

The Three B's

Terzian Galleries, February 25-March 8

ANGIE RENFRO and Elsa Sroka may never have met, but they are two of a kind. Each artist raises her relatively common subject to the level of rare beauty with energetic brushwork and elegant

simplicity. Terzian Galleries is presenting their work together this month in a show titled The Three B's, a title that highlights their shared subject matter: buildings, bees, and bovines. The Three

B's opens with an artists' reception on February 27 from 6 to 9 p.m.

"Angie Renfro's juxtaposition of industrial themes and soft, almost pastel-like background will contrast nicely with Elsa Sroka's cows and landscapes, which have that soft-focus feeling," says gallery owner Karen Terzian.

Renfro has always been drawn to "quietly strong subjects," and this sensibility has been even more prominent in her latest pieces, a dozen of which she'll show in The Three B's. "I think my life got a little quieter when I moved to Chicago [four years ago], so my work has gotten a little quieter and simpler," she says. "I think lately my work is skewing toward being minimalist. I think simplicity speaks a little louder. By isolating the subject matter, the viewer has no choice but to really examine it. It makes for a stronger connection."

Renfro has also been drawn to a new subject that happens to be another "b": bison. In BISON 2, she depicts the majestic animal in a landscape, rather than floating the portrait in negative space as she's done in many of the other early works from the series. "There's a lot of energy to it, but it's also a peaceful composition, so it's an interesting contrast. The nice thing about starting a new series is that there's a lot of exploration that happens," she says.

Renfro also exhibits work from her established series of bee portraits, including BEES 47, which displays a dynamic narrative through the bees' implied flight. "One can almost feel them buzzing about," says Terzian.

Although she's only been a professional fine artist for a few years, Sroka has quickly made bovines her signature subject. "We literally have not been able to keep Elsa Sroka's cows on the walls of the gallery," says Terzian. "The looseness of her work is what draws the viewer. It feels free."

As the series evolves, Sroka is creating expressions by which the cows in-



Elsa Sroka, Jesse, oil, 24 x 20.



Elsa Sroka, Ferdinand, oil, 24 x 20.



Angie Renfro, Bison 2, oil, 36 x 48.



Elsa Sroka, The Thaw, oil, 24 x 48.



Angie Renfro, Bees 47, oil, 36 x 36.



Angie Renfro, When the Tide Goes Out, oil, 48 x 60.

teract both with the viewer and with each other. JESSE and FERDINAND are close-up portraits that stand separately. However, when hung together, as a collector might place them, the cows appear to gaze at each other. "It's important to me to fall in love with the faces and these cows [in order] to paint them. I don't necessarily have a personal connection, like I know these

cows, but I know their expressions," she says. Sroka shows some 20 works in the exhibition, including cows as well as some landscapes.

Of the landscapes, Sroka notes, "I take reference from an experience and photos, but what ends up happening is my instinct and intuition take over. It's about color, forms, and shapes." Indeed, this approach may be yet another

commonality in this talented artistic duo. —Ashley M. Biggers

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