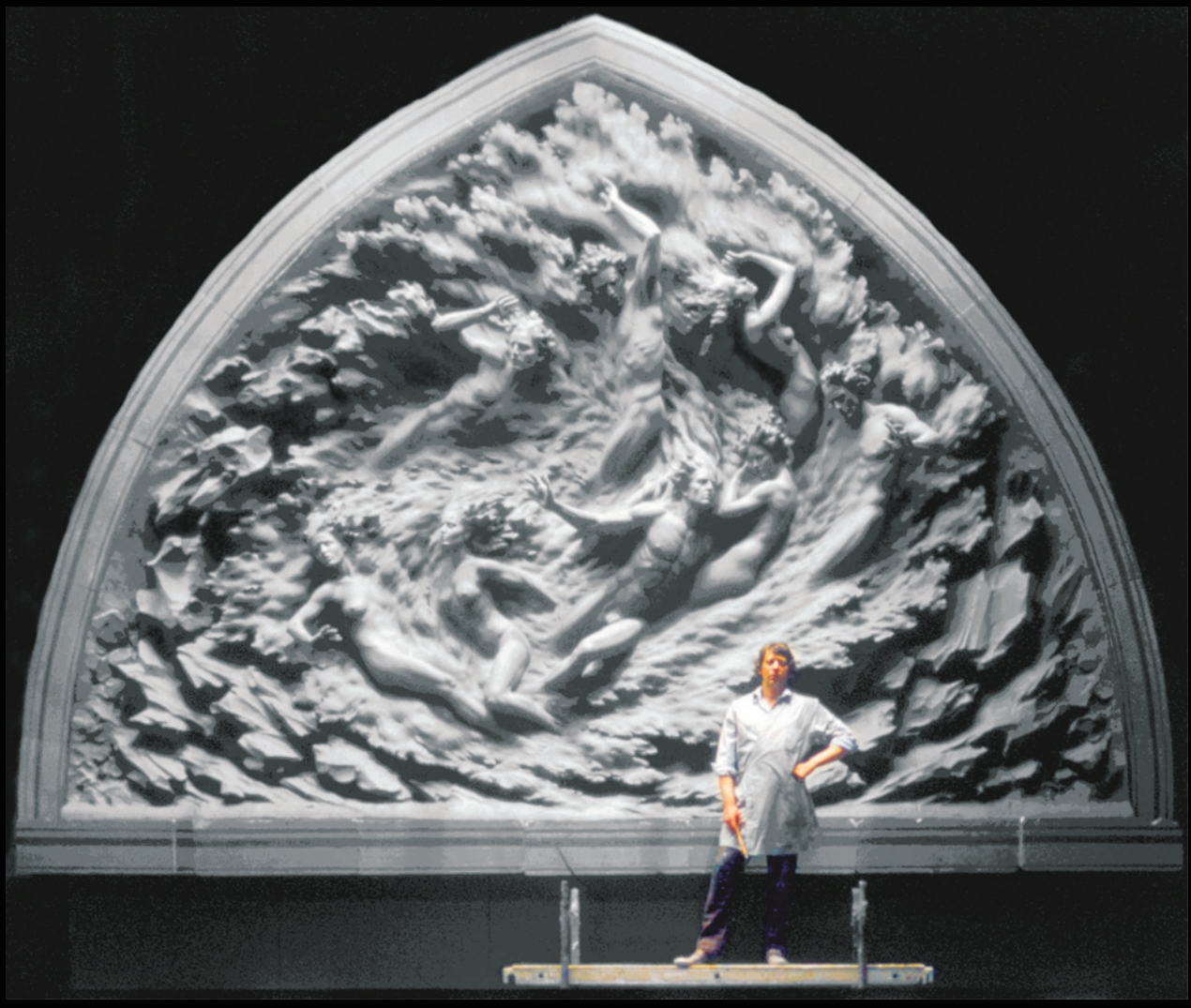
VOL. 4 NO. 3 FEBRUARY/MARCH 2002 New York

GALLERY&STUDIO

The World of the Working Artist

Frederick Hart

(1943-1999)



The Creation Sculptures

March 2-31, 2002

CFM Gallery

112 Greene Street, SoHo, New York City 10012
(212) 966-3864 Fax (212) 226-1041
cfmg@mindspring.com www.cfmgallery.com

Animals, Animals
Gloria Spevacek

Cat and Mouse ¥ Bronze

Jan. 29 - Feb. 16, 2002

Reception: Saturday, Feb. 2, 3-6 pm

Viridian Artists, Inc.

530 West 25th Street #407
Chelsea, New York, NY 10001
Tel/Fax: (212) 414-4040
www.viridianartists.com

Gallery hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
10:30 - 6 pm

ITALY

Photo-assemblages
by
Leon Yost
January 29 to
February 16, 2002

noho gallery

IN CHELSEA
530 West 25th Street
4th Floor
(Between 10 & 11 Ave.)
New York, NY 10001
212.367.7063
Tues. - Sat., 11 - 6pm

Burano, 42" x 20" 2001

Forms and Facets
JINX LINDENAUER

Sculpture

PIETRASANTA • Carrara Marble

PEAR • Bronze

March 12 - March 30, 2002

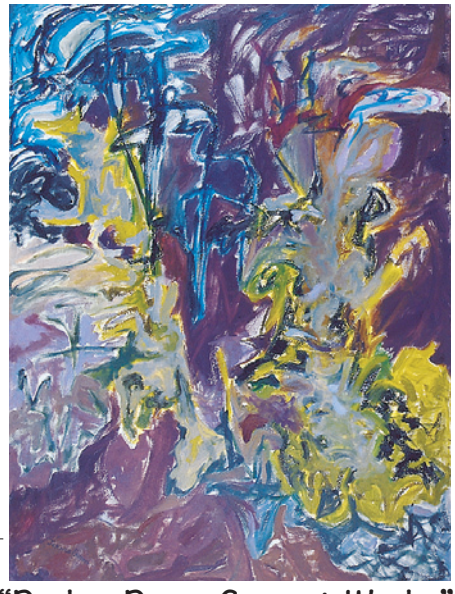
Reception: Saturday, March 16, 3-6 pm

Viridian Artists, Inc.

530 West 25th Street #407
Chelsea, New York, NY 10001
Tel/Fax: (212) 414-4040
www.viridianartists.com

Gallery hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
10:30 - 6 pm

JESSICA FROMM



"Tempest" Oil on Canvas 48" x 36"

"Darker Days: Current Works"

February 19 - March 9, 2002

noho gallery

530 West 25th Street, 4th Floor
NY, NY 10001 (212) 367 7063
www.artincontext.org Hrs: Tues - Sat 11 - 6 pm

Charles S. Klabunde

"Anorgoram Mask Dancer" Lower Sepik River, Papua, New Guinea

Shadows and Ceremonies
African Drawings and Paintings

Beyond the Looking Glass Gallery

33 Bridge Street, P. O. Box 69, Frenchtown, NJ 08825

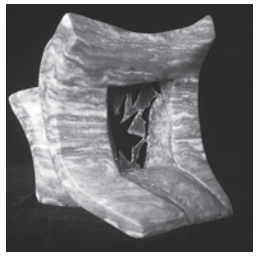
908-996-6464 www.klabundeartist.com

G&S Highlights

On the Cover:
Frederick Hart *had always hoped to have his Creation Sculptures for the facade of the Washington National Cathedral issued in limited edition. That wish has been honored posthumously and the landmark works can be seen at CFM Gallery. –Page 3*

Jinx Lindenauer, pg. 11

Charles S. Klabunde, pg. 9



Ethel Schlesinger, pg. 4

Charles E. Murphy, pg. 8

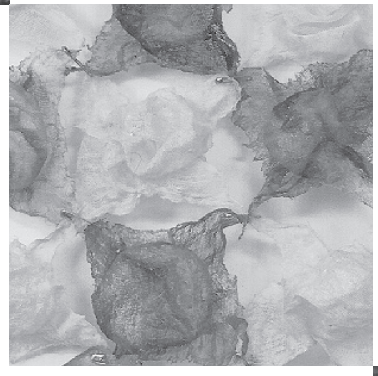
Hester Welish, pg. 6

The figure pg. 23

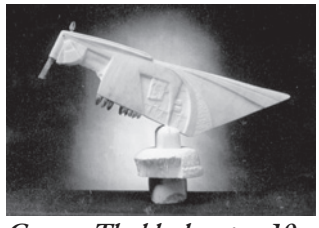
Gloria Spevacek, pg. 7

Grandma Moses, pg. 16

Neil McIrvine, pg. 23



Danièle M. Marin, pg. 5



George Tkabladze, pg. 19

Jessica Fromm, pg. 21

Hilda Green Demsky, pg. 20

GALLERY&STUDIO
An International Art Journal
PUBLISHED BY

217 East 85th Street, PMB 228, New York, NY 10028
(212) 861-6814 E-mail: galleryandstudio@mindspring.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER **Jeannie McCormack**
MANAGING EDITOR **Ed McCormack**
SPECIAL EDITORIAL ADVISOR **Margot Palmer-Poroner**
DESIGN AND PRODUCTION **Karen Mullen**
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR **Juliet M. Ross**

Frederick Hart's "Creation" Suite Makes its New York Debut at CFM

"CFM Gallery is proud to offer the opportunity to own a piece of art history," Neil Zukerman, the gallery's owner and director, was saying recently, as he prepared for his upcoming exhibition of works by Frederick Hart, who passed away in 1999.

