

Austin American Statesman  
XL Weekend Reviews  
January 26, 2006  
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## Gabbiani Pulls Pieces Together

Only eight artworks make up Francesca Gabbiani's exhibition at Lora Reynolds Gallery. Yet each of these works consists of many pieces of paper. Gabbiani creates collages, to which acrylic and gouache are added.

The collage medium often encourages a spontaneous and experimental process resulting in sometimes fragmented compositions, but not here. These are carefully constructed scenes depicting boldly cinematic interiors (deco looking homes) and exteriors (dark tree limbs over richly hued skies).

Not surprisingly Gabbiani cites cinematography and the city of Los Angeles as influences. They, like her work are assembled and frequently associated with stylized artificiality.

Ironically the two works that could be called exteriors, which are landscapes, are smaller than the interiors. They silhouette tall fir trees against saturated sunsets reminiscent of "Gone With the Wind" backdrops. Color choices and balancing detail with simplicity make these collages jewel-like.

Gabbiani's interiors have features commonly attributed to Surrealist canvases. The painted scenes are strikingly empty. They also all include prominent stairways or doorways, symbolic of psychological passages perhaps.

Unfortunately, when seen in person, these larger images (78 inches by 104 inches), suffer from their not-so-seamless production. Whether they are meant to show illusionistic space or instead negate a sense of depth, similar to Postimpressionist paintings or Japanese woodblock prints, is unclear. Individually colored shapes force awkward relationships and fail to communicate a cohesive whole.

Most exceptional and intriguing is Gabbiani's "White Book." A small accordion-style book pulls out to showcase brilliant laser-cut images in well-suited format. Inspired by the popular novel "Devil in the White City," by Erik Larson, Gabbiani includes miniature architectural structures and fair rides as "illustrations." "White Book" contrasts the precious and the ominous, as do the other works, but wins with its elegant and multi-faceted sophistication.

("Francesca Gabbiani: Wonderland" continues 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesdays-Saturdays, through February 25, Lora Reynolds Gallery, 300 West Ave., No. 1318, free, 215-4965.)