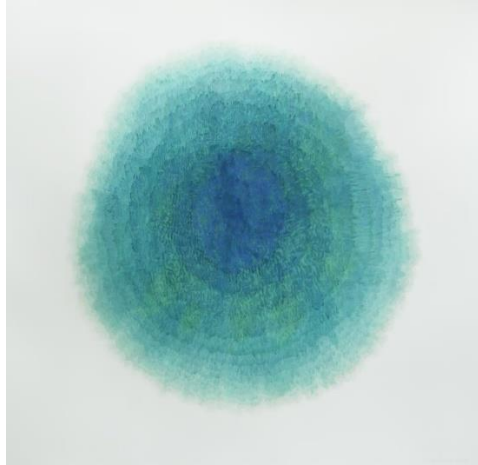


Capsule Art Reviews: "Cleve Gray: 1967 Silver Paintings," "Craft Texas 2012," "Debra Barrera: Kissing in Cars, Driving Alone," "[Houston Times Eight]," "Liz Ward: Cryosphere," "Structural Impermanence: New Works by Renée Lotenero"

MEREDITH DELISO NOVEMBER 14, 2012 4:00AM



"Liz Ward: Cryosphere" In 1897, the Swedish explorer Salomon August Andrée and two companions attempted to travel over the North Pole by hot air balloon. They never made it. In fact, two days after taking off from Norway, they crashed onto Arctic ice, where they faced inevitable death. Their hot air balloon, and what was left of them and their camp, weren't discovered for another 30 years. It's a fascinating, but also horrifying, tale, and one that speaks to the allure of the North Pole at the time — an attraction that cost many men their lives. Liz Ward understands this appeal. The Texas artist is captivated by the North and the histories captured in its ice cores, which provide the subject matter of her new watercolors and silverpoint drawings currently up at Moody Gallery. In light watercolors and silverpoint, Ward depicts the ice cores, which are like the rings in tree trunks, except they record climate conditions over thousands of years via accumulations of snow and ice. Given its age, Arctic ice has unfathomable history and depth, and Ward's watercolors seem chock full of both, especially in her large-scale watercolors. In torrents of gorgeously vivid blues, reds, yellows, and more blues, she manages to capture an inherent, raw energy, all the more aided by the subtle sparkle of the mica in her watercolors. In addition to these large-scale works, which the artist calls "glacial ghosts" in a further reference to climate change, Ward has two watercolor pieces positioned directly across from each other in the gallery titled Ice Balloon. They're minutely detailed blue circles that directly reference Andrée's doomed expedition. Even if you didn't know the morbid history, you couldn't look at these icy blue watercolors and not shiver. Through November 21. 2815 Colquitt St., 713-526-9911. — MD