One has every right to be skeptical when gallerists make fulsome statements, and Zukerman is not only more enthusiastic than most, he is also a notoriously felicitous phrasemaker. Indeed, P.T. Barnum probably would have approved of Zukerman's promotional zeal, and he would surely have envied his command of what my father used to call The King's English.

At the same time, no one who has seen Zukerman's extensive personal art collection would question his sincerity when he states, both privately and for the record, that he would never represent any artist whose work he himself would not buy.

And there is no question that the exhibition which will fill CFM Gallery, 112 Greene Street, from March 2 through 31 is historically significant. For its centerpiece will be the long awaited limited editions of some of "The Creation Sculptures," adorning the main entrance of The Washington National Cathedral. They include both the maquette and working model for the magnificent twenty-one by fifteen-foot central tympanum,"Ex Nihilo," the companion bas reliefs "Creation of Day" and "Creation of Night," and the lifesize freestanding figure, "Adam." All are editioned from the seminal commission that launched Hart's career.

Hart was an apprentice stone carver, completely unknown, all of thirty-one years old, in 1974, when he won what author Tom Wolfe has called "the most monumental commission for religious sculpture in the United States in the twentieth century."

J. Carter Brown, Director in Emeritus of the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., admitted that his own response to what Hart had accomplished was "one akin to awe." In a major monograph published in 1994, four years after the completion of the sculptures, Brown wrote that the "intellectual voltage of the iconography of the facade is startling..."

Even that is an understatement, given the juxtapositioning of the Cathedral's patron saints with the wave-tossed, voluptuous naked figures of "Ex Nihilo." So sensually provocative is "Ex Nihilo," in fact, that a huge, crude replica of it was used without permission in the Warner Brothers film "The Devil's Advocate," a satanic thriller starring Al Pacino. In the film's fiery climatic scene, the figures in the bas relief come orgiastically alive, an outrage that prompted indignant lawsuits from both Hart and the Cathedral, who held joint copyrights for the sculptures.

"They were awarded a large, undisclosed settlement, but even more significant is that the suit helped to preserve an artist's rights to his own work and the protection of its intent," says Neil Zukerman. Adding that hearsay has it that there might have been "a line item in the film's budget for the lawsuit," the gallerist quips, "They probably figured it would be easier to get forgiveness than to ask permission!"

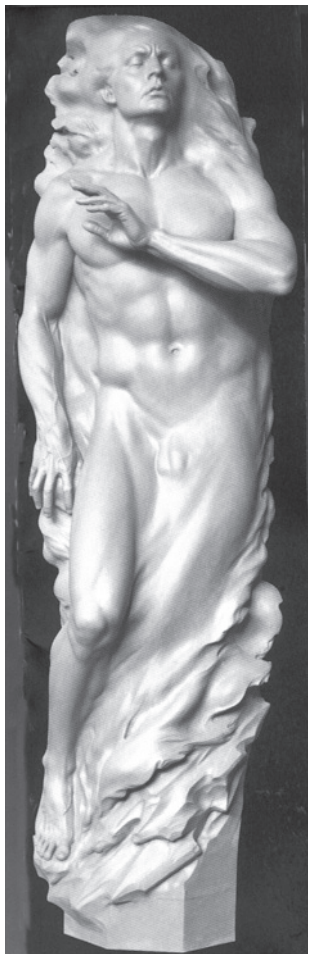
In any case, the very fact that his work would lend itself to such a blasphemous misuse reminds one yet again what a complex artist Frederick Hart was: on one hand hailed by Pope John Paul for creating "a profound theological statement for our day"; on the other, a master of the unabashedly sexy undraped female form.

As Raine Eisler pointed out in Sacred Pleasure, while Eastern religions have exalted the sensual since ancient times, here in the West, "the view that sex has a spiritual dimension is so alien to everything we have been taught that it takes most people completely aback."

Hart, however, was never troubled by such contradictions. His art was sanctified from the start by his sacred love for his wife, Muse, and lifelong model Lindy Lain Hart, whose beautiful face and body he emblazoned again and again across the facade of the great Cathedral. Thus, without being an iconoclast (a notion that would surely have been repugnant to his southern gentleman's sense of propriety) Hart nonetheless affected a stunning synthesis of diverse religious traditions.

The editioning of "The Creation Sculptures" realizes posthumously one of Frederick Hart's fondest dreams, confided to his publisher Bob Chase at an exhibition of Rodin's "Gates of Hell," which had been similarly editioned. After Hart's original working models and maquettes were exhibited at the Cathedral in a Frederick Hart Memorial service in 2000, Chase met with church officials, who agreed to releasing the limited editions, with part of the proceeds going to support the programs and ministries of the Cathedral.

Also featured at CFM will be other major works in bronze, marble, and clear acrylic, the innovative modern medium that Hart pioneered to "sculpt in light" themes that grew out of "Ex Nihilo." Especially noteworthy among the latter



"Adam," resin

are pieces such as "Divine Mileau" and "Prologue," in which ethereal female nudes float within the luminous surface, embodying that synthesis of the sensual and the spiritual so unique to Hart's work.

Because he believed so wholeheartedly that "art must be part of life," and that it was his God-given mission to restore heroism, grandeur, and beauty to the human figure, Frederick Hart could be quite contentious in defense of his exalted aesthetic ideals. Indeed, at his cantankerous best, he could almost remind one of the abstract painter Ad Reinhardt, arguing just as fiercely in an earlier era for "the utter separation of art from life."

It is doubtful that either man would have to exert himself so strenuously in the more inclusive aesthetic climate of the present day.Thus, it is time for Hart's most vociferous supporters to stop casting him in conservative opposition to modernism for their own self-serving purposes. Rather, we should all finally recognize Frederick Hart for the truly radical spirit that he was, and allow this great contemporary sculptor to claim his rightful place in art history.

—Ed McCormack

The Harmonious Organic Vision of Ethel Schlesinger

Often when an artist is doubly gifted as a painter and a sculptor his or her work in the two mediums takes a distinctly different form. However, the opposite is true in the case of Ethel Schlesinger, whose solo show of mixed paintings and sculptures is on view at Pleiades Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, from February 19 through March 9.

Schlesinger's paintings and sculptures are equally inspired by nature and explore facets of the same subject matter, albeit in two or three dimensions. Somewhere between the two are relief paintings, such as "Textures" and "Valley," in which Schlesinger builds up the surfaces of her compositions with various collage elements, such as bits of wood, wire, aqua resin and other materials.

In "Valley," the earthy monochromatic palette, combined with the rugged tactile surface, lends the piece a powerful organic unity, comparable to Anselm Keifer's works in which straw and other natural materials evoke a textural terrain. In Schlesinger's "Valley," however, there is also a sense of the feminine element in nature, suggested here in the labial folds and womb-like openings that enliven the surface, which can be compared to the orifices so prominent in the canvas and wire wall reliefs of Lee Bontacou.

"Gateway"

In Schlesinger's case, paper, string, wood, aqua resin, and whatever else "takes my fancy," as the artist puts it, are employed along with acrylic paint and medium to create surfaces that invariably suggest aspects of nature in both the paintings and the sculptures. That the latter have compelled Schlesinger over the past two years would seem a natural consequence of her growing preoccupation with surface and texture as a means to replicate a palpable sense of space and place in nature.

Schlesinger's sculptures succeed splendidly in this goal, as seen in "Treelife" and "Woods," where rugged shards of wood create craggy forms that transport the viewer to wild, secluded landscapes of the imagination. Other pieces, such as "Gateway" and "Sunhem," evoke a sense of cavernous enclosures or primitive abodes, albeit without becoming so specific as to cancel their enigmatic mystery. For the most part, Schlesinger prefers to preserve this abstract ambiguity, although "Birdies" is a delightful exception. Here, the quite literal forms of the small creatures would appear to have evolved inevitably from the rough hewn materials themselves, out of which Schlesinger has conjured up a community of feathered friends with the brevity and grace of a sculptural haiku.

