

THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL

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It's refreshing, at long last, to be able to look at a substantial body of work by a single artist at the Arlene Bujese Gallery in East Hampton, where most of the summer's shows were large group presentations in which each exhibitor showed only one or, at the most, two pieces.

The current show actually features two veteran artists, Sheila Isham and Alexander Russo. Both are involved in nature — she with animal forms in paradise-like settings and vivid color, and he with inspired landscapes in subtle yet lush hues: whites, lavenders, greens.

This exhibit provides an entirely fresh focus on their new directions.

The Shadow Beyond

Two-person shows inevitably invite comparisons. Both of these painters aim to fuse subject matter and image with a hint of elusive abstraction in stroke and structure, but each is defined by a personal, idiosyncratic style. In their juxtaposition, they clarify and support each other's quests for the shadow beyond the substance.

Ms. Isham probes for the spiritual dimension of the animals she portrays in the earthly world of the painting as well as the one beyond.

Both the "Mythical Escapade Series," nine works on paper in various media (lithography, oil, watercolor, collage), and "The Oasis Series," three major oil paintings on linen (the largest of which, "Cosmic

Earth," is some six feet square) explicate her theme of soul in the many varieties of its non-human manifestations.

Done from 1994 to 1997, they explore the interaction of animals and birds against an ideal, dream-like background of flora and fauna, as in "Mythical Escapade, CXLIX," a col-

lage on paper of birdlike forms in a lush setting of larger-than-life flowers and foliage.

As both background and foreground, the creatures pictured appear mystical, as if in touch with unseen elements experienced only by animals, like the high-pitched sounds only they can hear.

How an invisible and powerful spiritual presence is mysteriously communicated to the viewer is the compelling drama of Ms. Isham's work.



SHEILA ISHAM's paintings "explore the interaction of animal and birds against an ideal dreamlike background of flora and fauna," according to our reviewer.

From The Studio

ROSE C.S. SLIVKA