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When Painting is Sculpture, and Vice Versa

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Anne Tschida



“Being a painter who no longer paints leaves me open to many different paths” is the way **Ted Larsen** describes his sculptural process. And indeed his lovely metal works have a painterly feel as much as they do three-dimensional objects. For his latest series of works that make up “Gimcrack” at Pan American Art Projects, he has crafted mostly pre-painted, salvaged-steel scraps into sculptures – a choice of material that could lend itself to a literally heavy output, but these look far more delicate.

Taking the historical form and place of painting as a starting point, Larsen – who has shown often with Pan American and is based in Sante Fe – works with his sculptural canvases over a period of time: erasing, adding, amending.

“I carefully consider the form of the object. It can take years to develop them, with many revisions. Often the form mandates the materials used and how they will be used. Everything has to be questioned: How should things be joined? What should be visible? What needs to be eliminated? The possibilities are endless.”

Making up the second part of the two-person exhibit are the newest works from Miami-based Carolina Sardi, also painted-steel pieces. After plating the steel with gold, chrome, copper and silver, adding reflective dimensions, Sardi would like us to experience her “Fairy Tales,” the name of her show. “Now we not only look at a piece and the shadows that it produces but we also look at ourselves reflected in the pieces. This added effect addresses the question of form and essence, what is real and what is imagined and philosophical ideas dealing with Narcissus and Plato.”

A well-done combination and choice to start of the new year.