In these and other pieces, such as "Undersea," with its undulant linear rhythms exemplifying the term "drawing in space," we have an answer to another writer for this publication who ended his review of Schlesinger's exhibition in 2000 by wondering where she would go next.

Impressive as Schlesinger's recent sculptures are, however, it is important to keep in mind that she began as a painter and that her paintings are the progenitors of her work in three dimensions. Indeed, it is in Schlesinger's paintings that we see most clearly her relationship to other contemporary New Naturists such as Gregory Amenoff, as well as to earlier American modernists such as Arthur Dove and Georgia O'Keeffe who drew, as she does, from the deepest wellsprings of nature, extracting its essences and energies to create abstract compositions that resonate with an inner mystery. Surely, the surging forms and chromatic richness of paintings such as "String Song" and "Coral" transcend what we normally think of as landscape painting or even nature based abstraction to give us a resonant sense of the forces underlying natural phenomena.

A nature poet who employs color, texture and form, rather than words, to create her metaphors, Ethel Schlesinger is a constantly evolving presence in today's art scene. In its restless evolution, her work approximates the flux and movement of nature itself, and the present exhibition shows her in a particularly fertile phase of her development.

—Byron Coleman

Femininity and Strength in the Art of Danièle M. Marin

Some of us tend to think of feminist art as a movement that peaked in the 1970s with Judy Chicago's famous installation, "The Dinner Party," performance pieces such as Janine Antoni's "Loving Care" (in which the artist soaked her long hair in dye and mopped the gallery floor with it), and the various "Earth Bodyworks" of the late Ana Mendieta, who imprinted the outline of her own nude body on the earth with fire and ash to create what the writer Gloria Feman Orenstein called "a sacred site in which one woman reclaimed her passionate link to the Great Earth Mother."

And, indeed, these were seminal events through which women artists made powerful statements of emergence at a time when such politicized gestures were much needed. It would be shortsighted, however, not to recognize that Mary Cassatt was making just as relevant a feminist statement for her time when she defied her Pittsburg banker father to study art in Paris in the late 1800s. Nor should we forget the long struggles and hard-won triumphs of others, from Frida Kahlo to Louise Bourgeois, whose contributions, while perhaps not as avowedly political, were equally relevant and brave.

To this distinguished company of women artists one should also add the name of Danièle M. Marin, who is less well known but proved herself to be no less committed and brilliant in her solo exhibition "Au Féminin/As a Woman: a possible pattern," which ran through January 27 at Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street.

Marin, who emerged with her well-received first solo show, "Reclaiming the Dress: A Journey," at Noho Gallery's former location in Soho a few years ago, still employs the simplified outline of a dress form as a recurring motif in some of her mixed media pieces. This basic shape, signifying the feminine body as effectively as any nude, has the quality of a primal symbol. It becomes an almost ghostly presence in pictures such as "Prehistory," where layered bits of gossamer, gauze-like fabric are combined with bits of thread that function like finely drawn lines, the fragile materials enhancing the poignant quality of the image.

Like Kiki Smith, another post-feminist artist who continues to explore themes relevant to the lives of women, Danièle M. Marin often chooses such materials for their ethereal effect, to complement the exquisite emotional undertones of her imagery.

"Cloth and caring are the wonderful gifts that women gave us since the beginning of time," Marin has stated. "In most of my art pieces I use 'scrim' as a medium or in addition, to reveal women's unnamed emotions. Cloth has always been present as a silent partner; it abolishes apparent dividing lines between art and life, both past and present. Cloth makes evident the link between history, culture, and art."

Like Ava Gerber, an artist best known for a piece called "Sisterhood," consisting of a circle of linked aprons, Danièle M. Marin often employs fabric to create imposing yet delicate "soft sculptures" and installations. A centerpiece of the show at Noho Gallery was the installation entitled "Making Sense," comprised of myriad squares of pink fabric crumpled to suggest pale roses and connected with small safety pins to form a large grid. A small ladder ran from the gallery floor, up under this skirt-like pink grid, to the wall. A long ribbon of scrim ran from under the grid, down the ladder, onto the gallery floor. Visible within it were squares of paper about the size of tea bags, penciled with tiny sketches and scrawled phrases such as "cognitive unconscious."

"A Sense of Place" (mixed media) 32" x 25"

Despite its fey, fanciful quality, "Making Sense" had a haunting psychological undertone, its very title suggesting an ironic feminine answer to male admonishments that one should abandon the intuitive for a more "rational" line of reasoning. Yet, as in all poetry—and make no mistake about it, this installation is a visual poem of sorts—the piece invites individual interpretation through its use of evocative albeit elusive material metaphors.

Another major piece was the large painting/assemblage entitled "Triptych (Vulnerability & Strength)." In this work in acrylic and mixed media, the raison d'etre was a filmy full-length dress on a real hanger hooked over the top of the center panel, and flanked on both side panels by large charcoal drawings of angels, partially covered by semi-transparent areas of scrim collaged to the canvas. The overall effect was of a symbolic feminine crucifixion, making it one of the most profoundly affecting statements in the show.

Marin's highly original manner of layering materials was especially apparent in another piece entitled "Memory Burst." Here charcoal and collage were employed by the artist to create a striking abstract composition with a large, circular central form emerging like a full moon from a deep black ground in which a faint grid was barely discernible, anchoring it to the picture plane. On closer viewing, the large lunar-looking orb actually turned out to be a kind of pouch or pocket of semi-transparent mesh, filled with a variety of loose sheets and scraps of paper covered with diverse images, including an old fashioned drawing or print of a woman's face. Now the pouch evoked a womb pregnant with images, creating a metaphor for the creative process from an especially womanly perspective.

Marin's smaller mixed media works are every bit as effective in their own manner as her large ones, creating a suitably intimate context for imagery poised between personal reminiscence and universal resonance. Especially poetic in this regard were collages incorporating old photographs, such as "Girl's School," in which one child, resembling a younger version of the artist, was singled out in a quaint group portrait, and "La Tour Eiffel," where multiple images of the same child levitated around a loose line drawing of the famous Paris landmark.

In these and other small mixed media collages and assemblages (including one entitled "Birth," in which the piece de resistance was a small silver foil ball) Marin reveals an evocative personal surrealism, tinged by nostalgia, akin to that of Joseph Cornell yet distinguished by her own unique angle of vision.

Danièle M. Marin succeeds admirably in her stated goal of capturing qualities of "femininity and strength." Indeed, she makes the two words synonymous by virtue of her sensitive and felicitous handling of womanly themes.

—Ed McCormack

Hester Welish's Variously Engaging "Abstract Realism"

"Interiors and cityscapes have always fascinated me as a painter," says the Manhattan artist Hester Welish, "perhaps because the architectural structure integral to these subjects provides a recognizable yet abstract form that does not inhibit my imagination."

Welish, who studied at the Art Students League, the National Academy of Design, and the China Institute in New York City has exhibited her work at Noho Gallery, among several other U.S. venues, as well as at The Mall Galleries and Heatherly Gallery, both in England.

In her new exhibition, "City Structures and Still Lifes," at Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, from March 12 through 30 (reception March 16, from 4 to 6 PM), Welish demonstrates her ability to create dynamic compositions from every day subjects. Indeed, Welish's oils on canvas are successful examples of a style for which a writer for this publication once coined the term "abstract realism."

"Jazz"

One of the highlights of the present exhibition, in terms of Welish's ability to have it both ways, is the cityscape entitled "Construction." Here, the steel beams of a building under construction project powerful spatial tensions in a manner similar to that which caused more than one critic in the Abstract Expressionist era to liken the calligraphic brushstrokes of Franz Kline to I-beams. But while Franz Kline made his early reputation with stark black and white canvases, Hester Welish is a colorist as well as an artist who imbues representational subject matter with the thrust of abstraction. Here, the rusty-hued beams are set against a lyrically mottled pink and pale blue sky that pleasingly complements the formal power of the composition. Other details, such as the cables of a crane and the dark, diagonal shape of what appears to be a sheet of steel being hoisted up to the structure of crossed beams, further enhance both the formal and descriptive qualities that create a compelling synthesis of shape and image, atmosphere and design.

