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arts & entertainment

Art

by Roberta Fallon

TRUTH OR DARE

Organizers and collectors of material and memories, the artists in Fleisher's "Challenge 2" make works that are personal journeys as well as riffs on journeying. Barbara Woodall, the most overt sojourner, uses road maps as source material, cutting and pasting the red, blue, green and yellow symbols of highways into abstract configurations that resemble starbursts. The untitled works are a marvel of obsessive detail, full of cosmic ruminations about life's metaphorical roads. Painter Rebecca Rutstein portrays a dreamy world with clouds of imagery floating on top of a pastel Hans Hoffman-like patchwork quilt. Her large paintings, infused with airy lightness, appealing colors and buoyant visions from geology textbooks, explore personal territory but happily take the viewer along for the ride. That can't be said of Emma Varley's cut-paper installation, "Corral," a visually austere, reductive work spanning one corner of the gallery. The work's white-on-white ambiance might have been more inviting if the artist had used more interesting cut shapes or been more generous with splashing them around the room (see Astrid Bowlby's "Leaves of Grass" installation at the Pennsylvania Academy for comparison). As it is, Varley's low-energy piece gives you little reason to look.

>> "Challenge 2," through Nov. 9. Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine St. 215.922.3456, ext. 318. www.fleisher.org