

THE TIMES HERALD RECORD

'Organic Graffiti' unites SUNDAY industry and nature

May 20, 2001
The Times Herald-Record

How the heck did Cara Enteles come up with her amazing paintings?

They're unlike anything you've ever seen.

Picture a frozen waterfall in the mountains. See it glistening against a gray metallic sky.



Stephen Israel

Look at it in the bright afternoon light. See it in the soft glow of sunset. Watch the scene change. That's just one of the paintings you can see in an exhibition that opened yesterday at the Delaware Arts Center. They're wondrous - not just because they're painted, scraped, scratched and sanded on huge sheets of aluminum, but because they make industry and nature work together.

So how does Enteles do it?

The story begins in a little girl's bedroom in the suburbs

and continues at the Beaux Arts school in Paris and DKNY jeans in New York City. It winds up in the woods and water of the Delaware River Valley.

As a little red-haired girl in Verona, N.J., Cara loved to paint so much, her mother yelled at her for making her bedspread look like a Jackson Pollack painting. Mrs. Enteles even banned her daughter from painting with those permanent oils.

So Enteles waited until school to use that thick paint to draw everything from landscapes to portraits. She loved painting so much, she skipped lunch at Verona High School and doubled up on art classes.

But when it came time for college, her mother said art was no way to make a living. So Enteles enrolled at Parsons and studied fashion.

She was so good at it, she landed a job in the jeans department at Calvin Klein, where she learned to texture denim by sanding, bleaching or fraying it - skills that would come in handy with her art.

And she kept painting. She



Photo provided

How does artist Cara Enteles create her works?

studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She returned to New York City and painted abstract landscapes on canvas.

She visited the Delaware Valley and painted what she saw - churning white waterfalls in the mountains, bright green ferns in the woods, orange newts near the Delaware.

One day in her Manhattan

studio, when she was working part-time on those jeans for DKNY, she saw a scrap of aluminum laying around. She began to see how much could be done with this man-made material. She imagined how it could come alive with scratching, scraping and sanding - and organic scenes of nature, like tree roots, spiders and water - painted with rich expressive colors.

And that's how Cara Enteles came up with her amazing paintings.

If you go ...

"Organic Graffiti," the exhibition of Cara Enteles' new paintings, continues through June 8 at the Delaware Arts Center Gallery, Main Street, Narrowsburg. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 252-7576.

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