Representational qualities come more emphatically to the forefront in another painting by Welish entitled "Jazz," its composition centered on four huddled musicians. At least three of the musicians strum bass fiddles, making this a most unusual jam session, while the instrument of the fourth member of the quartet, partially hidden by one of the others, is not visible. Despite the decidedly figurative nature of the picture the matching red suits and uniform brown complexions of the combo make its members appear to merge, unifying the composition and emphasizing its underlying sense of abstraction. Indeed, the clear, sharply defined color areas and the inclusion of the title word "Jazz," spelled out in bold black letters that float above the heads of the musicians, recalling the use of topography in some Russian Constructivist compositions.

The synthesis is equally dramatic in "Still Life with Guitar," where the instrument of the title, painted in vibrant red and yellow hues, is propped up on a black easy chair and surrounded by an array of colorful shapes suggesting skillfully organized clutter. In this canvas, with its flatly painted interlocking shapes, Welish evokes a host of modern art historical precedents, from Georges Braque to Milton Avery. At the same time, she maintains the unique aesthetic identity that distinguishes her work as a whole.

By contrast, "Landscape" is one of Welish's splashiest forays into semi-abstraction, with deep green trees and swerving bodies of land and water set against a brilliant yellow sky. Here, the slightly more eccentric composition veers toward a visionary Neo-Romanticism, combining strident color contrasts reminiscent of the Fauves with poetic and picturesque atmospheric qualities akin to independent spirits such as Albert Pinkham Ryder and Casper David Friedrich.

It is her willingness to explore so many different approaches, following her intuition and the dictates of her subject matter, appropriating elements from various periods of art history, varying her technique to suit each picture, yet retaining the stamp of her own inimitable character, that makes Hester Welish a constantly surprising and engaging painter.

—Lawrence Downes

The Sculptures of Gloria Spevacek Ennoble their Animal Subjects

"I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd," wrote Walt Whitman, and it is precisely the qualities described in the last phrase of that famous sentence that the sculptor Gloria Spevacek captures so skillfully in "Animals, Animals," her first solo exhibition at Viridian Artists, Inc., 530 West 25th Street, from January 29 through February 16.

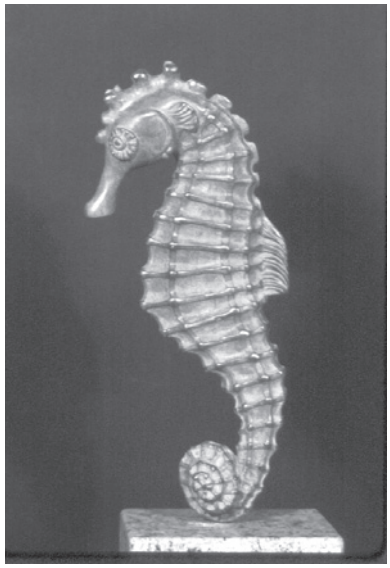
Animals were among the earliest subjects in art, as seen in prehistoric cave paintings of bisons, the fierce lions guarding ancient Chinese temples, and the feline figures decorating Egyptian tombs, among numerous other beasts, both real and imaginary, which have fascinated artists since time immemorial. Although painters from antiquity to the present have also depicted animals symbolically or literally in all manner of contexts, modern sculptors have created some of the most memorable images of our nonhuman friends: Picasso's famous goat, Marini's many horses, Baskin's birds of prey, and Calder's various zoo and circus animals, to name just a few.

Not many artists, however, have explored the subject as extensively as does Gloria Spevacek. Working in materials ranging from alabaster to bronze, Spevacek invests her sculptures of various species with genuine affection and visual wit, as well as formidable formal qualities.

One of the true highlights of the show is the bronze "Cat and Mouse." The flowing form of the feline figure in this piece is exceptional for its sense of grace and about-to-pounce tension, especially well expressed in the undulant curve of its back as it crouches atop two stacked books, staring down at its prey. The real surprise of the piece, however, is that what the cat is staring at so intently turns out to be a computer mouse rather than the actual rodent we normally associate with that familiar phrase. Without distorting either the animal or the object, Spevacek exploits the visual pun inherent in the piece and its title to the hilt, making the computer wire curve around the mouse like a tail, reminding us that this ingenius device was named as much for its shape as for the skittery movements we make when we manipulate it.

Another especially engaging piece is "Getting Acquainted," a bronze with a subtly speckled blue patina. Here, Spevacek takes a slightly more abstract approach, severely simplifying the shapes of the two identical birds whose long beaks, as they engage each other breast-to-breast, cross like swords, suggesting that the wary beginning of a relationship can be, in some respects, not unlike a duel. Here, too, Spevacek's insightful humor and ability to use animals to make subtle statements concerning human nature without compromising their integrity by anthropomorphizing them is augmented by her aesthetic acumen. Her creatures, whether depicted with relative realism, as in "Cat and Mouse," or simplified to the point of semi-abstraction, as in "Getting Acquainted," command space with an authority that is invariably impressive. Her treatment of animals, for all her obvious affection for them, is never sentimental or merely anecdotal, yet the refreshing lack of pretension in her choice of subject matter can almost distract one from what a truly fine sculptor she is.

"Marine Equus," for example, could be viewed as a winningly unassuming bronze of a sea horse, the sort of subject that is often treated whimsically, until one examines this one more closely and appreciates how it commands space with such sinuous abstract grace, making an arabesque in space. By contrast, "Equus I," an alabaster bust of a more landlocked horse, with dramatically arched neck and flared nostrils, is possessed of an almost Etruscan majesty. While some of Spevacek's other sculptures remind us of the more domestic attributes of animals, in their role as companions or diversions for humans, here we are in the presence of a mythic steed, such as those that carried nobles, kings, and warriors on their travels or into battle.



"Marine Equus"

A member of both the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators and the National Sculpture Society, among several other prestigious affiliations, Gloria Spevacek combines specialized knowledge of the characteristic of animals with broader aesthetic abilities to create some of the most imaginative and appealing animal sculptures seen in recent years.

—Ed McCormack

Charles E. Murphy's Newly Elegiac New York State of Mind

Charles E. Murphy has emerged in recent years as our premiere interpreter of New York City views, not only because his oils of familiar landmarks have all the resonance of portraits, but also because they are so sublimely painted. Poised between bravura brushwork and pristine control, Murphy's canvases are illuminated as much by the artist's deep and abiding affection for his subjects as by his unfailing way with light on steel and glass and stone. Indeed, his ability to convey subtle emotional qualities through atmospheric means is what imbues his paintings with the unique poetry that sets them apart from the work of others who attempt similar themes.

Particularly poignant in this regard is "Remembrance," a recent oil on linen in Murphy's newest exhibition of "New York Impressions," at Manhattan Athletic Club, 277 Park Avenue, from February 4 through March 29, with a reception for the artist on Tuesday, February 12, from 6 to 8 PM.

In "Remembrance," the Manhattan skyline is seen from across the river in Brooklyn, where Murphy resides and has his studio. The sky above is at once luminous and oddly overcast, with softly shadowed clouds floating over stratospheric streaks of yellow and deep purple. On the right side of the canvas, the stone base and vertical girders of the bridge border the composition like a dark curtain. Beneath it, a large rain puddle is enlivened by evocative reflections. But the piece de resistance of the painting is a single, slender tree beneath the bridge, its delicate leaves wreathing the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, still standing by a miraculous act of memory on the opposite shore.

The Twin Towers rise magically yet again, now in profile, in another oil on linen entitled "East River at Dusk," where the angle of vision creates the effect of a monolithic monument shaped by sunlight and shadow, set majestically against a vibrant blue sky. With Manhattan Island on the left side of the composition and linked to the water-line by a graceful necklace of bridge-lights, twinkling mutedly as dusk descends over the river, Murphy creates yet another affectingly elegiac image that will linger long in memory. Indeed, for those of us familiar with Murphy's oeuvre, his paintings of the Twin Towers take on extra weight and meaning, mirroring our communal loss through the eyes of an artist whose nuanced intimacy with the city and unique ability to capture its subtle shifts of mood enables him to suggest the psychic toll that the September 11 tragedy has taken on us all.

"Remembrance"

In Murphy's most recent paintings, the compositions have grown increasingly more daring, as seen in "Brooklyn Reflections II," where a large puddle on the bottom third of the composition dissects and reflects an obscure, somewhat desolate industrial street. Here, with few other elements than some factory buildings, a rusty red dumpster and a more vibrantly red parked car, the artist employs the reflective puddle to create a sense of dislocation, a slightly disconcerting quality that signals a dynamic new departure in Murphy's work.

So sensitively attuned to his subjects is Charles E. Murphy that the manner in which our city has been irrevocably changed by the unprecedented terrorist attack haunts some of his recent paintings. At the same time, there are other works, such as the three exhilarating and beautifully composed snow scenes, that hark back to happier times in the life of our great, grievously wounded city.

