

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

GUARDIAN

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'Pastiche, an Exhibition of Cacophony'

Through July 31, Canvas Gallery

IF ART VENUES scored points for user-friendliness, the Canvas Gallery would win, hands down. Not only is it open every day from early morning until at least midnight, but it also offers good food and drink and plenty of seating. Formerly affiliated with Hang Gallery, the Canvas recently split off into its own entity and launched a new art program. "Pastiche, an Exhibition of Cacophony" features an eclectic mix of paintings by seven artists, and Kathryn St. Clair's abstract canvases, showing ghostly forms floating and hovering in colorful layers, are among the highlights. Some of her works suggest experimental geometry; others resemble hallucinatory life forms in deep caves or outer space. Each one assumes its own logic and mood, but they all possess an element of natural organic-ness, despite St. Clair's penchant for brilliant, saturated pinks and reds. Toru Sugita, in contrast, works exclusively in black and white. He contributes etchings and paintings of architectural spaces to this show; the etchings are interesting but very precise and specific, whereas the paintings teeter much more dynamically between literalism and abstraction. Sugita's *Neighbor's Deck* shows a view of a small space bounded by a railing, which casts a striped shadow on the floor. The thrill of the work has nothing to do with voyeurism, but rather with the precariousness of the angle at which we are looking down and across. Painted with an extreme economy of means, a deck chair and bicycle slip in and out of focus, almost dissolving into the painting's play of light and shadow. Beyond the deck's perimeter, the background plunges into an inchoate black-and-white morass, creating the impression that he has struggled to stake out and define this tiny piece of architectural space in an otherwise uneasy and chaotic universe.

-Lindsey Westbrook (Art Critic)