

The New York Times

‘Earth, Sea and Sky’

Nabi Gallery, Route 114, Sag Harbor. Through Oct. 26. 725-2629.

Qualities of the South Fork’s environment are central to this six-artist exhibition, which concentrates on artists who translate nature’s forces into pictorial energy. Most lean toward realism but make an effort to go beyond by reaching for an independence. Earth’s solidity and crustiness are emphasized in Paton Miller’s farm scenes, which have a chalkiness that often lends an aura of allegory to his generalized subjects. There is a tight and selective structuring, too, in many of Lewis Zacks’s local scenes. ‘Montauk Relic’ is his most successful, and one of the show’s highlights.

A striking yellow woodland painting by Rae Ferren uses horizontal

shadows and vertical tree trunks with considerable effect. Here Ms. Ferren captures the mood that can be established by reaching for an independence. Earth’s solidity and crustiness are emphasized in Paton Miller’s farm scenes, which have a chalkiness that often lends an aura of allegory to his generalized subjects. There is a tight and selective structuring, too, in many of Lewis Zacks’s local scenes. ‘Montauk Relic’ is his most successful, and one of the show’s highlights.

Ms. Buist’s small, swiftly captured sensations can be particularly convincing.

Small, carefully organized rocky Montauk seascapes by John Pomianowski add to the exhibition’s stylistic range. The best examples emphasize sharply delineated contrasts of summary forms and build a framework from stark configurations of cliffs, ocean and sky.

The vigorous, forceful brushwork of Kathy Buist and Simon Gaon give the show a substantial dose of optical energy and frequently seem to be parallels to the agitation of the natural elements. Ms. Buist’s small, swiftly captured sensations can be particularly convincing. Mr. Gaon’s canvases appear more mannered in comparison, yet the rhythms in his large pieces sometimes produce a work with considerable impact. Covered with turbulent paint gestures, these ambitious pieces recall the pigment application of van Gogh, Kokoschka or Soutine. One of Mr. Gaon’s small Times Square scenes, featuring a portion of a neon sign, is also included; its vibrancy adds a strong note.

— Phyllis Braff