—Ed McCormack

(See pg. 10 for review.)

Klabunde's "Shadows and Ceremonies"

When European artists first discovered African masks and sculpture at the beginning of the twentieth century, they were primarily attracted to their formal qualities, which along with the structural innovations of Cezanne, served as one of the primary catapults for the launching of Cubism. Picasso, particularly, saw African tribal art as a tool with which to wrench himself free from his roots in classical representation. His struggle culminated in 1907 with the epoch-making large canvas "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," one of the pivotal masterpieces of modernism.

But while African art has yielded a wealth of formal innovation, Western artists have generally ignored its equally rich spiritual content, as well as the humanity of its creators. By the very nature of their enterprise, collectors and curators, too, have taken African artifacts out of context, entombing them behind glass in display cases and museum vatrines, when their beauty and meaning can only be fully appreciated in the vital kinetic motion of the ceremonial dances for which they were created.

All of which brings us to "Shadows and Ceremonies," a new body of work by the contemporary American painter and printmaker Charles S. Klabunde, inspired by the art and peoples of Africa and Papua, New Guinea, which can be viewed by appointment at Beyond the Looking Glass Gallery, 33 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 69, Frenchtown, New Jersey, 08825 (telephone: 908-996-6464 or 212-777-9162).

Klabunde, whose work is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, in Washington D.C., and numerous other important public and private collections here and abroad, tends to work in series. Most of his suites of etchings and series of paintings spring from a philosophic or moral principle that he feels compelled to explore. This can come from anywhere. Previous bodies of work have evolved from diverse sources, ranging from Carl Jung's interpretations of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, to Martin Buber's writings on The Seven Deadly Sins, to Albert Camus' ideas about revolution, to a half coherent plea muttered in pain by a homeless man on the subway: "Hold back the night!" This last poetic phrase struck Klabunde as a poignant expression of the human spirit's constant struggle against the engulfing darkness, and lead to a powerful series of paintings of that title.

The idea for "Shadows and Ceremonies" began to germinate when Klabunde found himself deeply moved by a book on African art and life that he encountered by chance. When, equally serendipitously, a neighbor began to import art from Africa and New Guinea a short time later, the artist became a voracious collector. Soon an entire wall and a good-sized area of floor space in his studio in Frenchtown, New Jersey, was covered with colorful masks and carved figures. Working among them, steeped in their strong emanations, aided by photographs of tribal dancers, he began to make the large, meticulously detailed pencil drawings that precede his paintings. While many artists employ drawings either as preliminary studies for paintings or separate statements, Klabunde's are both. While serving to guide the compositions of his large oils on canvas, they are also finished statements in their own right. Like the paintings, the drawings take as their subjects either the graceful bodies of masked dancers captured in the throes of strenuous movement or the expressive faces behind the masks, decked out in tribal regalia and confronting the viewer in dignified repose. Of the latter portraits, Klabunde says, "It's very important to me to show these people as individual human beings with souls, rather than treating them the way Africans are usually depicted in our culture: not much differently than those faceless extras who get tossed to the crocodiles in the old Tarzan movies!"

In the paintings, particularly, the individual character of each portrait subject comes across powerfully, asserting itself through the tribal camouflage of facial paint, intricate beadwork, and elaborate ceremonial jewelry. Much like the the plumage of endangered avian species, these exotic adornments call attention to the innate beauty of these indigenous people and remind us of all that we lose when their cultures are usurped by the questionable "progress" of the modern world or wiped out by disease or tribal warfare.

In Klabunde's paintings of masked dancers, as in his tribal portraits, each composition depicts a single figure and conveys its singular presence with a centralized power that can only compared to certain canvases by Francis Bacon. Granted, Klabunde himself might balk at this comparison to a painter whose often grotesque subject matter and looser, more impetuous form of figuration he might think antithetical to his own humanist goals and methodical working methods. Nonetheless, the two artists share an ability to create the sense of an encounter with a palpable human presence placed in a frontal pose at the center of the composition, invariably against dark backgrounds that cast the figures in stark relief. While Bacon assaults the viewer with the visceral jolt of seeing the human image flayed like a side of beef, Klabunde confronts us with the culture shock of a spiritual tradition far different from our own. This is especially pronounced in Klabunde's powerful painting of a woman with a trance-like countenance gripping by its legs a rooster apparently sacrificed in a religious ritual, as well as in another canvas depicting a young boy with another dead fowl draped limply as a turban over his head. While such images may be somewhat disturbing to a "civilized" modern sensibility, they accurately reflect the spiritual content that most mainstream Western artists who ransack African culture for its formal riches choose to ignore.

"Mambilia Mask Dancer" Cameroon, Africa

Klabunde's paintings of masked dancers may be less provocative to some than the previous two pictures involving animal sacrifice, yet they still convey a host of meanings equally foreign to our way of life. In the tribal cultures of both Africa and New Guinea, masks are often worn to communicate with ancestral spirits. The dancer is believed to be transfigured by the mask, becoming the bearer of supernatural spiritual powers. Through their proud, stylized postures Klabunde's tautly muscled figures manage to convey the awesome responsibility of such transfiguration. Although these figures are considerably more realistic than those in "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon," their anatomy appears to meld more naturally with the outlandishly exaggerated human and animal masks that they wear. For while Picasso's ladies pose as though for an old fashioned bordello portrait, Klabunde's dancers flow with the fluid movements of their rituals, becoming one with their masks. Charles S. Klabunde, the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the creator of a suite of hand etched illustrations for a deluxe edition of Samuel Beckett's "The Lost Ones" that the author praised as "terrifying," has stated that "Shadows and Ceremonies" is intended to preserve aspects of a culture that is rapidly vanishing. In the process, he has created a series that, like all of his work, transcends its specific subject to make a universal human statement.

—Ed McCormack

The WSAC's "Reflections on Life"

Curated by painter Jennifer Holst for the West Side Arts Coalition, the recent group show "Reflections on Life," at Broadway Mall Community Center, on the center island at Broadway and 96th Street, featured twelve artists with diverse styles, two of whom approached genre subjects with notable panache:

Marianne McNamara captured the domestic tensions of a family visit in a crowded living room and the local color of a vital New York neighborhood, Spanish Harlem, with wit and style in two brightly patterned faux naive paintings in acrylic on canvas.

WSAC Newcomer Nicholas Kodjak showed watercolors focused on subway passengers, their crowded conditions and impassive expressions depicted in flowing washes and subdued hues with considerable abstract impact.

Impressive in another manner, Gail Rodney's studies of male and female nudes in soft pastels and oil pastels transcended their humble life drawing class origins to become compelling personal statements by virtue of her sensitivity to nuances of color and surpassing draftspersonship.

Vija Doks combines scrawled phrases and sensitive drawing with admirable flair in a witty self portrait.

Karl J. Volk is a quirky talent whose compositions combine humor and genuine aesthetic interest, as seen in his intricate collage of a male chauvinist dream palace and his watercolor of a middle aged disco dancer doing her thing.

Rebecca Perez showed a large realist painting of a woman wearing a t-shirt that said "My Mother Died When I Was 17," notable for its sense of a mysterious subtext, as well as its incisive portraiture and subtle integration of collage elements.

Few artists dare to exhibit two paintings as different from each other as Eleanor Gilpatrick's detailed image of a man in front of a brick house and her loose, Expressionistic canvas of a fruit vendor, but Gilpatrick's coherent overall vision makes matters of style irrelevant.

Two other figurative artists demonstrated their kinships with art historical predecessors without surrendering the qualities that make their own work unique:

K.A. Gibbons showed three relatively diverse works, but by far the most interesting was her oil of spectators on a shore gazing out on a lurid melted egg yolk sunset painted with a crude intensity reminiscent of Marsden Hartley.

Mary Laren was represented by several oils with a decidedly narrative quality, but by far the most interesting was her small painting of two lawyers conferring in a courtroom which, for its sharp sense of character and gesture, suggested a Daumier in modern dress.

Vija Doks

By contrast, Leah Zara employed the human figure primarily as a vehicle for formal exploration in two dazzling neo-pointillist paintings utilizing strident, near-fluorescent hues to create vibrant chromatic auras.

By now a familiar figure in WSAC group shows, Carole Barlowe layers small canvases of various sizes to create multi-leveled cityscapes in which simplified figures and isolated architectural elements create a sense of flux and movement that is in many ways more accurate than a conventional approach to such subjects can capture.

