

ART

TAKING A WALK ON THE 'SILK ROAD'

Asian art on display at the Rich Forum



"Dark Ganesh" by Jennie Chien.

By Abby Luby

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The lure of Asian art, with deep ancestral roots and cultural sway, is just one of the draws of "The Silk Road," the current art exhibition at the Rich Forum's Rosenthal Gallery in Stamford. The real thrill here is art created by local high school students, which is less academic genre study and more reflections of the very aesthetic that makes Asian art Asian.

Ceramic pots of red and gray clay made by Westhill ninth-graders were quintessentially angular and asymmetrical. Kim Blasnik's wide-mouthed, round pot as a globe has an off-white surface background to a carefully etched, dark burgundy map. The splayed fins of a fish on Mike Milone's vessel really seem underwater with dark, pointillist dots as trailing bubbles. Jen Perez's double-handled vase with two iconic Japanese figures and a bird is adroitly rendered, combining some of the main elements of Japanese art. Their art teacher, Kelly

REVIEW

Barney, should be proud.

Emily Harris, a student at Stamford High School, showed photographs from her trip to China. In one of many of her pieces in this show, a blurred exterior of a restaurant with garish yellow neon words is atmospheric and glitzy. In another, young Asian children happily squeeze into the frame holding up the "V" for victory sign, crazed with the camera's attention. Gary Morales, a senior at Brien McMahon High School, deftly painted a Buddhist text in Chinese calligraphy. The curating group, Picture That, should be commended for including these young artists.

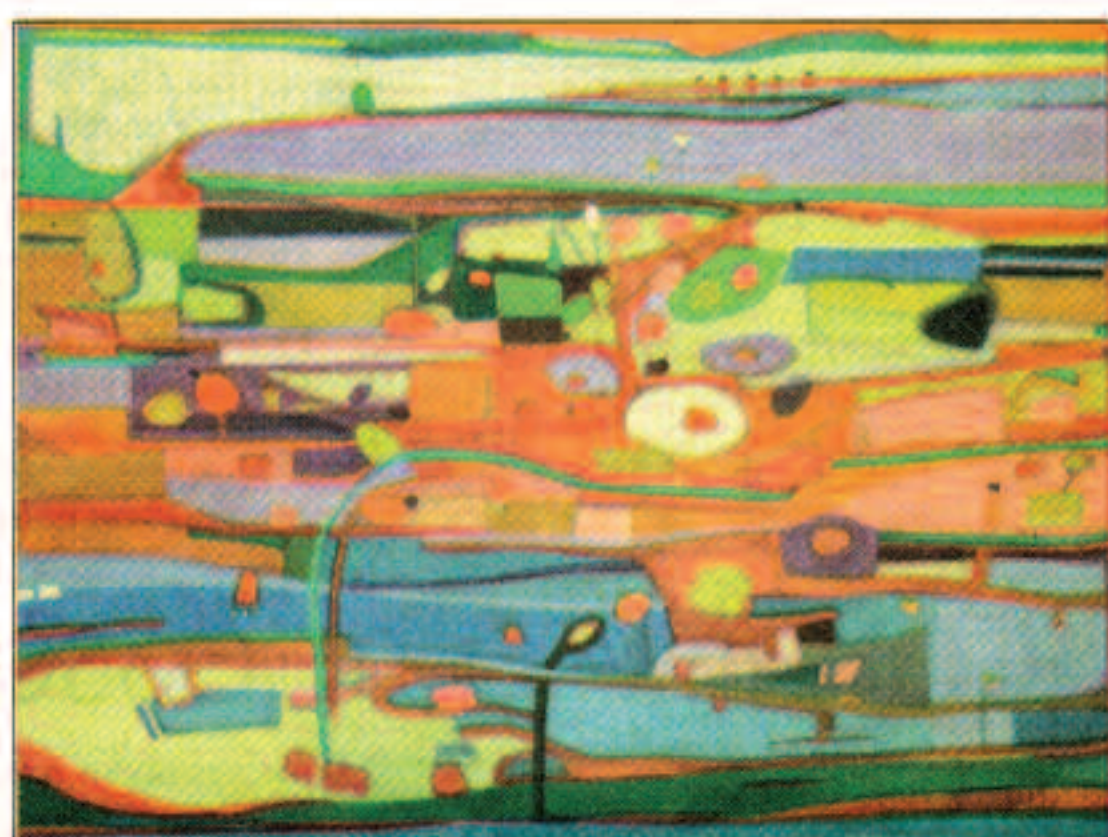
The premise of "The Silk Road," named for the network of Eurasian trade routes started during the first millennium B.C.E., linked cultures from the Mediterranean world, Persia, India, Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan. The work is by current artists from these countries.

