

The Portals of Perception Through the White Rabbit's Eye's

"If the doors to perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is – infinite."

William Blake

Viewing Dixie Friend Gay's new works I feel as though I have fallen through Alice's tunnel and inhabited the White Rabbit's body. I truly think I know what Grace Slick was trying to tell me all those years ago about one pill making me larger and one pill making me small and the doormouse saying "Feed your Head, Feed your Head."

Dixie's new works play forward from her exhibition of new paintings in 2004 appropriately titled "Velocity." She has chosen to include one work from that series *Bayou Fall*, which, appropriately for me, feels very much like what Alice and the White Rabbit must have experienced running to the rabbit-hole. Dixie has managed to capture a sense of movement by the clever manipulation of a digital photograph on her computer and then hyped up the color a notch so that reality and memory merge into a universally shared experience. She paints with an urgency and energy that implies speed – or at least rapid motion.

That whole concept is then somehow combined with the notion of time in the bravura painting of 2006, *Cadence* (72" x 108"), which is half again as long as *Bayou Fall*. Through a combination of light, shadow and reflection and the magical introduction of water that changes from white to pale blue to indigo to near violet and back to blue she transports us through space and also through time. By flanking that painting on canvas with a series of mixed-media works on wood panel which range from microcosmic plant forms to negative images of branches, she truly begins to open her little pharmacy and invite us to alter our realities and perceptions. The scale of these works is also new to Dixie. They are each 72" x 24" x 3", or roughly the amount of space she occupies in the Universe.

Dixie rounds out her exhibition with a series of smaller mixed-media works on panel that once again explore a microcosmic world that plays with color and scale and defies identification. By presenting forms in black and white she toys with us and blurs the boundaries of plant and insect. By playing with color and drawing on her computer reality and artistry are merged. And she has created a marvelous new artform. By printing the images from her computer onto Japanese gampi paper – the thinnest paper in the world – mounting that on wood panel that has been coated with paints infused with mica and then varnishing that surface these works radiate with an incandescent iridescent light like none other I have seen. One wants to dive in and swim around in this otherworldly space.

Dixie's practice of self-hypnosis and meditation and desire to experience altered states of conscience have taken her art to a new place – a place not unlike that William Blake describes where the doors (portals) of perception have been

cleansed and we are now allowed to explore the infinite. Or as Grace sings,
“When logic and proportion have fallen sloppy dead, Go ask Alice and Feed your
Head.”

Clint Willour