



Last call to see Amy Metier, Bruce Price and Eric Michael Corrigan shows

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By **Michael Paglia** Thursday, Apr 8 2010

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The trajectory of the exhibition season has two principal arcs. The first gets going in the fall and peters out at the first of the year, while the second begins in late winter and early spring before hitting autopilot for the summer. It's just like school. And that means we're hitting midterms as the initial wave of late-winter shows gets ready to close. This week, I'll point out a handful of them, all of which come down on Saturday.

Amy Metier: Palimpsest, at the William Havu Gallery, is made up of a substantial body of handsome abstract paintings supplemented by a group of compelling works on paper. Metier, who lives in Boulder but has her studio in Denver, is one of the state's acknowledged masters of abstraction. She started creating art as a child before receiving a BFA from Colorado State University in Fort Collins and an MFA from the University of Colorado in Boulder. She's exhibited her paintings regularly since the mid-1980s.

To arrive at her signature approach, a form of neo-modernism, Metier mixes and updates historic modern styles. Specifically, she combines cubism with its formalist progeny, abstract expressionism. This formula really works, and the results come out great just about every time — as they have in the recent pieces at Havu.



"Electricity," by Amy Metier, oil on canvas.



"RS0," by Eric Michael Corrigan, oil on canvas.

The title, *Palimpsest*, is a good stepping-off point for understanding what Metier is doing. The word refers to an old manuscript that has been erased and written over. The visual effect of this would be the literary equivalent of *pentimento*, where elements from both the obliterated and the added layers are visible at the same time.

Looking at the paintings, it's easy to see what Metier is getting at. The erasures and paint-outs in her works are obvious in places, with images and colors from the under-layers coming through to the surface. In "Electricity," she has instinctively laid down smears of paint that correspond to drawings of forms of indeterminate objects that appear both underneath and on top of the colors. The initial lines determine the placement of the colors, while the subsequent lines on top organize and define the compositions. And speaking of color, Metier's palettes are amazing, with some paintings using earthy, muted color schemes and others screaming with vibrant tones.

The small works on paper are both compatible with and somewhat different from the paintings. The "River of Things" series done in monotype with *chine colle* are closest to the paintings and have the same dense compositions and peek-a-boo elements. The linocuts from the "Harrison" suite have a greater simplicity and are therefore bolder. All in all, *Palimpsest* is a spectacular show and one of the best of the whole season.

Another of the state's premier abstract artists is the subject of a solo titled ***Bruce Price: I Am a Cloud***, at Plus Gallery. For more than a decade, Price has been playing around with patterns — an idea encouraged by Clark Richert, who was Price's teacher at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design in the 1990s. Price embraces the topic from a post-minimal perspective, pointedly violating minimalism's flatness by introducing planes of patterns that suggest the illusion of three-dimensional space.

For years, Price created meticulous patterns by hand, employing tape and straight edges, but in recent years he's begun to incorporate found patterns by inserting pieces of checked fabric into his paintings. It's definitely a time saver and adds another conceptual aspect to the work. The results,

"RS0," by Eric Michael Corrigan, oil on canvas.

Details

Through April 10, William Havu Gallery, 1040 Cherokee Street, 303-893-2360, www.williamhavugallery.com. Through April 10, Plus Gallery, 2501 Larimer Street, 303-296-0927, www.plusgallery.com. Through April 10, Walker Fine Art, 300 West 11th Avenue, 303-355-8955, www.walkerfineart.com. For slide shows of these exhibits, go to westword.com/slideshow.

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however, have been decidedly mixed. This makes the point that sometimes experiments succeed and other times they fail. Then again, sometimes they succeed *and* fail at the same time. This is clearly what's going on in *I Am a Cloud*. Some of the paintings really work and some don't.

One added feature of this exhibit is that it has been partly or wholly reinstalled each week by a different guest curator. This clever concept adds a second level of content.

Finally, there's an experimental show that's nothing short of a spectacle. With all the local attention on installation art brought on by *Embrace!*, which closed last weekend at the Denver Art Museum, it's interesting to notice that ***Eric Michael Corrigan: High Bias***, at Walker Fine Art, still stands out. Corrigan, of Denver, has transformed the entire space, save for the office and storage area, into a single work of art made up of found objects, created environments and some really good paintings. All of it enforces his theme: the cultural losses, particularly in the world of music, brought on by the digital revolution of the past fifteen years.

It's impossible to overstate the effect that computers have had on music and, in particular, the way it's delivered. Albums, imprinted on vinyl discs and put in cardboard containers, were the lingua franca of the field, and now they're obsolete. They were first replaced by CDs and now by digital downloads. Expressing this sea change, Corrigan has piled up thousands of records on wooden pallets and has had them shrink-wrapped. Once these albums were the defining objects of various cultural forces — jazz, Broadway, rock, etc. — but now they are nothing more than trash.