The quick splashes of paint in "Mongolian Migration," a painting by Ellen Yung Woods (Korean) is not as uncontrolled as it first seems. Ripping through the canvas midsection is a gaggle of horses, feet off the ground at a speedy gallop. The immediacy of the piece makes it seem like Wood just dashed it off with a premeditative calm before the implosion of creative energy.

Please see **SILK**, Page D4



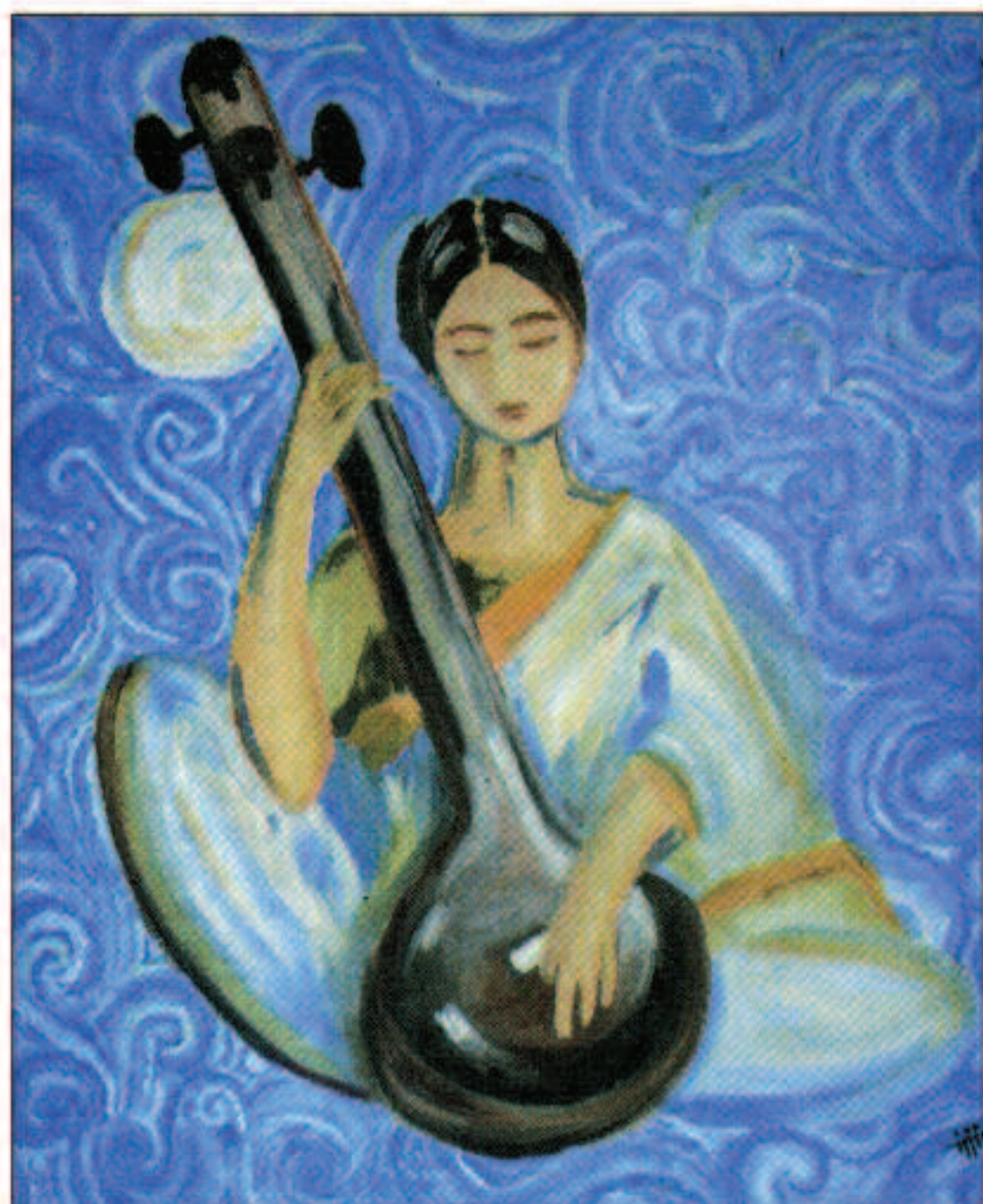
"Geisha Mirror" by Margo Vallone.