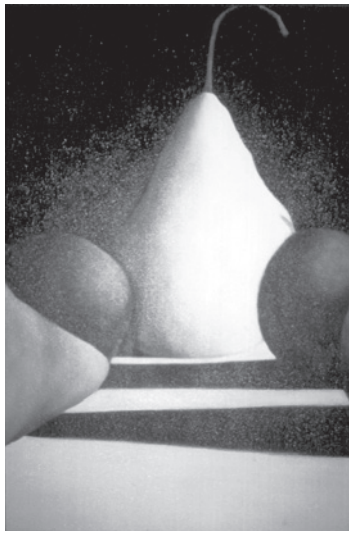
Mikki Powell, on the other hand, focuses in on a more intimate urban vignette in her large monochromatic canvas of a young boy and his dog on a tenement stoop, and gives us a strong character study in another boldly conceived painting of a mature blues musician in a wide-brimmed fedora and sunglasses posing proudly with his guitar.

—Wilson Wong

The Suggestive Still Lifes of Joseph Patrick Gregory

Every January when the Outsider Art Fair comes to town, the debate about what, exactly, constitutes that odd category is renewed. Joseph Patrick Gregory, however, whose solo exhibition was seen recently at Agora Gallery (now in its new location at 415 West Broadway, 5th floor), is one artist who makes such arguments seem irrelevant.

Granted, Gregory is self-taught and admits freely that he was drawn to art initially as therapy, having suffered from severe depression, anxiety, and having tried everything else, from medication, to meditation, to breathing exercises. Only art worked. In fact, Gregory will tell you that art saved his life. But does that make him any more of an outsider than Vincent van Gogh, a successful suicide whose work we now revere but whose therapy was not as successful? Only if we insist on interpreting the emotional power of both artists' work as a symptom rather than an expressive asset.



"Good to be King"

Joseph Patrick Gregory paints pears in a cool classical realist style. His compositions have a formal austerity that recalls certain Flemish masters, as well as mainstream contemporary artists like Robert Kipniss and William Bailey who imbue simple still life subjects with depth and mystery. Indeed, Gregory's compositions verge on Minimalism, and his paintings are as easy to appreciate for their purely abstract virtues as for his treatment of subject matter.

Yet, look at some of his pears a little more closely and they begin to take on undeniably anthropomorphic qualities, their curvaceous surfaces and softly shadowed skins yielding a warm erotic glow that one perceptive critic likened to the nudes of Titian and Rubens. Gregory confirms this interpretation, having stated that "about eighty percent of my work is a sexual scene or at least of a sexual nature."

Yet he has also imparted painted other symbolic qualities to pears as well, particularly issues of power and subjugation, as seen in the oil entitled "Good to be King." Here, a large white pear looms and lords its majesty over four smaller, darker pears. One could view this painting as simply a beautifully organized still life composition, but as its title makes clear, it is fraught with sociological implications.

Gregory has also painted somewhat more surreal pictures in which oversize pears are seen looming ominously on dark suburban streets. Gregory's generally subdued palette of pale green, gray, and blue hues adds to the sense that something not only anomalous but also quite sinister is going on, lending such paintings a truly disconcerting quality.

By contrast, paintings such as "Pears for Apollo" and "Brown Pear Still Life" belong to the more erotically allusive area of Gregory's oeuvre. The former depicts three pears in proximity, a veritable ménage à trois, while the latter suggests several voluptuous nudes in languorous repose, perhaps in a harem. Like all of Gregory's oils, they are at once evocative and aesthetically pleasing.

—Robert Vigo

Classic Modernism Prevails in the Sculptures of Jinx Lindenauer

When Harold Rosenberg declared in 1940 in Partisan Review that "The laboratory of the twentieth century has been shut down," he was noting not so much the end of Modernism as the geographical shift of its nexus from Europe to America—and New York City in particular. That Modernist art still persists more than half a century later as a vital and valid form of expression contemporaneous with the more difficult to define array of styles and tendencies termed Postmodern is especially clear in the work of those painters and sculptors who still find inspiration in ideal form.

One such artist is the sculptor Jinx Lindenauer, whose solo show "Forms and Facets" is on view from March 12 through 30, at Viridian Artists, Inc., 530 West 25th Street. (The reception will take place on Saturday, March 16, from 3 to 6 PM.)

Although she has exhibited in several group exhibitions and her work is included in private collections nationwide, this is Lindenauer's first solo show. Yet she arrives with a fully formed aesthetic vision that makes this fact surprising. Indeed, the refinement of her somewhat minimalist style suggests a long boiling-down process; for her pieces in bronze, carrara marble, and alabaster are possessed of a formal power and purity that is impressively mature. Indeed, one gets the impression of a long gestation process, indicating that this is an artist who delayed making her solo debut until she had achieved a long-sought level of achievement, a laudable rarity in today's art scene.

One of Lindenauer's most impressive and allusive pieces is the bronze "Pear," where the simple shape of the fruit lends itself to a more naturalistic treatment than is seen in some of her other sculptures, and in which the golden hue of the material itself enhances the effect. The anatomical suggestiveness of the piece, wherein the fruit's sensual curves and crevices appear to refer quite naturally to the contours of bellies and buttocks extends the allusiveness even further, even while "Pear" is essentially as abstract as Lindenauer's ostensibly less representational sculptures.

"Face Off"

Especially impressive among these are "Pietrasanta" and "Poor Will," the former in carrara marble, the latter in alabaster. Like many works by Brancusi, the modern master one can only assume ranks highest in Lindenauer's personal pantheon, "Pietrasanta" appears to be a variant on the egg shape, however the negative space at its center also suggests the womb in which the egg originates. In any case, Lindenauer is an artist strong enough in her own convictions not to mind inviting such comparisons, and she succeeds splendidly in maintaining her own sculptural identity and integrity in the face of them. "Pietrasanta," in fact, is both a tribute to a great sculptural tradition and an original statement by an artist more concerned with upholding eternal formal values than keeping up with current trends.

In "Poor Will," Lindenauer reveals equally strong allegiances to the primitive sources from which Brancusi and others also drew, for the piece, as its title hints, has the presence of a severely simplified Pre-Columbian or African figure. At the same time, it is severely abstract, for like Brancusi, who was more interested in the primal coherence of the primitive carvings that he studied so assiduously than in their blunt expressive possibilities, Lindenauer places the main emphasis on the formal aspects of her sculptures.

This is true, too, of "Face Off," an intriguing and somewhat anomalous sculpture in agate alabaster, in which the barest suggestion of a stylized face is inscribed on the craggy surface of a roughly rectangular, slablike shape. Here, the richly variegated amber color and crystalline translucence of the alabaster adds a poetic dimension to the piece. Yet, "Face Off" finally retains the monolithic formal presence that characterizes all of Jinx Lindenauer's best sculptures.

—J. Sanders Eaton

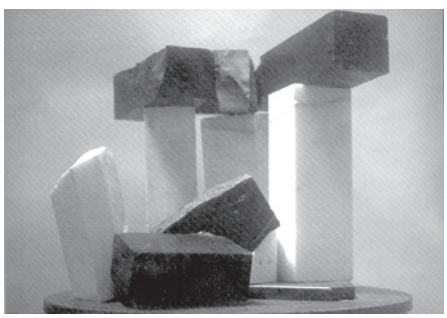
New York Notebook

Philip Pavia: New York School Legend

It never fails to amuse and dismay us how the really important events seem to soar right over the radar of art biz fashionistas. One of the most recent examples was "Freefall," a major exhibition of recent sculpture by the legendary Philip Pavia, at Broome Street Gallery, 498 Broome Street.

Born in 1915 and still going strong, Pavia was a ubiquitous activist in the New York Art scene of the forties, fifties, and beyond. In 1948, he founded the 8th Street Artists Club, where all the Abstract Expressionist heavyweights would contend boisterously in weekly panel discussions that Pavia organized for seven years. (When we visited him in East Hampton a few years before his death, Willem de Kooning reminisced: "Pavia started the club because we got kicked out of this cafeteria where we all used to hang out for not spending any money and making too much of a racket!")

Starting in 1955, Pavia published a magazine as a perhaps more polite forum for his friends to make their points in print. It was called IT IS, and it was the magazine of abstract art for the six issues that it lasted. (A big show of the artists and poets who contributed to IT IS is coming up at Sage College Museum in Albany. Scheduled for early 2003, the exhibition will travel for three years throughout the U.S. and Europe.)



Philip Pavia at Broome Street

After returning to sculpture full-time, Pavia had his first solo show at Kootz Gallery in 1961.The following year, he was commissioned by the Hilton Hotel to create the largest abstraction ever cast in bronze. Entitled "Ides of March," it was later acquired for the lobby of 1120 Avenue of the Americas. Shows followed at Martha Jackson Gallery, the Cooper-Hewett Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, the Guggenheim, and numerous other major venues here and abroad.

