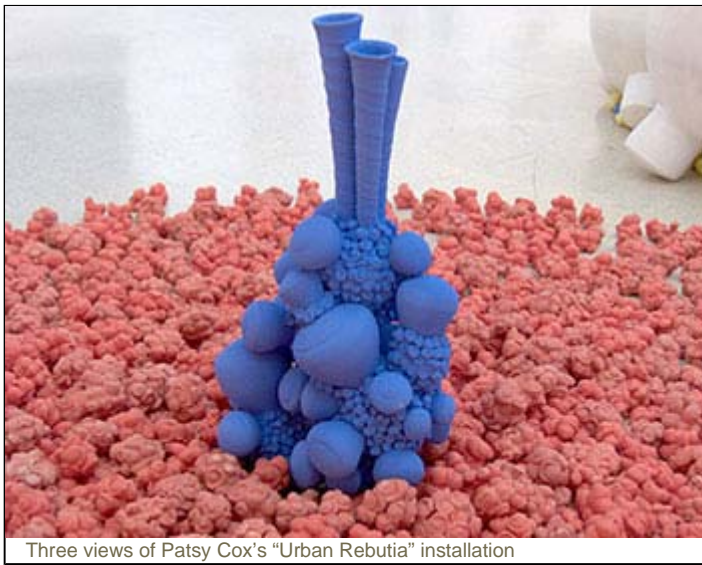


[**coverstory**]

Eye candy

'Pattern Play' gives us sweet colors and designs to ogle at the Brand Library Art Galleries

By Julie Riggott



Three views of Patsy Cox's "Urban Rebutia" installation

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'Pattern Play' gives us sweet colors and designs to ogle at the Brand Library Art Galleries

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on't worry about abstract expressionism, pointillism or any other "isms." You don't need a background in art history to enjoy the latest exhibit at the Brand Library Art Galleries in Glendale.

"Pattern Play" features the work of Patsy Cox, Yuriko Etue, Melanie Rothschild and Jerrin Wagstaff, artists who play with color and pattern in ceramic, paint and other media. The exhibit opens Saturday and runs through Sept. 28.

"The works are meaningful but also visually appealing. They're fun to look at, colorful and quirky," says Cathy Billings, art librarian and gallery manager. "I think it's going to be a lot of fun."

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Part of the funa is the unexpected way the artists use traditional media. Cox uses thousands of individually formed, painted and glazed pieces of clay for "Urban Rebutia." From a distance, the conglomeration of ceramics forms a large, striking pattern in bold primary colors that give it an almost cartoon-like quality. Up close, the individual red, yellow and blue pieces take on a life of their own. Texture and detail give them an organic look reminiscent of molecules or seedpods, which is fitting since the artist found inspiration in rebutia, a type of cactus.

Cox hopes these two perspectives give the viewer the impression of zooming in on a city in a plane. "As you get closer," she says, "you realize everything's moving."

Originally an 8-foot installation of 4,000 of these pieces, "Urban Rebutia" has grown. The Silver Lake artist, who teaches at California State University Northridge, added 2,000 or 3,000 more to take advantage of the huge exhibition space at the Brand Library Art Galleries.

"We have 100 square feet to play and explore in," says Billings of the galleries. "To see this giant installation will be a unique opportunity."

Rothschild also makes creative use of the large space with a piece that promises to grab your attention. In the 5-foot-by-6-foot "Paint and Air," immense "drips" of paint become a sculpture hanging from aluminum bars. This work in some ways evolved from the series of elaborately decorative and appealing "drip" paintings also on display. In one of those intricate pieces, two horizontal swaths of pink paint, just starting to ooze and drip on a textured yellow background, provide a border for a decorative strip with countless colors and abstract shapes.

This kind of work is something of a departure for Rothschild. The Topanga Canyon artist has made a living for the past 20 years from functional art, first from textiles and later from crafting and selling frames and boxes in striking patterns.

Most recently, she licensed a design to Target for wall art. Talk about lack of pretension: "At Target," she says, "you have ironing boards and then you have wall art."

Rothschild feels fortunate that she has no formal art training. In a class she took recently, the instructor focused on rules about what not to do. "I'm glad I didn't take that class 20 years ago," she says.

"There seems to be a connection between being creative and breaking the rules," she adds. "I use materials in ways you're not supposed to use them."

The third female artist in the exhibit also plays with colorful, repetitious designs. In her etchings with oil paint, Etue focuses on spirals, a shape she says she adopted from nature.

"I'm fascinated by spirals because of the movement — in and out — always movement," she explains.

The lotus flowers prominent in Echo Park near her Silver Lake home also blooms in her collages, which feature [photos](#) she has taken, printed, cut out and applied to canvas board and then embellished with paint.

"The ultimate goal of my work is to support people, to feel happiness and joy with my art," Etue says on her Web site. You may recognize her work from public murals. Etue and her husband started the Silver Lakers, a group dedicated to creating public art to beautify schools and other city structures.

Wagstaff's paintings are significantly more subdued. The abstract patterns in his art were inspired by something as mundane as the

[nitelife]

Club Listings

Magical musical mysticism at Coffee Gallery

A little New Orleans at the Levitt

[onfilm]

Concept snatchers

'The Invasion' is a soulless
clone of its predecessors

Showtimes

August 24 – 30 Note: Times
are p.m. and daily, unless
otherwise indicated. All times
subject to change without
notice.

[calendar]

[diningout]

Dining Directory

Kozy Korner close-up

A dinky darling found in
Glendale

scenery observed during freeway commutes. The Long Beach artist, who teaches at Cerritos College and Riverside Community College, spends a lot of time on the road and is drawn to "areas that are off-limits to people" such as industrial and military complexes and construction zones.

"They are visually interesting, and I can't go into them and paint," says Wagstaff, who explains he relies on memory for his small-scale (6-by-8-inch to 16-by-20-inch) paintings. "I focus on details that become abstract, little sections or pockets of visual information."

The result is linear, rectangular or pixel shapes in muted, "sometimes ugly" oranges, browns or other mostly neutral colors, reflecting the "industrial Southern California architecture, mass production and bland stucco."

Combined, the work of these four artists is a romp through color and design that is there to enjoy rather than ponder, though you may do that too.

"Our mission is to give people a professional gallery experience for free," Billings says, "It's not intimidating. Just quality work in a good setting." ●

"Pattern Play: Patsy Cox, Yuriko Etue, Melanie Rothschild & Jerrin Wagstaff" runs through Sept. 28 at the Brand Library Art Galleries, 1601 W. Mountain St., Glendale.

Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Admission is free.

For more information, call (818) 548-2051, or visit www.brandlibrary.org/brand_galleries.asp .

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