Lois Dodd: Natural Order

Review: Playfully Painted Realism

The works of Lois Dodd, on view at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Conn., through May 28, are a celebration of the artist's long career and her ability to render the familiar with new eyes. Dodd, who was born in 1927 in New York City and grew up in Connecticut, was part of the postwar generation of painters who sought to capture the essence of the American scene.

Her paintings, which often feature rural landscapes, still lifes, and domestic interiors, are characterized by their attention to detail and their use of earthy, muted colors. They are also notable for their playful, almost whimsical approach to realism, which is evident in her treatment of everyday objects and figures.

The exhibition, which includes works from the 1950s to the present, offers a comprehensive look at Dodd's oeuvre. It includes paintings that range from the early, semi-abstract works to the later, more representational pieces. Among the highlights are the large, panoramic landscapes that foreground the artist's interest in the natural world, and the small, intimate studies of domestic interiors that capture the quiet moments of everyday life.

Dodd's work is notable for its technical mastery and her ability to render the mundane with a keen eye for detail. Her paintings, which often feature simple compositions and a limited palette, are a testament to her commitment to the act of painting itself. Her approach is one that values process over product, and she is known for her willingness to experiment with different techniques and styles over the course of her career.

The exhibition also includes a selection of works on paper, including watercolors and drawings, which offer a glimpse into the artist's process. These works, which are often smaller in scale than the paintings, are notable for their delicacy and precision.

A painter both serious and playful, she never shies away from an eccentric angle or an unexpected gesture. Her pictures, often executed in broad strokes to thin, delicate, filamented ones, are a testament to her willingness to explore different techniques and styles. She handles geometric maneuvers with daring and grace. The large, early, semi-abstract "Pond" (1962) is an arabesque of disjointed lines that spiritedly suggest brown. One thinks: Here is Cézanne, reborn, and repurposed, for New England.

The title of her show comes from a 1978 oil on linen depicting tree trunks and limbs, which are rendered with an attention to detail that is both precise and evocative. The work, which is one of the highlights of the exhibition, is a testament to the artist's ability to render the natural world with a keen eye for detail and an understanding of the properties of light and color.

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