

Arts Review

Three very different takes on portraiture provide three reasons to see this exhibit

BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., JAN. 20, 2012

'True Story'

grayDUCK Gallery, 608-C W. Monroe, 826-5334

www.grayduckgallery.com

Through Feb. 19

There's a show of artwork by three different people at grayDUCK Gallery, and it's a show that will happily improve your day if you see it. There are three reasons why, and those reasons' names are Paul Beck, Allen Brewer, and Pat Snow.

Paul Beck offers an array of deft and snarky portraits, images that might be created by a minimalist political cartoonist working in house paint and varnish, as well as a series of paintings that make you smile and think, "Of course this guy did animated music videos for Radiohead and David Byrne – yeah, that makes perfect sense."

Pat Snow, who studied with the Rev. Howard Finster, also brings his portraiture to the grayDUCK walls, along with narrative pieces reminiscent of what Raymond Pettibon might have conjured in a year in which he'd resolved to use more bright colors than even the Pantone Matching System could bear.

The far gallery wall holding 99 watercolor portraits of Snow's friends arranged in a perfect grid is stunning; individually and as a group, these faces are faces you'd want to be at a party with right before you die.

Allen Brewer is working a technique where he draws or paints portraits while not looking at the surface he's painting or drawing on. If the man had no talent or skill to begin with, that would probably look like shit – even if somewhat interesting shit. But with Brewer's stupefying level of draftsmanship, the result is gorgeous and unsettling, generating the sort of subject-intensifying effects that the rest of us would have to invent complicated software to try to do on purpose. This exhibition is called "True Story," and what else is true is that there are actually four reasons you should see this show. The fourth reason is Jill Schroeder, the gallery's owner and curator, who again proves that she knows how to fill a gallery with worthwhile, intriguing yet accessible art.



I roll over into the dark and I am gone by Pat Snow