

A&E: Visual Arts

The *Significance* of Pandora Williams and Annette Gates

Artists collaborative Kiang Gallery show is a natural wonder

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Published 04.21.2010

http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/the_significance_of_pandra_williams_and_annette_gates/Content?oid=1513318

Rarely do two-person shows create a true dialogue between artists. Kiang Gallery owner Marilyn Kiang has curated *In Significance* featuring Athens artist Annette Gates and Atlanta's Pandora Williams, both known for their work in ceramics. The artists also share an interest in the natural world, both deriving their visual vocabularies from organic forms. Their contributions to *In Significance* complement one another and create a self-contained world that mirrors the cycles and forces that sustain the outside world.

Gates and Williams have executed a series of ceramic and mixed-media plant and animal studies for *In Significance*. Microbes, seedpods, and giant roots inspire the artworks' twists, turns and blobs. Porcelain objects dangle from the ceiling and bulge forth like foreign growths from the walls. While each object can stand alone as a static work, placed together, they suggest living, breathing entities.

For "Untitled," Gates groups hand-pinched black-and-white porcelain sculptures resembling pods and bacteria. One hundred and five cast and handcrafted sculptures in pale yellow, rose, green and blue span two walls in the installation "Cross Pollination." The seeds and other natural forms lay sprinkled across the walls as if a gentle wind had dispersed them throughout the gallery.

Gates and Williams collaborated on "Paradox." Gates' small, stemmed greenish pods poke out from the wall and extrude from a shriveled pumpkin-like organ made by Williams. The work's title may refer to the renewal of life through death, as the seedy bits – bearers of the next generation – burst forth from the rotting vegetation.

In "Radicis," Williams hybridizes the natural world and the technological one. The installation combines handmade porcelain sculptures with laminated mulberry paper, 465 LED lights, solar panels and a battery bank. Giant roots seem to creep into the gallery from outside at ceiling height. Lotus-like porcelain forms glow internally, their lights pulsing at varying speeds emulating different human breathing patterns. Although Williams' work often reveals a grotesque side of the natural world, with depictions of nests or hives made of mud and other abject materials, "Radicis" is gently meditative and hypnotic.

Individuality and interdependence simultaneously characterize the natural world. As a successful artistic collaboration, *In Significance* becomes its own ecosystem in which each artist's work has its own presence and makes its own contribution, but is given greater significance by the other's presence.

info

In Significance

Through May 1. Free. Thurs.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat., noon-5 p.m. Kiang Gallery, 1011-A Marietta St. 404-892-5477. www.kiang-gallery.com.

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