

HIGHLIGHTS by Heidi Kurpiela | A&E Editor

Eclectic exhibit offers artistic grab bag

A fall art exhibit at Allyn Gallup in the Rosemary District features work by Venice artist Richard Mueller.

Amid Chris Metz's whimsical and abstract renderings of people and Joan Moment's cosmic circles, Richard Mueller's scrappy wood collages stick out.

Metze, a Woodstock, N.Y., artist is known for his abstract expressionist landscapes of elemental acrobatic figures and Moment, a Sacramento, Calif., painter displays a penchant for de-emphasizing brushstrokes by using the bottom of painted bottles to leave imprints. The two seem to explore capricious and cosmic subject matters, while Mueller's work appears more earthly.

"His work is purposely left unfinished," says Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art Gallery owner Allyn Gallup, who admits his decision to include Mueller's work in his "Mark Making — Color and Line; Some Abstract Pictures" exhibit this fall was purely a random one. "I'm not quite sure if Richard's work would fit in any other exhibit."

Mueller, a professor for 25 years at Nova

Scotia College of Art & Design, splits his time between Venice and Nova Scotia, where The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia recently added 18 major works by Mueller to its permanent exhibit.

"Almost all art is decorative on one level," says Gallup. "I'm actually surprised by the positive reaction I've gotten from Mueller's work because it's so unorthodox. It's meditative and compelling in some respect, but it's not decorative."

The Metz and Moment canvases counter the brown strata of Mueller's recycled "canvases," a bucolic mix of found wood panels, shredded newspaper and glass. Gallup says there's much more to the artist's work than mere scratch wood in horizontal layers. Mueller's "Cadence #5" and "Cadence #6" conjure up primitive human sensibilities.

"Richard's intent is more complex than what you might think," Gallup says. "It's more narrative."

Between the painted wood panels and under fine strips of glass are pages torn



Richard Mueller's "Cadence #5."

ALLYN GALLUP CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY



Joan Moment's "Star Map" is an acrylic on canvas.

Allyn Gallup opened his gallery as Mira Mar Gallery in 1991. The gallery has a reputation for showcasing accomplished, contemporary artists, most of who already have work in public collections. Also featured in this month's exhibit, "Mark Making — Color and Line; Some Abstract Pictures," are artists Michael Kessler, Tanya Softic and Carla Poindexter. For more information, call 366-2093 or visit www.allyngallup.com. The show runs now through Sept. 29.

from Mueller's Encyclopedia Britannica collection, a reference, says Mueller, "to the cadence of language in visual pattern."

A teacher of pedagogy and cultural studies, Mueller uses the shredding of information as a metaphor for the constant analysis and reconfiguration of knowledge.

According to the artist, the point of the work is to communicate "the phenomenon

of surplus information in Western societies and the changing notions of truth and knowledge."

Though his work might lack the aesthetic of effervescent colors and form found in Metz's and Moment's paintings, Mueller's ability to commune with people and nature through layered pieces of mixed media is just as compelling.