At Broome Street Gallery, a major venue in its own right since it is operated under the auspices of New York Artists Equity Association, Pavia showed bronzes and marble sculptures that revealed the casual touch of mature mastery. Pavia sculpts as Sinatra sang, with a stylish ease that can almost appear effortless, even nonchalant. But such apparent insouciance is hard won, a product of long experience. This is especially evident in his works in black and white marble, stately slabs stacked and balanced in a manner that has been characterized as "a Stonehenge collapsing." Monumental even on their pedestals, they do indeed evoke massive, mysterious ruins. Thus, Pavia calls them "Freefall Temples," a phrase which takes on added poignancy post-September 11.

In contrast to the weighty presence of his marble sculptures, Pavia's bronzes are buoyant. They appear weightless, their linear shapes crisscrossing in space like the calligraphic strokes in Brice Marden's "Cold Mountain" paintings, albeit expanded dynamically into three dimensions. Although the bronzes are also part of the "Freefall" series, they defy gravity, appearing to fly rather than fall.

Philip Pavia, who befriended Jackson Pollock when they were both taking classes at the Art Students League credits de Kooning, Pollock, and Kline as important peers who inspired him to seek a similar freedom in sculpture. And, indeed, the directness of Pavia's approach, closer in spirit to those painters he admires than to most other sculptors, helps him to achieve his stated goal of making each new piece "an adventurous happening."

Visions of America at ACA Gallery

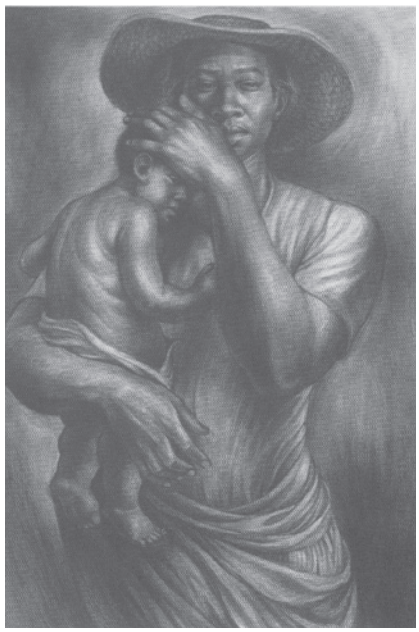
One of the best shows that you can still see as we go to press and should not miss is "Visions of America: A Black Perspective," at ACA Galleries, 529 West 20th Street, through March 2. Examining and celebrating "different aspects of African American artists' perceptions of America," the show spans the period from the Harlem Renaissance to the present.

Included are the stately, stylized Art Deco-flavored figuration of Aaron Douglas; the all-American Fauvism of Beauford Delaney; the influential collages of Romare Bearden, one of the acknowledged masters of the medium; the brilliant draftsmanship and monumental humanism of Charles White, who elevated drawing to a finished art on a par with painting; the evocative mixed media paintings of artist-illustrator-author Benny Andrews, who autographed copies of his new book, "The Hickory Chair," at the show's opening reception; the celebrated "storyquilts" of Faith Ringgold; and the radiant landscapes of Richard Mayhew, whose solo show will follow at ACA Galleries, from March 9 through April 6.

Two special highlights of the show are Hale Woodruff's "Cotton Pickers," 1931, which was presumed lost for over fifty years until its rediscovery in 1996, and "Fruits and Vegetables," a major Harlem Street scene by Jacob Lawrence, whose magnificent retrospective at the Whitney Museum was a highlight of the current art season.

On a personal level, we are also delighted by the inclusion of Joseph Delaney. The brother of the better known Beauford Delaney, this gifted painter has yet to get the recognition he deserves. That may be about to change, however, since ACA Galleries has been exhibiting Joseph Delaney regularly in recent years, and his lively street scenes, closer in spirit to the work of Reginald Marsh than the paintings of his brother, have their own considerable appeal.

What "Visions of America: A Black Perspective" demonstrates most dramatically is that, while African-American artists have all too often been excluded from the mainstream art world, their very isolation has given them a special perspective. These artists have truly paid their dues, as jazz musicians say, and their unique gifts enrich American culture immeasurably.



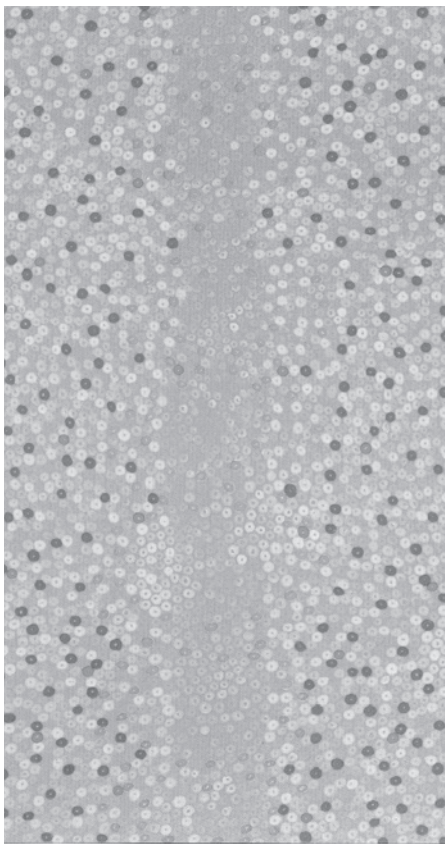
Charles White at ACA

Hell's Kitchen...or North Chelsea?

Does the name Eve Sonneman sound familiar? A highly esteemed photographer with several books to her credit, as well as a painter, Sonneman showed both aspects of her art regularly at Leo Castelli in the seventies and eighties. In 1996, she had a retrospective of photographs and paintings at Sidney Janis Gallery, for which Klaus Kertess, who curated the Whitney Biennial a few years ago, wrote a major catalog essay. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and she has also appeared on Late Night with David Letterman. The latter is an admittedly glitzy credit for a fine artist—but, hey, no one can accuse Eve Sonneman of not getting around!

Most recently Sonneman had a solo show of paintings, watercolors and painted objects at Jadite Galleries, 413 West 50th Street, a small venue in Hell's Kitchen that has been steadily gaining speed in recent years, thanks to the astute curatorial sensibility of its director, Roland Sainz.

Sonneman's oils on linen are large abstractions composed of myriad tiny circles with hollow centers that suggest everything from cells, atoms, and cosmic molecules to ring-binder reinforcements, and peppermint Life Savers—in other words, things both profound and mundane. The sheer, obsessive, swarming intensity of these minuscule shapes, some white, others



Eve Sonneman at Jadite

in brilliant colors, gathered in swirling overall compositions, calls to mind both the "Dreamtime" paintings of Australian Aboriginal artists and the eccentric psychedelic era conceptualism of the original "dot lady" Yayoi Kusama.

Eve Sonneman, however, has her own unique way with the dot, which she employs as a modular energy construct to give her large, colorful canvases a dynamic quality akin to the Orphism of Joseph Delauney and Frantisek Kupka. Like a contemporary offspring of these Orphists, who sought to extend the Cubist practice of fragmentation into new areas, as well as to emancipate pure color, Eve Sonneman employs her circular shapes set against contrasting grounds to produce pulsating chromatic harmonies that approximate the abstract freedom of music.

Also at Jadite, in the smaller gallery at the back, was an excellent exhibition of new work by Eileen Panepinto, whose collages and constructions are intimate in scale but magnanimous in terms of the range of ideas, moods, and subjects they encompass. Working with various found bits, as well as more traditional artist's materials, Panepinto creates what she calls "abstract physical narratives about experiences, places, thoughts or states of being."

She cites Joseph Cornell among her influences and does seem to share a special kinship with him in terms of her ability to make each work a little world unto itself. Kurt Schwitters also come to mind, for Eileen Panepinto is a visual poet whose work succeeds by virtue of her ability to create magical material metaphors from scraps of everyday detritus.

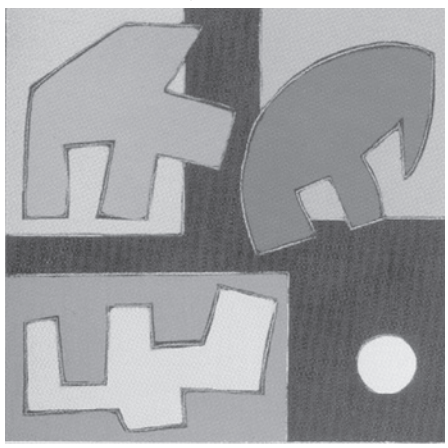
It is always heartening to encounter an artist like Eileen Panepinto, who opts for intimacy rather than overblown histrionics, and for whom the studio is obviously a laboratory for making discoveries rather than a factory for manufacturing art objects.

