

# Exhibition Pick: Aron Belka

BY **BENJAMIN MORRIS** (</ART-REVIEW/CONTRIBUTORS/BENJAMIN-MORRIS>)

JANUARY 25, 2016

---

**Benjamin Morris visits Aron Belka's exhibition at LeMieux Galleries documenting southeastern Louisiana's fishing communities.**



---

ARON BELKA, *BAYOU SAUVAGE*, 2015. OIL ON BOARD. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND LEMIEUX GALLERIES, NEW ORLEANS.

ARON BELKA  
LEMIEUX GALLERIES  
332 JULIA STREET  
DECEMBER 5, 2015 - JANUARY 30, 2016

Undoubtedly, the headliners of Aron Belka's show at LeMieux Galleries are the portraits: large-scale depictions of the men and women of southeastern Louisiana's fishing communities with rough brushwork that at first evokes a casual, almost impressionistic take on their subjects. But closer examination reveals Belka's extreme attention to detail, from the careful layering of paint delineating individual strands of hair, to subtle coloration for closely-observed moments: the shaded crimson clasp of a market woman's bamboo hat, or the way that, caught at the right angle, portions of eyeglasses vanish into their surroundings.

The same is true with Belka's boats: razor-thin lines of paint signal rigging, while quiet ripples of rust perturb the water. Small touches like this further illuminate the quiet dignity that Belka brings to his subjects, subjects whose lives are frequently passed over by a media obsessed with urban activity and clamor. Even so, the show is not flawless: in *Jessie*, portions of the canvas left in a sickly green wash feel unfinished, and in *T-Rod*, the bright cadmiums of the rig outshine the sunburned skin of Belka's subject, needlessly drawing the eye away.

In the end, however, Belka's most moving pieces are his smaller, understated snapshots of the wildlife of the coastal regions, the ibis and egrets whose precise depictions are at once a joy and a wonder to behold. Here Belka's use of single lines to render essential forms recalls Walter Anderson's ink sketches from Horn Island, and in works such as *Delta Roost*, *Bayou Sauvage*, and *Bayou Moreau*, Belka captures the eye, the hunt, and the strike at a single glance.

