

Rants & Raves –

A Review of Maysey Craddock's "Forest for the Trees" at David Lusk Gallery

By Sarah Knowles

The opening night of Maysey Craddock's show *Forest for the Trees* at David Lusk Gallery was filled, nearly to the brim, with life and conversation amidst Craddock's paintings—this was no surprise, as there is much excitement in this show. Craddock utilizes found brown paper bags as the surface for her relatively large gauche paintings; though they do vary in size, each painting uniquely captures her methodical, intricate and considered use of line, color, and layers. The surface's origin—found, brown paper bags—is evident and embraced, with the subtle texture created by the bags' wrinkles, as well as the assortment of stamped texts and graphics that show through the paint. Though she certainly does not attempt to hide the character of the bags, she does manipulate them by sewing them together in a quilt-like manner, to form her surface.

Craddock works with images that many may be quick to overlook or brush aside, as many would do a brown paper grocery bag—decaying, rundown, desolate spaces that generally emit a feeling of loss or abandonment, she sees as "rich, charged, vibrating places," as explained in her artist statement. In fact, her studio in the Medicine Factory was once among that kind of space and is surrounded by traces and elements of it. Her paintings, then, strive to invite the viewer to see these images through a new lens: as vibrant landscapes of our ever-changing surroundings that demand attention.

The simultaneously delicate and intertwining lines become, at times, abstract piles, and at other points, labyrinthine, guiding the eye in infinite routes throughout each painting and possibly beyond the boundaries of the frames of each cropped landscape. More neutral earth tones allow for bold pops of bright blues and reds, creating a graphic and a pattern-like effect, in moments. While her paintings as a whole can perhaps be determined by a similar, seamless method of execution, each differs greatly from the

next, just as no two abandoned, forgotten, and deteriorating buildings are alike. Through her paintings, Craddock invents her own world in which these typically dismal landscapes can live and be reinvented as striking and stimulating.

Maysey Craddock's show runs until December 22, so be sure to stop by and see her work for yourself! David Lusk Gallery is located in the Laurelwood shopping center. You can find out more about Maycey and her work on her website: mayseycraddock.com