

ARTE FUSE MAGAZINE

JOAN SNYDER: Sub Rosa at Franklin Parrasch Gallery

BY A. BASCOVE ON 05/13/2015

The Latin “sub rosa”, literally under the rose, comes from the ancient custom of hanging or painting a rose on the ceiling as a sign that participants of a group were sworn to secrecy. The subject of this exhibition is roses, in all of their beauty, their long held symbolism of love, faithfulness, and the private relationships of like-minded souls.

Snyder is in full mastery here. Her use of multiple materials, lush color, and the tension of opposites; the thin washes under built up mounds of paint and paper mache, the stark contrast



“Symphony VII”, 2014, Oil, acrylic, paper mache, pastel, silk, berries, and dried sunflowers on linen in two parts, 54” x 108 1/4” overall

of pale clotted creams, whites and golds with intense deep rose, wine reds, and black purples. She continues her exploration of various textures of fabric and glitter with the integration of organic materials pulled from the earth. An embodiment of

memory, hand written words and thoughts, are repeated and distorted to the point of illegibility. These are works of the primal emotions, of passion and loss.

There are two joined linen canvases that support “Symphony VII”. A row of 4 equal squares run across the top, each with a thick impasto rose of a different color, her personal language of flowers. Four movements of a symphony; a sequence arranged in an order that provides a



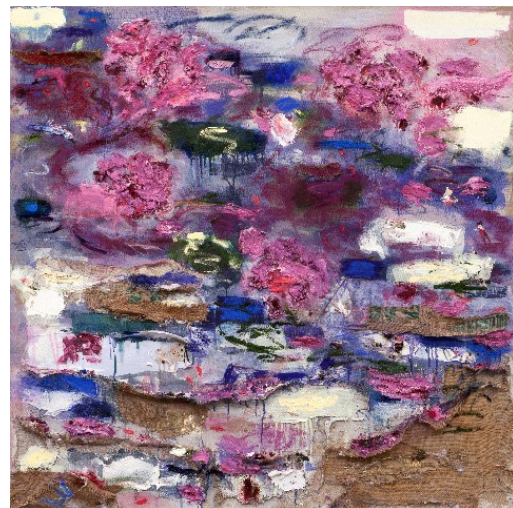
“Requiem Redux”, 2014, Oil, acrylic, paper mache, pastel, fabric, mud, straw, graphite, and glitter on canvas, 60” x 72”

contrast of tonality. Strips of white silk alternate with thick strokes of white paint. Dried sunflower husks and berries are embedded in black and dark orange dabs on the bottom half of the surface like something barely seen from underground. On the lower right, on a delicate rectangle of silk, a pastel line study of a rose. A reminder of the process, the barest specter, needed to communicate form.

In “Requiem Redux” the word requiem, the hymn for the laying to rest of the dead, is repeated multiple times on a mottled white background.

Whether boldly lettered in glittered red strokes or barely decipherable through over-painted areas, the dirge resurfaces. One of the essential elements of Jewish mourning is a rending of the mourner’s outer garments, the tear in the garments a manifestation of bereavement, the exposure of the heart. Mud and straw, elements of burial, are pressed into the canvas’s lower areas. In this incarnation Snyder’s roses are studded and surrounded with rent ribbons and torn cloth.

A rhapsody of contrasts, thick strokes of white, ultramarine, and deep violet paint layered with strips of translucent white silk, form a background for rose pink flowers in “Burlap & Silk”. The roses hover above roughly cut remnants of burlap, a texture recalling the earth itself. This coarse fabric twists and curls, creating areas extending outward from the painting’s surface. Sagging from the



“Burlap & Silk”, 2014. Oil, acrylic, paper mache, pastel, silk, burlap, and dried flowers on linen, 54” x 54”

weight, they enfold jeweled colored curds of rose and purple color inlayed with dried flowers and seeds. The phrase “Amor Matris” has a dual meaning, a mother’s love for her child and a child’s love for its mother. Again, two canvases of equal size are joined together to provide a continuous surface. On a background of dripping pink and green pastels strewn with white

franklin parrasch gallery, inc.

53 east 64th st. new york, ny 10065
www.franklinparrasch.com
t 212 246 5360 f 646 429 8770

roses the ambiguous phrase “If not know that I have loved you very much” is repeatedly scrawled in different directions. The words are obscured until they become a mysterious chant. These roses have a distinct dried blood red center; the color ground flows as if it’s been rained on.

“I know what they were about when I was making them I know what the words say I know the obsession and the pain and pleasure it took to make them I also know that in the end they are about paint and material about decades of personal iconography about putting words on paintings and rhythm and timing and color and form and style and taste and not about loss. Original meaning gets left behind. In an instant metamorphosis occurs.”
— Joan Snyder, “Sub Rosa” Catalogue 2015



“Amor Matris”, 2015, Oil, acrylic, paper mache, paper etching fragments, rosebuds, twigs, and glitter on canvas, 66" x 84 1/2" overall

JOAN SNYDER: Sub Rosa
May 9th – June 20th, 2015
Franklin Parrasch Gallery
53 East 64th Street
New York NY 10065
212-246-5360

Photography provided by the gallery and the artist