Báez’s oil-painting exhibit proves artist’s virtuosity

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An interesting stylistic contrast can be appreciated in Myrna Báez’s exhibit of paintings at Galeria Botello in Plaza Las Américas. Even though her partienlar style is always present throughout her work, either in printmaking or painting, these paintings denote strong variations in both rendering and interpretation of reality. The exhibit covers works created over a period of five years, although the majority of the works are from 1990 and 1991.

In her work, the artist constantly returns to themes explored previously in former works, but she adds new approaches. In a way there is a constant rhythm in the artistic development: the return to several motifs or subject matter, the use of similar technical devices and the search for new ideas or new ways to render similar topics. Her latest work is a sequence of her former production, yet differs in either the technical approach or the content. It is as if the artist constantly reexamines reality and its many possible interpretations.

Stylistic variations range from more naturalistic representations to what seem like abstract compositions departing from nature.

“Sol de cobre” (1991) is a striking scene in which three large disks in bright warm hues dominate the composition, adding motion to spite of the horizontal spatial arrangement. “Atardecer en la cordillera” is another very dynamic, almost abstract scene, in which the space seems to vibrate with the light stemming from the upper of the painting. “Paisaje gris” seems like a glacial scene because of the gray scheme used, while “Tierras del Sur” depicts a visual pattern of forms and contrasting violets and lemon yellows.

Some naturalistic renderings, lighter in concept but strong in emotional content, are rather pleasant works.

“Plátanos rojos,” “Arcoiris” and “Las vacas rojas,” which reminds us of her serigraph “Las vacas de Don Toño,” depict country scenes very

Myras Báez is well known for the way in which she deals with the relationship between the human figure and the environment, but only two paintings in this show deals with this relationship: “Isla” and “Retrato de un sueño.”

“Isla” depicts a nude female figure in a open, field, while “Retrato de un sueño” is a personal statement. The latter relates well to her “Autorretrato” (1987), also on exhibit at the gallery. Of particular interest in “Retrato de un sueño” is the way in which the artist has dealt with space. A simple horizontal distribution of forms—a reclining figure on a bed plus a translucent seated figure—achieves a new dimension by the use of bright orange and yellow oranges in a unusual manner, at the bottom of the painting.

This collection of oil paintings prove again Myrna Báez virtuosity in this medium. While working with basically the same motive and subject matter, but introducing variations, she has been able to attain new means of presenting reality. Perhaps the fact that she has returned to oil painting instead of working with acrylics and air brush, has given her such means.