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Lorraine Bubar
Peak Experience: Reminders of Beauty

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by Jody Zellen



Lorraine Bubar gravitates towards nature, marvels at its wonders and is able to translate the experience of the natural world into artworks made from cut paper. On view in her exhibition at Los Angeles Art Association's Gallery 825 are pieces created during casual visits or after extended stays in U.S. National Parks as an artist-in-residence. Each park, be it Denali N.P. in Alaska, Zion N.P. in Utah, Petrified Forest N.P. in Arizona or Lassen Volcanic N.P. in California, has a unique terrain which Bubar represents exquisitely through layered cut paper in varying colors, textures and transparencies.

Bubar talks about her interest in paper-cutting both historically and culturally, as well as from the perspective of craft. On her website she states, "*Creating intricate lacework out of colored papers sourced from countries where I have traveled, has connected me to the heritage of papercutting that exists in so many diverse cultures, from Eastern Europe (my background) to Japan, China, and Mexico.*" She continues, "*My paper-cuts reflect the hierarchy of nature and the intricate layers of life. I reveal bold color contrasts and lacy textural patterns reflecting the contrast between the fragility and strength found in paper itself.*"

It is impossible not to appreciate the intricacy of the handwork that goes into Bubar's creations. *Being in Butterflies* is at first glance an image of a backpacker trekking toward a distant peak. It is a clear day with a bright blue sky. The hiker, centered in the composition, appears unphased by the melange of orange butterflies framing the composition. A second figure (the artist) subtly mirrored on both sides of the image, delights in the array of fluttering orange insects.

Doubling or mirroring is a technique Bubar uses in many of her pieces. In *Half Dome* for example, the iconic Yosemite peak is centered within a shape made from the mirroring of the branches of a tree. Here, Bubar carefully excises flowers, birds and grazing deer from a large piece of blue paper that is then backed with different shades of green for grass, blue for sky, gray for mountains and yellow, pink and white for the flowers. In the image, everything but Half Dome is perfectly mirrored along the vertical axis creating a receding vantage point somewhere

behind the mountain.

Desert Dawn is a work about the desert created in earth tones of pinks and greens. The composition rises from the ground and includes striations of butterflies, flowers, tortoises and rabbits, cacti, trees and giant rock forms against a light purple sky dotted with a circular full moon. Again, the composition is divided in half with the details repeated across the vertical axis. The mirroring in *Walking on Water a.m.* only occurs at the bottom of the work, where Bubar depicts roots and flowers. Above this abstracted ground are grazing deer and an expansive vista with three hikers heading across the plain toward snow covered mountains. In the sky amongst billowing clouds are two large birds.

Bubar's works are composites created from memories of her time in the landscape. Rather than paint or draw these places, she painstakingly creates an outline by cutting small pieces out of large sheets, then filling the voids with different types and colors of paper. The result is a quasi-stained glass window effect made from the nuances of these varied sources. Each image is a marvel to behold and in a year of not traveling, these works are reminders of the beauty and positive effects of experiencing, and escaping to nature.

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