

# Ierardi's colors leave bright impressions

Cahoon presents her "landscapes of the imagination"

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Anne Ierardi is an enthusiastic painter of color and light, and her exhibit in the Little Gallery at the Cahoon Museum of American Art that runs through Dec. 30 feels more like a delightful romp through her memory and imagination than a traditional museum art show. That isn't to say the paintings aren't accomplished, for they are quite accomplished. There is just so much energy and spirit in these works that the space seems a bit small and staid. And really, that is half the fun, to find this explosion of color and life in the midst of a quiet museum on a dark and gloomy day. These colorful paintings just totally liven up the space and the images stay with you long after you've driven away.

The paintings in this exhibit were done in response to Ierardi's travels to Spain, Portugal, Umbria, Sicily and California over the last six years, and it is no surprise that she chose warm, sunny places that are a natural fit with her favored warm and

sunny palette.

In her artist statement, Ierardi declares that her "signature flows from the connection between my inner life and the world around me" and that all of her paintings are "landscapes of the imagination" that she hopes encourage viewers to use their own imagination as they see the work. It would be hard not to enter into her imagination when spending time with these paintings, for they exude imaginative expression in every stroke and color choice.

Over the years Ierardi has studied with artists Sal Del Deo, Cynthia Packard, Selina Trieff and John Grillo and one can see traces of the influences of each throughout her work. The way all those influences converge and merge in her work, however, is truly her own. Ierardi's use of complementary colors, broad brush strokes and confident manipulation of paint serves her well through all these works and in some ways is the link that ties them all together.

"San Francisco" depicts a solid stone mission painted in tones of yellow and gold that first gives the impression of cheerfulness and lightness. Look further, however, and one sees that solidity and solemnity are also themes here. In "Limone," one finds bright yellow, ripe lemons hanging



MARY RICHMOND PHOTOS

"Locanda Del Gallo," by Anne Ierardi

from sinewy branches but below them the ground appears to burst into flames that seem to reach up to meet them. Whether these are bright red flowers or actual flames is hard to tell, but I'm not sure it even matters. The painting is evocative either way.

"China Sisters" depicts two young girls with colorful umbrellas. The shapes are simple and solid, allowing the complements of red and green to do their visual work of pulling the composition together. "Pueblo" is a quieter piece, full of warm pink and peach tones against deep, cool greens. "Chinatown" once again uses reds and greens in strong and unexpected ways to show a bright night scene, giving the impression that the night itself is on fire.

After one has enjoyed all the energy and expressiveness, one turns to find some rest and respite in a piece called "At Home." Ierardi



"San Francisco," by Anne Ierardi

must have smiled as she painted this piece and sat back to enjoy it. Or maybe she lay back in the real hammock and took a little nap, for this sweet painting depicts an inviting white hammock hung in a sea of colorful flowers beneath an equally sublime and colorful sky. It is the perfect piece to end the viewer's journey through these delightful paintings.

Ierardi's paintings invite the viewer to join her on her journeys, the real ones and

the imagined ones, and in her well-crafted presentation she mixes it all up just enough that you may never know which element is which. And that works just fine. These are joyful paintings, grounded in an earthy sense of wonder and a desire to mark it all down in a meaningful way. We don't have to know everything about them to be caught up in their energy and creative spirit.

Anne Ierardi will give a talk at the museum in Cotuit at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 6.



Works by Anne Ierardi at the Cahoon Museum of American Art in Cotuit.