

'The Art of the Movie Theater'

By John Paul Keeler

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The Davis Orton Gallery at 114 Warren Street has been kind of a sleeper on the Art Gallery Trail in Hudson. Their exhibits have been quite interesting in their small two room space. There never seems to be a vanity touch in the photography they show.

REVIEW

The current exhibit titled "The Art of the Movie Theater" is quite splendid.

This writer is old enough to have experienced in Brooklyn as a young boy the last of the Silent Movie, Vaudeville and those great live concerts of Jazz and Big Bands with artists like Louis Armstrong (Sachmo) and the Jazz greats of the time. I remember so well the piano playing fast forward as the silent figures seemed to be running all the time. The neo baroque splendor of the foyers and interiors of theatres like the Flatbush and Lowe's Kings was thrilling and the great pipe organ playing was stirring to my young ears.

In the first room of the gallery twelve spectacular photographs in color by Stefanie Klavens show the exterior glory and interior beauty of the theatres shown. All the exterior shots are filmed late in the day near sunset. They have a special glow about them with the skies being wrapped in blue and almost blue turned black causing the theatres to be even more intensely colorful. The Crest Theatre in Sacramento has an Art Deco splendor. The Bruin Theatre in Los Angeles in the Streamline Modern style preferred by architect Charles Lee seems a modern

throw back to a building in Ancient Rome. The Roxy in Northhampton, PA looks quite like the Mahawie Theatre in Great Barrington and the Senator in Baltimore Maryland like the Colonial in Pittsfield. The interiors are beautiful. The Palace in Los Angeles looks somewhat like the Playhouse that burned down in Hudson. Proctors in Schnectady and The Bardavon in Poughkeepsie are movie temples of the past still full of life.

In the rear gallery Nadia Raman shows ten stunning black and white photographs titled "Cinema Play". They show worn out movie theatres in India. It's too bad she didn't title them. The most spectacular picture "Untitled No. 3" shows a giant projector in action looking like a prophetic telescope ready to discover planets in outer space. Another Untitled No. 4 shows a gigantic pile of empty film cases looking like pack rat droppings from Colliers in New York. Untitled No. 7 is a fascinating look through the ticket booth of theatre goers gathered in the lobby. The drab interior No. 6 with Lenin's portrait on the wall looks like a cigarette ad. No. 10 looks like a room in a museum in Salem showing a decaying room in a Chinese house with a picture of Mao on the wall. Photo No. 5 shows the sad worn out numbered seats in a defunct Indian Movie House.

It is delightful to find the wonderful galleries eateries, shops, the DAR and 18th Century buildings uniquely placed Below Third Street in Hudson. A walk to Parade Hill with St. Winifred guarding the city and further down off Front Street, the new Riverside Park completes the charm Below Third. Davis Orton Gallery is open Thursday-Sunday noon to 5 p.m.



Stefanie Klavens, The Crest Theatre in Sacramento.