



March 19, 2008

It was a busy evening for art in St. Louis last Friday, and the Art-Patrol made an effort to visit as many openings as possible. We began in Grand Center, went east from there to Washington Avenue, then headed south to the edge of Soulard (actually McKinley Heights), west again to Lafayette Square, and finished up further south on Cherokee Street. It was a lengthy patrol.

Our first stop was the Leslie Laskey show at Bruno David. His Hinge series in the main gallery looked great, though of course each individual work benefited from its shared proximity with the others. Overall there was a nice balance of meticulous design with loose brush strokes, the forms emerging from Laskey's beloved circle. The work is deceptively simple, but each piece draws the viewer in for closer consideration. One standout was the somewhat smaller "Fire Hinge," where the design was perhaps a little tighter, the colors perhaps a bit stronger.

Moving into the smaller gallery to the rear, we found the Woodland Sketches series. These, more than the hinges, have a strong mid-century flavor. They would look right at home over an Eames lounge chair in a

Bernoudy residence. Our favorites were "Guardians," which suggested bamboo forms, "Dark Path," and "Morning Rain" - these last two forming an interesting contrast of heavy versus ephemeral. Also evident in these works is the architectural sensibility that is impossible to isolate from Laskey's purely "artistic" endeavors.

A biographic video played in the multimedia alcove, which offered an interesting context of the artist, his environment and his creations.

In general, moving from the main gallery to the rear gallery gave the strong sense of a narrowing and focusing, both of intention and outcome.

The "portrait" series of dolls shown in the front gallery was a touch less note-worthy (though we were momentarily reminded of busts of Roman emperors), but overall the show is a remarkable credit to the continued creative energy of a man whose long-standing presence and continued creative output in the St. Louis area places him firmly in the pantheon of our best and brightest.

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