

# CHURNER *and* CHURNER

## ARTE FUSE

2012:An Artistic Odyssey by Joianne Bittle

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art review by: **Oscar A. Laluyan**



Joianne Bittle, artist

You might remember Homer's famous epic poem about the long wanderings of Odysseus. The word "odyssey" (*noun*) is derived from that and defined as an intellectual or spiritual wandering or quest.\* For the opening of the new art season in Chelsea last September 6th, Arte Fuse attended the most ambitious installation and show staged by CHURNER and CHURNER for the second solo exhibition of Joianne Bittle entitled "On My Way Gone".

There is a great arc of time covered by Bittle in this show as it has elements of prehistoric to the futuristic. A sort of man's evolution and the journeys taken along the way. At the front display window of the gallery was the piece *Unconformity* (2012), which was a version of Plato's cave. Her years at the American Museum of Natural History as a dioramist made the construction of the stalagmites and stalactites essential to set the tone and involve the viewer to see themselves in the cave with reflective and glass mirror surfaces. Placing yourself into this primordial world raises your own questions about the beginning of civilization in an environment that is raw and primitive. What must have been the journey like for prehistoric man to keep on discovering and continue stretching the boundaries of his existence? Bittle enthuses that art has no boundaries and the never-ending question is a constant quest. Jumping to the future is the ten-foot piece *Moonman V* (2011-2012), which pierced the ceiling of the gallery's back room. Talk about infinite space like it's ready to launch off into orbit and the great beyond. This is one year of work that Bittle has gathered to make such a magnanimous statement. It does evoke scenes from

the 1968 Stanley Kubrick film “2001: A Space Odyssey” and the obscured face of the space explorer from the reflective helmet shield pushes the alien journey into a new stratosphere. The canvas itself is heading into boundless space and you have to love a gallery willing to tear out its ceiling to accommodate the full scale and provide visual impact in presenting the art.



Joianne Bittle with one panel of Space Monkey (2012)

Clearly, Bittle sets the scene for the viewer to ponder about the journeys we take either from the beginning of our lives where it felt like a placid but primeval forest and to the heart racing blast into the future of the unknown. Personal odysseys are a thing of beauty and Bittle gives us an artistic representation of how each of us takes on our personal evolution. We don't know our final destination yet but it's best to enjoy the ride while trying to get there.

*(\*definition sourced from Merriam Webster Dictionary)*