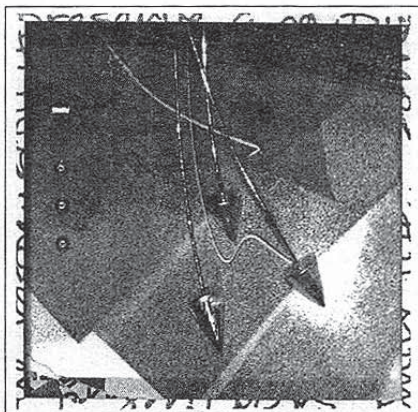


ART

KATHRYN E. GOODSON
art@c-ville.com

The art of accessorizing



"Out of the Blue No. 1, mixed media" by Loes van Riel

Eleven years spent in jewelry surface design and papermaking made a perfect platform for Loes van Riel's leap into mixed-media collage. That becomes clear in her latest exhibit, "Jewelry for the Walls," in which her collages feature luminous gold, wires, spacer-beads, crystals and other little baubles one might typically associate with jewelry as art. And what better locale for such a show than jewelry shop-cum-gallery Angelo on the Downtown Mall.

The collages, small and intimate yet packed with tiny jewels, seem instantly fragile due to their petite size (3 1/2" x 3 1/2" on average). She's framed each piece to resemble a window; the surface of the artwork is inset an inch from the outer mat. On the 1/4" of white double matting, van Riel has written whole sentences in cursive and literally sliced them in half. The illegible writing on the mat adds mystery.

"Jewelry for the Walls" is not your typical paint, paper and something-or-other glued-on-top collage show. In one piece, "Out of the Blue No. 1," van Riel adorns delicate blue paper with layers of silver, 23k gold leaf and a finishing touch of light crystals. Spacer-beads line the left-hand side like gold buttons down the front of a shirt. Adding Mizuhiki (fine Japanese gift-wrap) to the miniature work, she's then draped a piece of black netting (heavy like the screen from a door) across the top like a valance. The placement of the materials with the careful balancing of heavy and light elements only further demonstrates that method is the key to collage. The days of slapping various unrelated objects onto a board and calling it art are over.

Indeed, collage is so common these days one must differentiate pieces to generate attention. While it's obvious van Riel adores bright reds and blues (all the pieces are backed with one or the other), the two pieces in the current show that are the most interesting are, in fact, not in color at all.

Van Riel has taken her own black and white photographs of ornamental cabbages piled into groups, blown them up and used them as sheets in her collages titled "Untitled with Golf Leaf." While they're larger in size and not as eye-catching as electric red, the two "Untitled" pieces are subtle, calmer than the other pieces. The only hint of color is a streak of gold leaf binding them together.

You might want to hurry to see van Riel's latest series at Angelo, though. Before she had even finished hanging the show, three pieces had already sold. ©

"Jewelry for the Walls," an exhibit of mixed-media collages by Loes van Riel, hangs at Angelo through April 30. Angelo is located at 220 E. Main St. on the Downtown Mall; hours are Monday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm. Call 971-9256.