

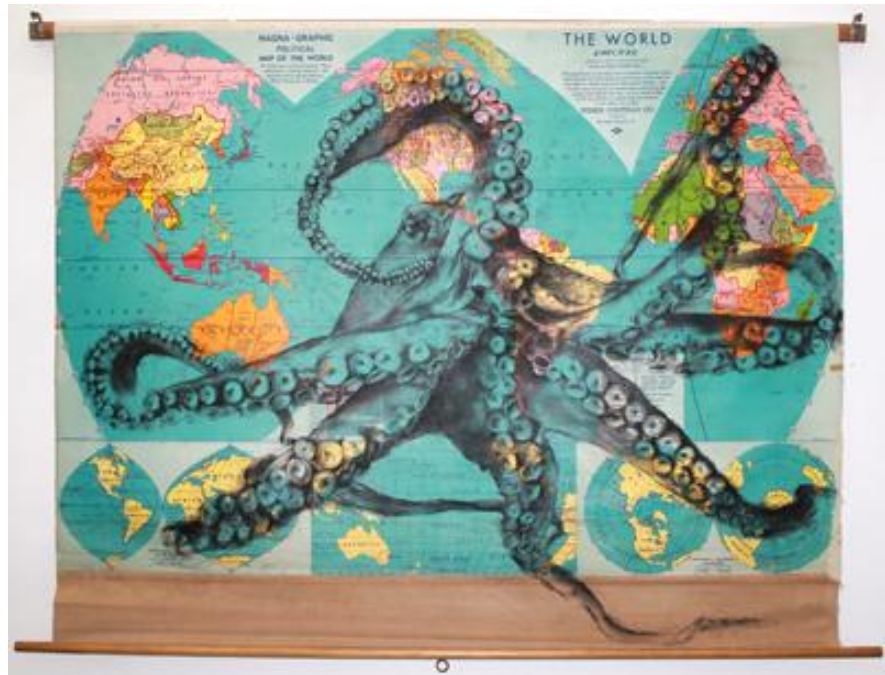


All the Arts, All the Time

Art review: Lynn Hanson at PYO Gallery LA

July 22, 2010 |

Lynn Hanson's hand is deft, sure, sometimes even catalytic. When she brings that technical confidence to bear on imagery with strong narrative or metaphorical possibility, the results are powerful. In "Domain," for instance, one of the highlights of her show at PYO, Hanson draws an octopus in charcoal atop an old, classroom-style pull-down map of the world.



The creature is an emblem of a kind of imperial reach, a sense of irrefutable control over the broad territory touched by its slithery, muscled tentacles. Hanson's rich, velvety articulation gives the image a strong, animate presence and contrasts aptly (nature vs. culture) with the map's flat colors and neatly delineated countries.



In "Shroud," another quietly searing star of the show, Hanson depicts a dead pelican in a tangle of seaweed. Painted in oil on translucent drafting film (reminiscent of the work of Rebecca Morales), the lifeless heap of gray emerges as a tender and dignified death portrait, beautifully textured.

The show contains several more equally penetrating or poignant pieces, but other works dilute the whole. A series of full-scale drawings of surfers, swimmers and lifeguards is well-executed but unremarkable. A painted triptych on arched panels suggests a moody seascape, but fails to rise above generic, chromatic abstraction. Hanson, based in L.A., has ample tools at her disposal. How she chooses to use them makes the difference between work that is indelible and work that is forgettable.

-- Leah Ollman