquiry.

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Artist Tinfo's 'Salt Point Oil Series' praised

A Review by DANIEL ALTIERI

"Salt Point Oil Series," paintings by Ilya Tinfo, Temptations Gallery, Mendocino.

Ilja Tinfo's Salt Point oil series makes me honestly happy to look at painting again. These are broad, dynamic sparkling canvases of texture and light and they definitely establish Ilja as not just another skilled painter but, perhaps, and one must always say this with discretionary reservation, a great painter.

Rich blue skies seem to sweep back into bright seashore infinity. Clouds curl in distant backgrounds in a style somewhat surreal — halfway between a Flemish landscape Master's grey puffy heavens, even a Constable and a Poussin, and the precious and miniaturized medieval skies of a Giotto.

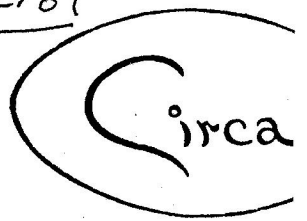
And then there are the rocks. This is what Tinfo's Saltpoint series is really all about! If rocks are the bones of the earth for the Chinese brush master, then they are the flesh of Ilja Tinfo: worn, sandblasted, melted, burned, beaten by waves and pushed up from hidden places in the earth by geological yawnings and stretchings to be deposited in the stark coastal sunlight. These paintings are haunted with dark shadowy

crevices, and filled with fissures, oozing with sensually corporeal stone that looks as if it has only just solidified yesterday rather than a billion pre-Cambrian years ago.

I could go on talking, piling one purple phrase on a purpler, but... My advice is to see this show.

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