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MONTCLAIR ARTS TALK

By [Carol Selman](#) [Email the author](#) | October 1, 2011

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The Cosmic Everyday: Carol Brown Goldberg-Painting & Sculpture

One woman shows wows art crowd at Montclair State University George Segal Gallery

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About this column: About this column: Montclair Arts Talk celebrates the arts and the people who make the arts happen in and around Montclair.



Acclaimed painter and sculptor Carol Brown Goldberg's cosmic vision and down to earth charm captivated a strong art crowd of admirers at a symposium and reception this past Saturday, Sept. 24 at Montclair State University's (MSU) George Segal Gallery (GSG). Goldberg has returned to her suburban Washington, D.C. home, but 25 of her large-scale paintings and 23 of her small scale, bronze sculptures remain on view through December 10 at the gallery.

The exhibit's distinguished curator and symposium keynote speaker Dr. Donald Kuspit and fellow panelist Glenn Harper of "Sculpture" magazine have gone home, too. But Dr. Kuspit's incisive commentary and a revealing, transcribed conversation between Harper and the artist can be read in the GSG's outstanding exhibit catalogue.

Before I write another word, let me write just one: Go!

Let me add a few more words: Go on your own and then come back with the kids. If the philosophical, mythic, religious and art historical implications of Goldberg's works are profound and challenging, the paintings are mesmerizing—vibrating with an almost sonic energy, and the sculptures are absolute delights. And, funny, too.

Let's back up with a little biography. Goldberg began exhibiting in D.C. in the 1970s; since that time her cosmic, abstract canvases have traveled the world. Some have found permanent homes in the National Museum of Women in the Arts, The New Orleans Museum of Art, several university art museums and private collections.

Since 2008, there has been both an outpouring of painting and an outpouring of sculpture, initially small scale, many now grown to human size or more heroic, 12-foot proportions.

“I paint during the day and sculpt at night,” Goldberg said in a cozy conversation we enjoyed Saturday evening. “My work has many layers; it mirrors the layers of our lives.”

You don’t look at a Goldberg canvas, you are drawn in. Goldberg paints with acrylic then, seemingly sculpts her canvases with pulverized glass suspended in pigment. Sometimes she explores many colors; sometimes variations of one and sometimes the paint is black and white.

Eliciting some of the strongest responses was NT1, pictured in the gallery above, from her current series. Executed in black and white and in Goldberg’s often signature motif of abstraction overlaid with a hand painted grid of small circles, the central space, punctuated with blue pulverized glass pulls you into her galaxy.

Goldberg has a deep interest in science and art; in 1989-90, she curated and produced a lecture/exhibit series delving that relation. She has shown at the American Center for Physics.

Astrophysicists currently posit that there are many universes, Goldberg’s canvases create them.

Goldberg is abstract expressionism, op art and color field for the 21st century; her paintings often evoke responses heard around psychedelic art. Her works are simultaneously highly intellectual, deeply spiritual and highly accessible.

Goldberg talked about her painting process. “I don’t have a template. I work with the canvas laid flat and start at the outside of the canvas,” Goldberg said. “When I can’t reach the center, I have to prop the canvas up. So it’s like I am seeing it for the first time; it’s like falling in love for the first time.”

A few years ago, Goldberg was asked to do a sculpture for a major show in Spain. “I hadn’t done sculpture since 1985”, Goldberg said. “One night, during the 2008 Obama-Clinton debates, I took blocks left over from when my children were young. I started going into the kitchen, the tool box, I could hardly stop.”

Goldberg branched out to the local hardware/house ware store. “I was just taking things off the shelf,” Goldberg said. “I forgot their everyday uses; everything looked like eyes, faces, arms. Soon I had made 150 maquettes.”

Ultimately executed in bronze, the clothes pins, electric outlets, vegetable peelers, shower heads, blocks, paint brushes and more have become a family of anthropomorphic shapes that challenge and delight.

In the central gallery, “Nighttime with Rothko,” a sculpture, has a conversation with “NT 7,” a canvas that, in part, references Rothko’s major body of work.

Come and listen in on that conversation.

The exhibit comes to us through the vision and dedicated work of M. Teresa Lapid Rodriguez, the director of the MSU Galleries and the George Segal Gallery. Gallery designer and photographer Anthony Louis Rodriquez has once again done a masterful installation, painting the usually white walls and pedestals grey for this exhibit:

Miriam Jacobs of GSG is the coordinator all things educational, including a marvelous program of tours and workshops for all ages: These include “Fundamental Luminescent Goldberg,” Goldberg and Op Art,” Goldberg and Pollock,” and “The Music in Goldberg.” Montclair’s Keely McCool is the exhibit’s registrar.

On Saturday, MSU College of the Arts Dean Geoffrey Newman spoke of the importance of the George Segal Gallery to the region and the Montclair arts community, who were present in full force-including Virginia Block, Marion Held and McCool of Studio Montclair.

Montclair Art Museum board member Sylvia Cohn and painter Hetty Baiz and sculptor James Perry, who showed at GSG this winter. See [here](#) for more information.

The George Segal Gallery hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday from 12:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Entry is from the 4th floor of the Red Hawk Parking Deck adjacent to the Alexander Kasser Theater.

Free and open to the public, the exhibition is handicapped accessible. See [here](#) or call 973-665-3382.

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