

transliterate their forms into sculpture, employing not only glass but two materials new to her practice, ceramic and bronze.

Her casting of the original garments was so precise that the imprints of individual threads are discernible in finished works. Installed in separate wings of the gallery—one wing showcasing glass works, the other ceramic and bronze pieces—the sculptures were lit for dramatic effect, the glass forms rising from gray pedestals like floating islands of captured light. As in the past, the artist subdivided the glass pieces into two or



Karen LaMonte, "Floating World," 2011, bronze, ceramic, and glass, installation view. Imago Galleries.

three sections, the hard lines of separation imparting an excavated appearance that heightens their iconic quality. The unseen figures wearing kimonos in works such as *Chado* (2010) and *Ojigi—Bowling* (2010) were depicted kneeling or mid-bow, lending a sense of movement and inferred personality. These gestures and the motions they connoted, along with the luxuriant puddling of diaphanous "fabric," induce an uncanny disconnect between the hardness of the medium and the softness of the material they portrayed.

The variety of chromatic and surface treatments in the ceramic examples—glazes, crackles, terra-cotta and terra-sigillata finishes, and gold leaf in *Geisha* (2010) and *Maiko* (2010)—affords a sensuality of surface that proved gripping and invigorating. That a sartorial and cultural form embodying such delicacy and

gentility could be portrayed in such an unexpectedly monumental fashion attests to the artist's sensitive melding of Eastern and Western sensibilities.

—Richard Speer

Raimonds Staprans

Hackett Mill
San Francisco

After one of his annual visits to his native Latvia, the painter Raimonds Staprans returned to California and

wrote about the shocking intensity of the West Coast sunlight and deepness of the colors of the ocean, earth, and fog. The artist, now 85, paints from memory. Not surprisingly, those memories are saturated with color and blindingly lit.

Reduced to simple planar forms, the California landscape and the kitchen table alike are drenched in vibrant hues: cadmium orange, brilliant ultramarine.

Comparisons to fellow Bay Area painters Richard Diebenkorn and Wayne Thiebaud invariably arise. In many of the canvases on view in this show of recent landscapes and still lifes, Staprans painted a tipped plane parallel to the



Raimonds Staprans, *Half Moon Bay*, 2011, oil on canvas, 36" x 48". Hackett Mill.

picture's surface, evocative of the compositions of both of those painters. *Half Moon Bay* (2011) and *Road to Redondo Shores* (2010) depict piers and jetties that seem to slide toward the bottom of the picture. In *Another Sunshine Table with Leftover Jar* (2011), the horizon line grazes the top of the image. In *Marin 8* (2010) and several other works, the painter's process is revealed through pieces of tape he has used to divide the canvas into proportional areas and then covered with saturated pigment. These taped bits read like gestural inflections, as do the occasional drips and splatters that punctuate and relieve the smooth oil surfaces.

Staprans is also a playwright, and one might consider his sparse still lifes to be metaphors for actors on a stage. The pieces of fruit in *Still Life with Some Unneeded Painted-Out Objects* (2011) loosely suggest four characters facing an audience. The objects are gathered at the lip of a gray tabletop, their shadows and backs to the viewer. Three radial lines of tape, like spotlights, direct the eye toward center stage. The forms are generalized, almost mannered, as if they were placeholders lined up for their final bows.

Thiebaud's cityscapes and Diebenkorn's tabletops have undoubtedly influenced Staprans's work. But the emotional starkness, the depopulated piers and barns, and the tabletop dramas in the cadmium heat and light are all his own. Despite the intense color, they are, ironically, closer in spirit to the works of Edward Hopper.

—Lea Feinstein

'18th-Century French Prints'

R. S. Johnson Fine Art
Chicago

This top-notch selection of 26 prints spotlighted the flair of the Rococo in prerevolutionary France, as well as a variety of techniques. As one might expect, the lush gardens, promenades, elegant balls, and luxurious updos of the era dominated.

On view were works by such masters as Louis-Marin Bonnet, Nicolas de Lauenay, Antoine-Jean Duclos, Etienne Fessard, and Jean-Honoré Fragonard, whose *Le Petit Parc* (ca. 1763)—depicting an overgrown Italian garden—was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art this