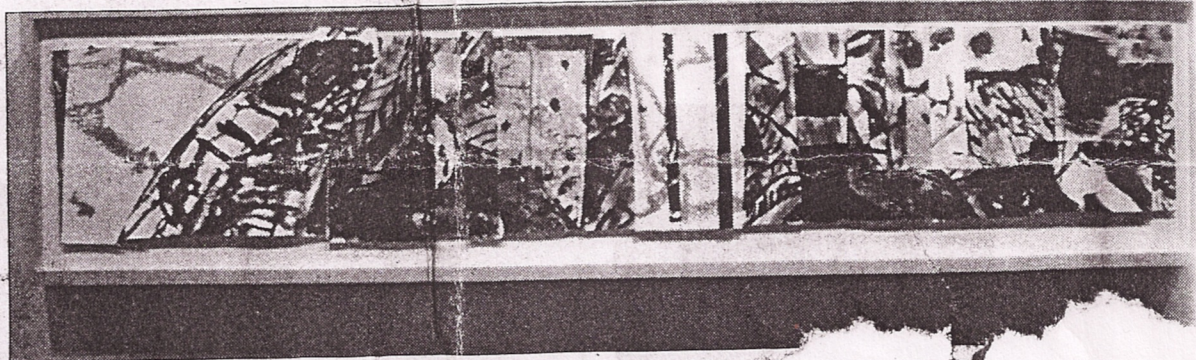


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In works like "Collaged Landscape Scroll," Flora Natapoff assembles shifting piles of shadow, light, and line in idiosyncratic grids, creating a sense of constant movement.



Moving collages; silent stre

By Cate McQuaid
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Barbara Krakow has in her inventory a Flora Natapoff collage of Harvard Square that dates back to the '80s. It's big, loose, and painterly, with great blocks of color tumbling into one another. From the squares of blue and green in the foreground to the large, encircled T marking the subway stop in the rear, the collage bustles and encompasses the viewer.

Galleries

Natapoff has since married, settled in London, and developed multiple sclerosis, which has limited her movement and eyesight. Over the years, the artist has continued to engulf her viewer, by covering entire walls and rounding corners with smaller works. That is, until now. The necessity of her physical condition (she can see well with only one eye and work with only one hand) has limited Natapoff's scale.

In her new show at the Krakow Gallery, Natapoff makes up for what she has lost in size with density. Her collaged landscapes and cityscapes layer one drawn or painted scrap over another so that often only edges show through. She assembles these shifting piles of shadow, light, and line in idiosyncratic grids, creating a sense of constant movement both across the picture plane and into it. The movement inward feels more like a dance through time than space, perhaps because so many of the layers are hidden save for their edges. Each pile (such an ugly word for so graceful a construction!) reads like all that has led up to now, topped off by the glorious, fleeting present. Collaged, many of these have a symphonic quality.

"In a Dark Wood" is topped with horizontal bands of black paint brushed over rugged white paper, rectangles pasted one over another like a swelling wave, creating a kind of canopy of leaf and sky. Three columns run beneath. Those on either side are made up of three squares, swarming with the blues and brick reds of Natapoff's muted palette. The center column protrudes out at us, layers of squares, rectangles, and torn lengths

~~"Caribbean Collage," oil on canvas, by Marilene Phipps.~~

of paper in angry black on white. Together, these three columns create a heaving, struggling movement.

So much happens in each collage. Like the earlier works, they sweep, containing many views and vistas, only in a much smaller space. Natapoff's work is dense, tough-minded, even defiant in its embrace of beauty. It will not let go. Nor will she.

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