

Los Angeles Times

Review: Margo Wolowiec's Modern Weavings Based on Tradition and Trash

Written by Leah Ollman

May 9, 2014, 6:05 PM



"You'll Be Missed Too," a weaving by Margo Wolowiec at Anat Ebgi. (Michael Underwood / underwoodpix.com)

No unicorns in walled gardens in this show of tapestries.

San Francisco-based Margo Wolowiec draws her imagery from social media channels -- Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr -- and her inspiration from Navajo rugs and Bauhaus weavers. Her five large (81-by-57-inch) and two smaller weavings at Anat Ebgi are at once beautifully indeterminate and sensually satisfying.

Wolowiec works in a soft and lush palette of rose, jade, gold and persimmon, offset by charcoal and umber. She hand-dyes her thread at the loom as she weaves, a painterly process yielding painterly nuance. Movement within the fields recalls television-screen static in its blur and thrum.

Wolowiec is not blindly faithful to either her traditional or contemporary sources. Rhythms begin but are interrupted. Symmetry stays loose. Diamond patterns and stripes appear, but more as nervous fragments than resolved order. The digitally-based images, too, surface mostly as suggestion. Only occasionally are they legible -- a posed nude here, a tattooed arm there.

However durable the surface in which they are embedded, the imagery feels transient, unstable.

This disjunction generates an appealing friction. So, too, does the collision of visual clutter and time-honored method. Wolowiec processes the ephemeral and expendable digital rush with slow, manual diligence. At every level, a wonderful unlikeliness prevails.