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Art

Collage-style works, concrete, ephemeral

By Ed Sozanski

Geology's child. Painter Rebecca Rutstein declares a wildly optimistic artistic vision. In the paintings she is showing at Bridgette Mayer Gallery, she is trying to produce "a glimpse at understanding the complexities of time and the purpose of human existence."

I can't say that her paintings moved me closer to cosmic revelation, but they did say something interesting about time and transience.

Rutstein composes collage-style by bringing together images from various sources. Some are concrete and universal, others personal and ephemeral.

The latter tend to be arcane, like the outline of a canopy bed. You might not recognize it as such, nor would you guess that Rutstein uses it because she says she always wanted such a bed.

The visual anchors for each work are more accessible — diagrams of geologic strata, tectonic plates and volcano plumes. These references to "earth time" make the contrasting ones to human concerns seem all the more transient.

Rutstein's paintings are engaging and generally life-affirming. I think they would be stronger if she rendered them more precisely and made her playful colors more saturated.

Bridgette Mayer Gallery, 709 Walnut St. 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Wednesdays through Saturdays.
Through March 23. 215-413-8893 or
www.mayerartconsultants.com.