

The Philadelphia Inquirer

In Philly galleries now: Jane Irish

April 20, 2018

by Edith Newhall



Plantation, 2017,
egg tempera on
linen, 62 x 74
inches

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Without question, Jane Irish's *Antipodes*, a remarkable floor-to-ceiling installation of paintings at Lemon Hill mansion, deserves every bit of the attention it has attracted. That whole-house art takeover is a true tour de force for this Philadelphia-based painter and ceramicist. But it should not overshadow her current show at Locks Gallery, which contains some of the most sumptuous paintings Irish has ever made.

The 15 paintings in the *Architectures of Resistance* show — on paper, Tyvek, and large-scale canvases — all focus on interiors of houses in various parts of the world. Some are imposing, as in *Palazzo Francavilla* (2016) from Palermo, Sicily; some are grand but a little more lived-in-looking, as in *Untitled, New Orleans* (2016).

600 Washington Square South
Philadelphia PA 19106
tel 215.629.1000 fax 215.629.3868
info@locksgallery.com
www.locksgallery.com



Irish has always been generous with color, and never more so than with these paintings. There's an electric jolt of orange on a ceiling in the house in *Plantation* (2017), and that same color predominates in *Villa Sant'Isidoro De Cordova* (2016). Dramatic violet appears several times, as well.

A subtle theme of resistance is an undercurrent in these paintings. It's overt in *Plantation*, which depicts a veranda in an unidentified, partially imagined house. Window views show a Mississippi plantation on the right and a south Vietnamese rubber tree grove to the left.

All of these sublime, mysterious images of old houses suggest that time and persistence shall overcome.

Through May 25 at Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Information: 215-629-1000 or locksgallery.com.