"Essence of Things" by Juri Morioka.



"Suction of Reality" by Mika Yokobori.



"Music Meditation" by Manjiree Manolkar.



"Sumi Shrimp" by Chung Soon O'Dwyer.



"Pink Koi" by Duk Soon Fwang.

Contributed photos

■ Continued from Page D3

Three mixed-media pieces by Yuko Ueda (Japan) titled "Underground" are dark and cavernous, exuding raw, grainy, earthen textures with sparse minimal imagery with a small white boat or a frame of 35 mm film. Single, thin, white lines float through the darkened mass contrasting the work's weightiness. Scratches give way to luminous fuchsia peeking out of the deep mud-brown facade like smoldering, gurgling lava. A hit of yellow is a mysterious burst.

Three intense pieces by Mika Yokobori (Japan) in ballpoint pen or pencil on paper are fluid landscapes of surreal imaginary.

In "Line Dancing Legs," a plethora of spindly legs support an amorphous, organic fungus with misshapen arms reaching out for leafless trees, root balls intact.

Korean artist Chung Soon O'Dwyer's "Sumi Shrimp" is a large, beautiful flourish of the shellfish done in Sumi ink brush. The lushness of O'Dwyer's "Rose" is a soft, lush watercolor, almost abstract in the use of delicate pinks and reds done with a fluid hand.

"Infant," an oil painting by Manjiree Manolkar (India) implies a cross-cultural bent that to us seems the Christian iconic Madonna figure holding an infant, but with her third eye in red, the customary forehead

dot in the Buddhist symbol of enlightenment, the background is sparse but intriguing hieroglyphics.

The all-knowing "eye" theme played here as well as in other work such as "Pink Koi" by Korean artist Duk Soon Fwang where a sweeping flourish of a red bulbous form emerges from a sea of swirling pinks revealing a central eye of the koi, otherwise known as carp.

The prescient eye in "Brahmin — Human Potential" by Vinita Jadhav (India) has a large, partial eye with a harshly painted blue-lined textured iris jutting out from the side of the canvas. Sharp-edged primary colors give way to thin lines of Sanskrit run-

ning along upper and lower lids.

Many brightly colored scrolls by Philippine artist Maria Madonna Davidoff dot the show renderings of Eastern icons in predominately yellows, oranges and blues all outlined in black. One of Juri Morioka's (Japan) pieces in the show, "Faint Echoes of Heavenly Music," is a colorful abstract work in oil with vivid, intricate layering of congealing lines and form.

"The Silk Road" is on view through June 30 at the Rich Forum, Rosenthal Gallery, 307 Atlantic St., Stamford. Gallery hours are Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sunday, noon-5 p.m.