

Art

Banana Factory, GoggleWorks swap artworks

BY RON SCHIRA
READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT

What has become a trend to sweep through post-industrial towns such as our own has been the refurbishing of either abandoned or closing factories to accommodate and

promote the arts. Inspired by well-known places such as P.S. 1 in New York City, these rough-and-tumble brick juggernauts have been popping up throughout the country in various mid-sized cities

ART REVIEW

and for the most part have been successful.

The GoggleWorks Center for the Arts in our community and the Bethlehem-based Banana Factory are similar in that respect, and in an effort to cross-pollinate and compare ideas from only an hour away, an exchange program was introduced, and artworks were swapped. The exhibit, simply titled "Banana Factory Exchange Exhibition," is on view in the GoggleWorks Cohen Gallery through March 2 and will showcase artists from the Lehigh Valley arts center. Concurrently, the Bethlehem facility will have GoggleWorks artists seen in a respectful interchange.

Surprisingly, I had seen a number of Banana Factory artists prior to this exhibit, mostly in juried shows, and was impressed by the quality and selection. It is pretty much normal fare, though, as far as subject matter is concerned; the pieces are consummately executed but no different from or better than any work produced or sold in Reading, for those keeping score.

And as usual it always comes down to the individual artist and his personal

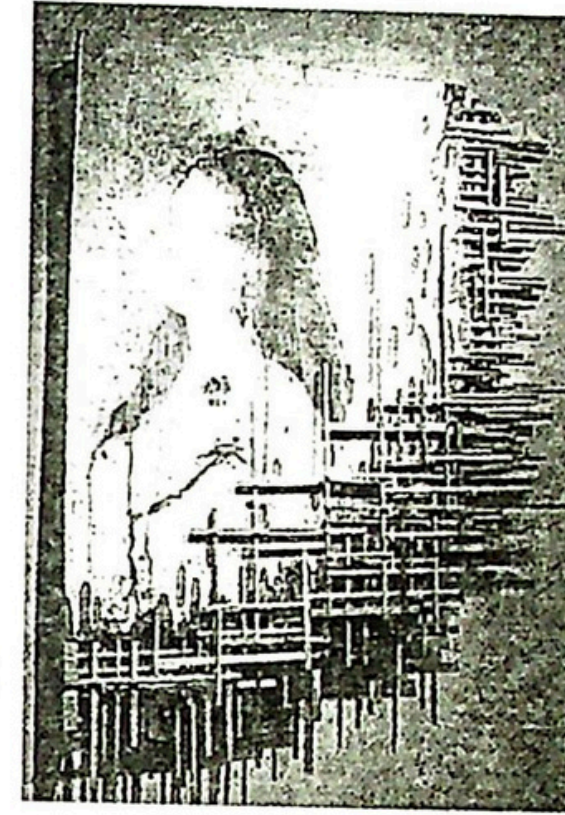
If you go

The GoggleWorks is at 201 Washington St. Call 610-374-4600 or visit www.goggleworks.org for hours and information.

vision. Heather Sincavage, for instance, displays a construction of gridded balsa strips amid a washy image of a faceless and seemingly bloodstained woman. The piece, titled "Accumulated Meditation," although deceptively morose, was alternately intriguing as a metaphorical, near archetypal object of self-esteem and abuse.

Berrisford Boothe's "Between Sight and Touch," at 5 feet across, appears altarlike in its granite-blue, iridescent texture and nonobjective composition of concentric rings painted on a shaped canvas. I was reminded of old theaters and art-nouveau design, something akin to looking upward in a rotunda except presented as an abstraction.

Occupying the opposite side of the spacious Cohen Gallery were works by GoggleWorks artists Cynthia Thomasset, Dan Gorman and others. Susan Biebuyck's toothy acrylic



COURTESY OF RON SCHIRA

"Accumulated Meditation," a construction piece by Heather Sincavage.

of a smiling woman with sunglasses, "Channeling Alice: Edie," caught my attention even before I fully entered the room, and Bethany Krull's splendid porcelain of a horseshoe crab occupied its space with contemplative ease.

If I were to make one observation on the differences between the two centers, it would be that metaphor and narrative are significant for more than a few of the Banana Factory works while humor and aesthetics find expression here: two grassroots arts organizations, an hour apart, working to uphold the dream of making our areas a destination for art.

In galleries

Reading Eagle art correspondent Ron Schira's picks for must-see local exhibitions this week:

1. "Steampunk," Freyberger Gallery, Penn State Berks, through Feb. 28
2. Thornton Dial, Outsider Folk Art Gallery, through Feb. 28
3. Nicholas Hill, New Arts Program, through March 5
4. Banana Factory Exchange, GoggleWorks Cohen Gallery, through March 27
5. "Trio: Balance, Transform and Strata," Freedman Gallery, through March 11
6. "Success From the Past," GoggleWorks Schmidt Gallery, through Feb. 28
7. "War Is Fun," Sharadin Art Gallery, Kutztown University, through March 4
8. Fairgrounds Square Mural, public-art project, Peter Jon Snyder
9. "Jody Rex Retrospective," Art Plus Cooperative, through Feb. 27
10. Kathryn Pannepacker, something's looming, through Feb. 26

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WEEU 830 presents

GERALD VEASLEY'S JAZZ BASE

at the Crowne Plaza Reading

Thursday, Feb. 17 + 7:00 p.m.
Skip Moyer & Co-Op Bop

featuring Allen Gaumer, trumpet; Tom Kozick, guitar; Gary Rissmiller, drums; Nelson Hill, sax; Skip Moyer, bass

Paul "Skip" Moyer is no stranger to the Jazz Base.

The popular bassist has performed at the club with a variety of groups over the last six years. And now Moyer will be collaborating with members of his "favorite" musical ensemble – the Lehigh Valley-based Co-Op Bop.

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Music charge: \$10

Tickets in advance or at door: \$20*

*For tickets: CD Exchange, 360 E. Wyomissing Ave., Mohnton, PA 610-777-2310

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