

Undressed and Unreal: Exploring Two Exhibits

ROB GOLDMAN is a magazine photographer by trade and it shows in his most recent work of female nudes in “Sogni d’oro” at the Stepping Stone Gallery in Huntington.

Goldman, a partner in the cooperative gallery for contemporary photography, explains that the black and white, silver gelatin prints are the result of a “gift I gave myself of 10 days in Tuscany” with a voluptuous blond model. Looking at a naked model caught in attitudes of studied distraction, it’s difficult to separate the photographer from his pictures. Are these images the documents of an artistic journey, or the campaign for a new designer fragrance?

Goldman’s sepia-toned prints are indisputably attractive. With their images of the female nude wreathed by grapevines or sunning on a rock, the photographs have a timeless, almost classical quality. In the most striking images, Goldman allows the play of light and shadow to create its own geometry. His view of the Tuscan landscape, seen through a railing whose long shadows criss-cross those of a chair, takes an exploratory step forward, where most of the other photographs lag behind in all-too-familiar territory.

While there’s not much of Tuscany evident in Rob Goldman’s Tuscan photographs, the history and texture of Russian artistic traditions are very much present in “A Stroll in Clouds,” a group show of paintings by Russian artists at the Inter Art Gallery in Huntington. Surrealism informs much of the work on view, though the influence of such diverse traditions as puppetry and religious iconography is

equally strong. It seems all the more remarkable that, with a few exceptions, the paintings, date to the last two or three years: Many might have been lifted from a 1920s exhibition of avant-garde art. Yet the work of these six artists also respond to present-day forms and technology.



“Lisa, Tuscany, Italy” by Rob Goldman is part of the “Sogni d’oro” exhibit, at Huntington’s Stepping Stone Gallery through July 15.

Dmitry Kravtsov’s fisherman and brawling peasants are derived as much from cartoons as Marc Chagall, and Sofia Baturina’s chic ladies would be equally at home in a rock video or beside one of Picasso’s harlequins. Vovva Morozov’s still-lifes look as though they have been pixilated on a computer screen, though the influence of Dali in his image of eggs in a glass splintered by nails is unmistakable. Dali’s arid landscapes loom large in the surrealist fairy tales created by Dmitry Yakovin, suggesting Alice in Wonderland displaced to the distant future.

But the wittiest and most original work comes from Dmitry Pahomov often incorporates three-dimensional elements into his paintings. In the case of two men engaged in a silent struggle over a pumpkin, the two heads emerging from the canvas make a disquieting and hilarious impression.

Ivanov’s human figures are also burdened with exceptionally large heads. Their solidity and fixed expressions imply masked responses: a woman confronting a husband when he returns home late or a third person interrupting a game of checkers between two friends. Though comical on the surface, Ivanov’s treatment of such everyday situations renders them ambiguous.