

Print Article



Domenico Zindato
Untitled
 2005
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato
Untitled
 2005
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato
Untitled
 2007
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato
Untitled
 2007
 Phyllis Kind Gallery

FORCE OF CULTURE

by N.F. Karlins

A gravity field must be forming right now around Phyllis Kind's new Chelsea gallery at 236 West 26th Street, because "Domenico Zindato: Recent Works 2007" is filled with drawings so powerfully seductive that they pull you into them. Showing the Italy-born, Mexico-based artist at the height of his powers, the exhibition is one of the triumphs of the current season.

Once you jump into one of Zindato's pools of color, you will discover the layers of fantastically detailed patterns, both abstract and naturalistic. Bodies and body parts parade or stream or float amid abstract plant, bird and quadruped forms or totally non-representational elements.

Dizzying chains of circles and thousands of dots decorate layers of colored ink, both transparent and opaque, in designs of every possible sort. By looking closely, you see them bend and blend from one part of the drawing to the other. You discover flourishes of metallic paint that make the whole scintillate even more.

Dive deeper still and gradually you find certain portions of a drawing delicately inscribed with writings in English, Italian, French, German and Spanish. These luminous drawings have metaphysical messages hidden in their depths, yet they whisper their ideas with the same sensitivity that is to be found in their color harmonies. The script is not easy to spy. You have to search for it.

In one of the pieces, a number of concentric bands appear at one side of the work. In the center are bands in lush colors with circular areas below and triangular forms above.

But wait. A closer study reveals quadrupeds, floating figures with upraised arms and strange birds within the concentric bands. One orange and red central line is actually composed of a series of figures shown sideways packed against one another like a line of Rockettes. Another darker line is made up of their feet, below that is a series of blue figures in frontal view with criss-crossed hands, with a lighter band of feet below. The triangles may contain strange heads with eyes or, perhaps, be parts of birds viewed from above. If so, human figures float in their wings. This is just a hint of what's going on in a single work.

Zindato, as low-key as his art is exuberant, does all the obsessively detailed drawing himself, falling into a sort of trance and working six or more hours a



Domenico Zindato
Untitled
 2007
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato
Untitled (detail)
 2007
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato
Untitled (detail)
 2007
 Phyllis Kind Gallery



Domenico Zindato

day for several months until a piece is done.

I've had the pleasure of talking with Domenico Zindato on several occasions. He told me that he begins by cutting up a hand-made paper of some type and roughing out some broad areas in pastel. He then launches himself into the lengthy process of adding layers of ink with fine-tipped brushes and nib pens, without any thought of what the composition will look like. It develops over time.

Zindato was born in 1966 in southern Italy. He was in Rome studying law, a common profession in his family, but soon escaped into theater and cinema studies, then left the university to travel. He spent several years in Berlin performing a Dada-esque cabaret act, and lived in Bombay, but eventually settled in Mexico City about ten years ago. He now lives further south in Mexico and concentrates on drawing wherever his travels take him.

The artist initially produced small drawings of figures in surrealistic settings in inks with a spidery line. By the late 1990s, he was producing work in his mature, all-over style. These pieces have grown from 6 x 8 inches to as large as 40 x 30 inches without losing any of their punch.

Zindato, now having his third solo show in New York, had earlier incorporated the high-keyed palettes of India and Mexico into his work. His recent sheets prove him equally adept at using the rich cerulean blue of the Mediterranean and the ocher of his current home. Whatever colors he uses, he makes them dance ecstatically.

Domenico Zindato, Sept. 18-Nov. 3, 2007, at Phyllis Kind Gallery, 236 West 26th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001

N.F. KARLINS is a New York art historian and critic.