

LIFEBEAT WEEKEND: Halloween costumes that won't haunt your budget. E16

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ART SCENE  
Bill Van Siclen |



*The Woods*, a painting by Elizabeth Condon, is part of an exhibit at the Lenore Gray Gallery in Providence. The show also features the work of sculptor Jerry Mischak.

Almost by definition, artists are people with a knack for keeping in touch with their inner child. But some artists do it better — or at least more diligently — than others.

A case in point is Elizabeth Condon, a Brooklyn-based artist whose dreamy, semi-abstract paintings are currently on display at the Lenore Gray Gallery. In her artist's statement, Condon cites both Doctor Seuss and Chinese scroll-paintings as artistic inspirations. In lesser hands, that might be a recipe for disaster. But Condon makes it work, deftly fusing the free-flowing, nonlinear perspective of Chinese painting with the free-flowing, nonlinear logic of the Seuss

books.

In *Two Places*, for example, a series of recognizable images — a house, a tree, a river — float in a sea of softly pulsing colors. The result feels like a dream or memory suddenly, if fleetingly made visible. Other works evoke fantastic landscapes, whether it's a night sky filled with glowing stars and planets (*Dispersion*) a fairy-tale forest filled with wisps of sea-green fog (*The Woods*) or a swirling garden scene (*Night Flowers*) worthy of another age-defying artist: Paul Klee.

The show's other contributor, Jerry Mischak, also has a Seussian streak. Indeed, Mischak, who teaches sculpture at the University of Rhode Island, is best known for using duct tape, a material that he can coax into almost any shape from sleekly geometric to sensuously organic.

It's a talent that is on full display in *City in Balance* (*Let's Share a Place*), a large duct-tape sculpture in which a miniature city seems to sprout from the limbs of a gnarled tree. Though the message — something along the lines of "Wouldn't it be nice if we could all live in harmony with each other and with nature" — is serious, Mischak's approach is more playful than political.

Through Nov. 6 at the Lenore Gray Gallery, 15 Meeting St., Providence. Hours: Mon.-Fri. 10-4:30, or by appt. Contact: (401) 274-3900.

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