

# Master of mixed media

Luis Bujalance displays a fondness for changing directions in a show at the Bucks Gallery of Fine Art.

Luis Bujalance's installation "You and Me" hangs in the stairwell at the Bucks Gallery of Fine Art in Newtown.

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STAFF WRITER

**S**culpture or painting? Though they are mostly two-dimensional and hang on the wall, the mood and execution of Luis Bujalance's canvases entertainingly blurs an esthetic line.

Bujalance works in solid forms, aided at times by a fondness for asphalt — the kind Home Depot sells by the gallon — and other materials of uncompromising visual integrity.

The globetrotting Spaniard mined the riches of American home-renovation warehouses on working trips to Bucks County under the artistic sponsorship of Bucks Gallery of Fine Art director Joan Perkes.

Some of the results are on view in the artist's exhibit, "Approaches to Oneness," at the Newtown gallery through Jan. 23. The works are a series of revelations of Bujalance's inner vision, as well as his virtuosity in mixed media.

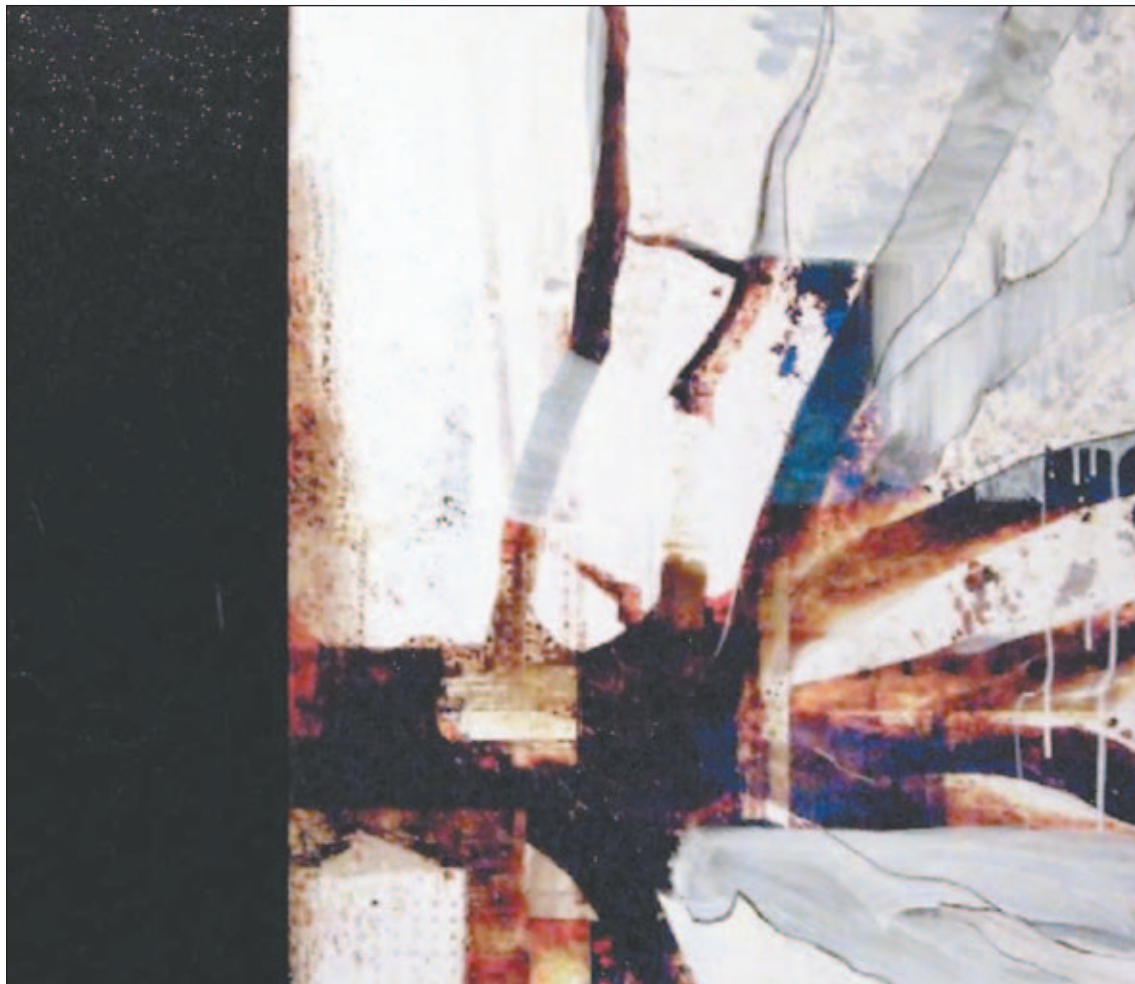
The visual possibilities of asphalt are demonstrated in "Amarrado di mi Sombre," where the rough black substance is a counterpoint to a puddle of some hard, shiny, translucent material.

