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Sharon Horvath: Parts of a World
By Mario Naves

There are, let's face it, too many artists. Time will weed out the over-hyped, the god-awful, the good and the great. In the meantime, we suffer a deluge of creativity. Overabundance isn't an indication, let alone a guarantor, of good tidings. New Yorkers see more art in a season than most people do in a lifetime—is it any wonder they're a jaded lot?

In rare cases cynicism is upset by proof that art isn't a luxury, a commodity or a cheat, but a necessity affording sustenance, bedazzlement and pleasure. Sharon Horvath's paintings are cases in point: Here, we feel, is art that justifies its reason for being, largely because Horvath's kaleidoscopic abstractions seem to encompass every reason for being.

Within densely layered surfaces, sparkling tonalities and Byzantine networks of line and pattern, Horvath weaves a bewildering range of artistic influences, historical tangents and philosophical frameworks. Her meticulous touch is, in its infinite patience, reminiscent of Himalayan iconography and, in its rhythmic insistence, not far removed from the obsessive character of outsider art. Watteau is referenced; so, too, are the early Renaissance, pictographs, blueprints and cartography. The cosmos are evoked with consummate ease along with the spiritual awe they have long inspired. Horvath speaks of embodying a "third space—an intermediate territory distinct from either inner or outer worlds."

If that sounds dreadfully metaphysical, rest assured the artist is also a fan of more tangible pursuits, not least sex and baseball. You'll divine within the work's intricate architectural scaffolds a veritable Kama Sutra of randy stick figures and the encompassing glow of stadium lights. But whimsical minutiae don't distract from artistic sweep; if anything they help to clarify it. The small paintings, prudently shushed into a back gallery, promise more than they deliver, but the bigger pieces open up and morph right before our eyes—they never stop delivering. How many contemporary artworks can you say that about?