



A Colored Pencil “Find” in France

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Multiple vantage points and tangled perspectives

I was recently given the opportunity to exhibit six of my colored pencil drawings in an international show held in Chateau Grouchy (pronounced “Grooshy”) in the town of Osny (pronounced “O-nee”), about 20 miles northwest of Paris. Featuring the work of 16 American, French, German, and Spanish artists, the exhibition was part of a cultural exchange under the auspices of a sister-cities agreement that includes Columbia, MD (extended, as a courtesy, to my home town of Ellicott City, MD).

The 18th century chateau, which now houses the Osny town hall and mayor’s office, has several lovely spaces on all three floors dedicated to exhibiting artwork.

I arrived with all the other artists on Friday, September 14, to install the show, and while we waited for the coordinator with the hanging plan to arrive, I wandered upstairs to see some of the other artwork on display.

To my delight, I found a wonderful exhibition of 43 colored pencil drawings—or “les dessins au crayon de couleur”—by a French artist, Maryse-Anne Couteau. Her work is fascinating.

Multiple highly representational images—faces, figures, animals, plants, objects, architectural elements, and undefined shapes—each were beautifully drawn and placed within a larger format, as if they had been collaged there, at



angles that reference multiple vantage points and tangled perspectives. This leaves the viewer—especially viewers like me who don’t have enough French to get a clue from the titles—to guess at the context and seek the common thread among all the disparate elements. I could have stayed there all day!

I was not able to meet the artist, as her reception had taken place the previous weekend, but I left a greeting and compliments in the guest book (in English), along with my thanks for such a pleasant surprise (or, as the French would say, “surprise.”) OK, not that different, I guess. For more of her work, see her website: <https://couteaumaryse.fr/>



Artwork:
Maryse-Anne Couteau

Photos:
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