An entire group of Bujalance's works runs along these lines, from the boiling forms of "The Old Game" to bold strokes of bleaching across seemingly random though precisely placed rectangles of pigment-covered cloth in "Entre el Cielo y la Tierra."

Bujalance refreshingly switches techniques in more recent series, two of which are in the current exhibit. The artist steps back from protean engagement with his materials in favor of manipulating digital images on a number of levels.

One can juggle pixels to alter photographs in numerous ways, such as by altering shape and color. Bujalance did that, then mechanically jumbled his images by cutting them in strips and weaving them together in his "Connections" series.

This gives another layer of complexity — or three or four — to already intricate depictions of endlessly branching veins.



"Paisajes I," above.

Luis Bujalance works on a digital-print mixed media image.



"Connections II," above.

In "Connections II," arteries are precisely continuous visually yet chromatically truncated, the same vessel running in a quilt-like pattern from gray to black, to red and back to gray.

It is a dazzling comment on mutability that further suggests the oxygenation of the blood, a heroically significant physiological phenomenon common to humans and other animals.

As Bujalance explains in the exhibit catalog, "through the treatment of digital photography, I try to depict the essence of nature. I understand the concept of essence as the characteristic that is common to every individual and, therefore, constitutes the elemental feature from which all other structures are compounded."

The turning point in the artist's shift from the "sculptural" paintings to the digital pieces is clearly seen in the "Paisajes" series. "Paisajes I" employs the woven-digital technique in its depiction of a branching image; "Paisajes II" and "Paisajes III" are truer to the artist's earlier up-close essays in abstraction.

The composition of the latter two in the series suggest a door made up of collages of photos of living forms, the portal pushed partway open to reveal a related, though private, dimension of the universe.

Bujalance puts his meaning up front in a seemingly simple but poignant installation made of a graceful tree branch wrapped with blue and red satin ribbon. It's titled "You and Me."

The Bucks Gallery of Fine Art is at 201 S. State St. Phone: 215-579-0050. Web site: www.bucksgallery-offineart.com.



"The Old Game"

## F.Y.I.



### Point of Origin

The colloquial term "mackintosh" for a raincoat comes from Charles Mackintosh, the Scottish chemist who invented and patented the first practical waterproof cloth in 1823.



### Big Breakfast

An ostrich egg can make 11½ omelets.

### Behind the Name

Chevy Chase's real first name is Cornelius. The nickname Chevy was bestowed by his grandmother and derived from the medieval English "Ballad of Chevy Chase."



### Beyond Boredom

Adélie penguins employ yawning as part of their courtship ritual.



### Film Files

For the knife fight between Jim (James Dean) and Buzz (Corey Allen) in the 1955 blockbuster "Rebel Without a Cause," the actors used real switchblades. They protected themselves by wearing chainmail under their clothes.

### Quotable

"I love hugging. I wish I was an octopus, so I could hug 10 people at a time."

— Drew Barrymore



### TV Tonight

THE GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS  
8 p.m., NBC/10

The 66th annual Golden Globe Awards will be presented, live from Beverly Hills, Calif. The event returns to its three-hour gala format, following the 2008 telecast that was stripped to an hour-long laundry list of winners, thanks to the Hollywood writers strike.



### Did You Know?

Frederick Douglass was the first African American to receive a vice-presidential nomination, with the Equal Rights Party in 1872, but he neither campaigned for nor acknowledged it.



### Today's Number

210 — the average number of sunglasses turned in at Walt Disney World's lost-and-found center every day.

