

Revealing landscapes and the poetry of motion



Above: An untitled mixed media collage by Flora Natapoff at Barbara Krakow Gallery

A DVD of the 1999 Judith Wechsler documentary "Flora Natapoff" shows the artist drawing a landscape. She rides in a car through the English countryside, sketching the undulating hills as they fly by. The film is on view at Barbara Krakow Gallery alongside "Abstracts and Brief Chronicles," an engaging exhibit of Natapoff's expressionist collages.

Much of Natapoff's work has a similar sense of endless unfurling. It's a serial depiction of her experience of the land. Sometimes she creates that sense of succession in several pages of an artist's book. Sometimes it is in layers of a single collage. Either way, she captures both the depth and expansiveness of a given place, and a given moment in her imagination.

Natapoff will be familiar to some Boston art lovers; she lived here for several years in the 1970s and 1980s, before moving to London, and has

-exhibited with Krakow for 30 years. She suffers from multiple sclerosis, which has reined her in and perhaps made her gestures less generous. Looking at her work is an intimate experience, thanks to the smallish scale and the delights of paging through her artist's books, but don't be lulled by the scale. These collages crackle; with their sharp edges and painterly textures, they feint and dodge, then jab.

One untitled wall piece opens like a box of goodies. The pale grays and blacks of the container give way to bright yellow and red inside, yet for all the party intonations these edge into deep, painterly passages of blue-green. Despite the boxy feel, there's a spiraling quality to this collage, as if it opens only to point further inside, to hidden depths. Another one brackets a rocky collage, mingling sharp edges with fluid gestures, between two bold, smoky hieroglyphs.

Flora Natapoff: Abstracts and Brief Chronicles

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery
10 Newbury St., through July 28.
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By Cate McQuaid
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Natapoff doesn't use collage like Rauschenberg, to juxtapose particular images; her work is too lushly abstract for that. Rather, the collage, with its sharply cut or ragged edges, and its built-up, almost three-dimensional quality, creates an architecture of feeling, built out of scraps of landscape and memory.

BARBARA

KRAKOW GALLERY