

GALLERIES

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abstractions that set one to musing about the breeze in a spring garden or the rush of water through a natural spring. Even the occasional image of a human leg or bones within an abstract field fails to set an ominous tone. This is authentically mellow art that probably got that way by being experienced and very well schooled. (Ruth Bachofner Gallery, 804 N. La Cienega Blvd., to Dec. 5.) —S.M.



"First contemporary Soviet artist to exhibit in United States premieres in Los Angeles," trumpets a press release for Rudolph Khatchadrian's exhibition. One look at his realistic drawings on plaster tells you that "contemporary" describes the artist and not his work.

Khatchadrian's art has about as much relationship to current art as most historical Russian art has to its European and American counterparts. His show consists predominantly of overworked academic drawings that might be illustrations for a how-to book.

Khatchadrian, a Soviet Armenian who lives in Moscow, certainly

does know how to draw. He proves his facility by rendering still lifes and portraits in hair-line detail. Working in sepia pencil on thick slabs of plaster—and apparently hoping the material used for frescoes and icons will lend his art the historical weight he wishes it had—he turns out an alarming array of stereotypes and clichés. We find stylized nymphets, a stiff young woman trying very hard to look sexy as she poses in Spanish-dancer garb, a mean "Caravan-bashi," an obese Roman lady and a sweet little girl looking out of a jewel-like window to the village beyond.

What's most obviously missing is a convincing emotional tone. The still lifes are squeezed dry of all juice and the portraits are either sentimental or outrageously theatrical. Khatchadrian's quizzical self-portrait, the best work in the show, suggests that he might know better than what he has chosen to transport here. (Heritage Gallery, 718 N. La Cienega Blvd., to Nov. 23.) —S.M.

WILSHIRE CENTER

Suzanne Caporael's paintings have the eerie familiarity of the otherworldly landscapes that pop

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Rudolf Khachatryan (1937–2007)

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Review of Art Exhibitions

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Рудольф Хачатрян (1937–2007)

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