

In the galleries: Artist takes a detour on her journey to the past

By Mark Jenkins April 8

Judy Jashinsky derives inspiration from the art of classical and Renaissance Europe, but she doesn't simply celebrate the past. She questions it, from both a feminist and a New World perspective.

Jashinsky's "I'll Take You There," presented by Civilian Art Projects at CAOS on F, surveys her career from 1980 to 2015. The works, many of which depict historical Italy and Spain, include a painting of Columbus and Queen Isabella at the mosque at Cordoba.

The explorer is headed, of course, for the Caribbean and encounters with its peoples. Both the region and its inhabitants are among Jashinsky's recurring motifs, represented here by a painting of an indigenous man with four colors of corn. The picture's backdrop is not a blue sea or a green forest, but a field of sheer gold, the color of the prize the Spaniards sought.

Such detours from traditional realism are characteristic. Jashinsky, for example, paints on wooden panels, as medieval artists did, but she emphasizes the grain and natural hues. The images are guided by the medium.

The show's epic piece is a drawing, executed on multiple sheets of paper that fill an entire wall. The mixed-media picture depicts the crowd that turned out in 1599 to see the severed heads of Beatrice and Lucrezia Cenci, who became popular heroines after their execution for killing their abusive father. The scene was memorialized by many artists before Jashinsky, but never with her mix of the elevated and the irreverent.

Judy Jashinsky: I'll Take You There On view through April 19 at CAOS on F, 923 F St. NW. 202-607-3804. civilianartprojects.com.

Cathy Cook

"Cranes in Motion" looks at endangered Sandhill and whooping cranes from various angles and via assorted media. The VisArts at Rockville show even includes a crane that looks back.