

La Crescenta artist shares her view of human connections



Srboohie Abajian, an artist from La Crescenta, with her artwork that is prepared for display in the Brand Library in Glendale on Friday, August 8, 2014. Her artwork along with artwork from three other artists, will available for viewing at a reception on August 9 from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M., and admission is free. (Tim Berger / Staff Photographer)

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AUGUST 8, 2014, 5:10 PM

The art of Srboohie Abajian is returning to Glendale this weekend with 15 new pieces exploring human companionship.

The artist, who lives in La Crescenta and creates her work out of her home studio, said she began the series with sketches last year that helped direct her series toward full expression.

An observer of life and the people around her, Abajian said she lets what she sees shape the context of her work.

"I'm just interested in how people behave and what people need and how people live their lives," she said. "I just came up with the realization and observation that... humans need good relationships with each other."

A few years ago, Abajian was watching shoppers at the Glendale Galleria and elsewhere, examining what they were holding, which led her to create monotype images of people holding various items using painted black lines on canvas.

In her latest series, titled "All Roads Lead to People," material objects are still a focus in her art, as something that can drive a wedge between people, particularly when human connection suffers in the face of materialistic ambition.

She said she's seen how a lack of communication between people can lead to separation and depression.

Opening at the Brand Library & Art Center on Saturday, her new works are also inspired by her observations of the immigrant community, to which she belongs, having moved to the United States from Armenia in 1994 when she was 35 years old.

"[In] talking with people, I observe how everyone feels and [what] I feel, too," she said. "Eating alone is not satisfactory."

But people's investment in each other is perhaps what makes them happiest, Abajian has found, and in her new series, she applied more color to the canvas than in past pieces to express how beauty and inspiration arise when people are joyful over their interactions and relationships with others.

"In human relationships, don't try to get," she said. "Try to give."

The new acrylic-on-canvas pieces feature mostly faces, hands and human figures.

In one image, Abajian contemplates what she calls "caring hands."

"The hands aren't just piled up together," she said. "They're holding each other."

At the Brand Library, her series is part of a group exhibit called "Perception and Reality." The other artists featured are Rachel Roske, Catherine Tirr, Olga Lah and Renée Azenaro.

An opening reception for the exhibit will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the library, 1601 W. Mountain St. The exhibit will be on view through Sept. 19.

For more information, call Brand Library at (818) 548-2051.

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Source: <http://www.latimes.com/tn-gnp-me-0809-la-crescenta-artist-shares-her-view-of-human-connections-20140808-story.html>