

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Juxtaposed photos altering nature

Posted on Sun, Mar. 22, 2009

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For The Inquirer

In her latest photographic constructions, Eileen Neff has intentionally limited herself to a group of photographic images of found and altered nature that she is showing individually, or in various juxtapositions within one print. Additionally, two of these constructions depict themselves as shot by Neff in what appears to be the very Locks Gallery room where they are currently displayed.



Eileen Neff's show "Things counter, original, spare" includes the photo construction "Before and Behind" (2009).

If you treat Neff's show as one large installation of related images, you can sense a rhythm in her additions and subtractions of images.

Looking at *Under the Summer Sky*, for instance, which depicts a large outdoor cage framed by trees, and then at *After the Winter Before*, which shows the former work on the gallery's floor, propped against the wall, I imagined the steady sound of slides dropping into a projector, the ticking of a metronome, or a poem being recited. (It's well worth reading aloud Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem "Pied Beauty," from which Neff borrowed her show's title - "Things counter, original, spare" - before going to Locks.) Your eye is drawn from reference to reference, in a kind of visual exercise that parallels Hopkins' sprung paeonic rhythm.

Though it's interesting to see how all of Neff's constructions reflect on each other, knowing their connections isn't crucial to enjoying them. Each has a strong presence and mystery on and of its own.

Like camels? Nancy Graves was so taken by the creature's awkward design that she decided to celebrate it in three life-size sculptures.

The artist, who died in 1995, tried anything that caught her fancy, in other words, and her paint-

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ings and sculptures could and often did mix images drawn from Egyptian, Greek, and Byzantine art; paleontology; anatomy; psychology; and mythology, with a few contemporary found materials thrown in.

Graves was known for uniting opposing forces in her art, too, and her exhibition in Locks' second-floor gallery hews to that particular dynamic, as well as to her collagelike layering of materials.

Speaking of collage and camels (unfortunately, the big guys are in storage in museums, not here) *Untitled (Collage)*, dated 1968–1976, is full of casually sketched images of camels interspersed with painting, found paper, and other materials.

Two early paintings from the mid-1970s, *Lines* and *OV*, show Graves exploring abstract expressionism and developing compositions of overlapping planes and lines on white backgrounds. Five years later, in the painting *Arachne*, she has introduced vivid color and all sorts of charming decorative elements to her paintings - patterns of dots of color, airbrushed lines - and a central image that is clearly spiderlike and the antithesis of pretty.

In the late 1980s, Graves begins adding an anodized aluminum attachment to her paintings - a "layer" that projects at least a foot from the surface of her canvases, and whose imagery bears no relationship to the painted image behind it.

After all the riotous color and edgy line that is classic Graves, it's refreshing to pause in front of one of this show's few sculptures, "*Triangle*," a sterling-silver doodle of an animal - possibly a camel? - that displays Graves' affection for Calder, but also her own spiderish ability to layer lines, collagelike, in empty space.