While in Hell's Kitchen, the colorful old name that we prefer to "Clinton" (a real estate euphemism that could be changed to "North Chelsea" at the rate galleries seem to be moving in) to visit Jadite, we discovered Fountain Gallery, a new venue at 702 Ninth Avenue. This handsome exhibition space on the corner of 48th Street is affiliated with Fountain House, an organization dedicated to the recovery of men and women with mental illness, of which the exhibiting artists are clients.

Much of the work on view, however, gave the lie to the notion that all people who have experienced such difficulties should be termed "outsider artists," a question that also comes up elsewhere in this issue. Indeed, very little of the work on view at Fountain Gallery had either the claustrophobic intricacy or the primitive rawness usually associated with the genre.

We were especially impressed with the vigorous gestural abstractions of Marty Cohen, the graceful calligraphic colored ink paintings of Armando Montes de Oca, and Deborah Standard's bold hard-edge compositions in gouache and casein, all of which had a sophisticated mainstream look.

Exhibitions at Fountain Gallery are curated by members of the New York art community who volunteer their services. One of these volunteers, who recently curated two shows there,



Deborah Standard at Fountain

is Sali Taylor, an artist and teacher known for her mandala paintings.

Sali (the mononym by which she is known professionally) has shown her work at another nearby venue, a not for profit interdisciplinary space called Art for Healing, located at 405 West 50th Street. Founded by artist Loren Ellis, who believes that various art forms "should be fused and shared simultaneously," Art for Healing presents visual art, as well as performances, readings, and other events on-site, as well as at various public spaces around town.

It would seem that such hybrid enterprises are a specialty of this vital multicultural neighborhood, where we ended the evening quite pleasantly with a suitably mixed up meal at a Cuban-Chinese diner.

Whither Goest the Whitney Now?

It's that time again: The 2002 Whitney Biennial, which opens on March 7 and will run through May 26, will be the largest edition of this always intriguingly kinky national survey since 1981. Included are 113 artists and collaborative teams. There are other good reasons to get to the Whitney this year, although the news that the Biennial will also boast the largest representation ever of film, video, sound, performance, and Internet art doesn't strike us as one of them. All too often film, video, and "sound"

Luis Gispet at the Whitney

come off in a museum context as a lot of competing noise and kinetic confusion, while much performance art strikes us as show business for people without talent. As for Internet art, unless it has improved a great deal since the Whitney introduced it in the 2000 Biennial, so far the web seems more useful for artists as a virtual gallery than a medium for art-making.

More interesting is the news that this year's Biennial will include off-site presentations by six artists in Central Park, and a recreation of Gertrude Stein's Paris salon in a private apartment on Spring Street. Among the better known names in the show will Kiki Smith, whose " Sirens and Harpies" will be installed in Central Park zoo; the Latvian-born artist Vija Celmins, who had a solo show at the Whitney in 1995; Vera Lutter, known for her large-scale photographs of urban and industrial scenes; Christian Marclay, who explores the relationship of image to sound; and Collier Schorr, who will reportedly "reconstruct the entirety of Andrew Wyeth's controversial 'Helga' series," with a young German school boy as the model—a gender bending conceptual exercise of the type one expects from this artist. Not to be outdone, Lorna Simpson will present a video grid of fifteen mouths humming the Rodgers and Hart show tune "Easy to Remember," as transmogrified by the avant garde jazz saxophonist John Coltrane.

Then there is by Christian Jankowski, who has worked a with a real-life Baptist televangelist to create "The Holy Artwork," the first known avant garde museum installation also televised as a straightfaced sermon.

We're also curious about the work of the late Margaret Kilgallen, who died in 2002, and was associated with a circle of San Francisco artists whose work is rooted in mural painting, graffiti, tramp art and underground comics; Yun-Fei Ji, a painter from Southern China who updates the ancient mode of ink and brush painting to deal with quirky historical subjects; and Conor McGrady, an artist from Northern Ireland whose drawings in watercolor, gouache and compressed charcoal explore the tension of

(Cont'd. next page)

daily life in Belfast.

We're heartened to see, too, that painting, the art that started it all and that critics repeatedly declare dead (perhaps so they can write subsequent articles about its rebirth at the hands of photogenic twentysomething "discoveries" fresh out of art school), is also alive and well in the work of several intriguing artists of various ages and varied styles, among them Gerry Snyder, whose multi-panel oil retells the Biblical story of Lot and his daughters; Lauretta Vinciarelli, an architect whose watercolors illuminate abstract spaces; Quattara Watts, whose mixed media compositions combine found objects, photographs, and painted texts and numbers; and Peter Williams, whose paintings layer interrelated images and forms to suggest subtle aspects of human perception and identity.

Love it or hate it, the Whitney Biennial is an event that no one concerned with keeping a finger—even if, in some cases, only a vulgar gesture finger—on the pulse of contemporary art can afford to miss. The 2002 installment sounds...even more so.

Naujokas and Bryant: Two True Believers

Speaking, once again, of the art that started it all, two consummate painters, each of whom transforms elements of the visible world in a unique manner, are featured in concurrent solo shows at Katharina Rich Perlow Gallery, in the Fuller Building, 41 East 57th Street, through February 28.

For his series of "Tabletop Vistas," Joe Naujokas, who has exhibited with the gallery

Sandi Seltzer Bryant at Perlow

for several years, photographed downtown Manhattan from the top of the World Trade Center shortly before the September 11th tragedy. Then he painted those views in oils as though seen through his studio window or in paintings within the painting, surrounded by other objects and props that create complexly layered compositions. Upping the imagistic ante by adding trompe l'oeil effects and collage elements to his meticulously painted views, Naujokas achieves a metaphysical sense of spatial dislocation. Inside and outside, reality and illusion, overlap and merge in delightfully unexpected ways.

The paintings in the series that Sandi Seltzer Bryant calls "Landscapes of my Travels," inspired by train journeys through the Netherlands and Northern Europe, evoke the lay of the land and such particulars as railroad tracks, meadows, and waterways in abstract, rather than literal, terms.

Bryant translates such elements of the landscape into brilliant ribbons and grids of color that, like the rhythmic swirls of Friedensreich Hundertwasser, evoke an almost giddy sense of joy. Her combination of loosely flowing and precisely schematized forms and offbeat color combinations is peculiarly poetic and ultimately exhilarating.

Joe Naujokas and Sandi Seltzer Bryant are very different kinds of painters, one rooted in realism, the other in abstraction.What they obviously share, however, is an abiding belief in painterly endeavor for its own sake that lends their work a similar integrity and depth.

Clueless Critic Contest

What well known art critic was humorless enough to write an entire essay about the late painter Stuart Sutcliffe without mentioning once that Sutcliffe had been an early member of the Beatles? (We know this guy is mucho serious and has only one ponderous note in his tuba—but come on! If Jackson Pollock himself had once been a Beatle, that would be worth mentioning, man!)

The first reader to e-mail us the correct answer will win a free 1-year subscription to Gallery&Studio.

* * *

•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•

COMPETITIONS

RECENT WORK SHOWCASE 2002, NYC group exhibition and $9000.00 awards. Deadline April 30. Send Sase for prospectus: Slow Art Productions, 870 Sixth Avenue, NYC 10001

PHOENIX GALLERY 2002 NATIONAL JURIED COMPETITION: JUNE 19-JULY 13, 2002. JUROR LISA PHILLIPS, DIRECTOR, NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, NY. ALL MEDIA. AWARD: SOLO/GROUP SHOW. Deadline: MARCH 31. Prospectus. Send SASE, Phoenix Gallery, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. info@phoenix-gallery.com

13TH annual Juried Competition at Viridian's new Chelsea location: June 25 to July 21, 2002. Juror: Robert Rosenblum, Curator, Guggenheim Museum, Contributing Editor, ArtForum and NYU Professor. Awards: Cash Prizes, Group Show, Continuous Slide Screening for runners-up. Deadline: April 13, 2002. Send SASE for prospectus: VIRIDIAN Artists Inc., 530 West 25th St., New York, NY 10001. Or download from our web site: www.viridianartists.com

20th ANNUAL JURIED EXHIBITION, PLEIADES GALLERY, OPEN TO ALL MEDIA. JUROR: Mr. Larry Rinder, Curator of Contemporary Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. NY. SHOW: June 26-July 13th, 2002. SLIDES DUE: May 20. Send SASE for PROSPECTUS to Pleiades Gallery, 530 West 25th. 4th Fl, NY, NY, 10001-5516. 646-230-0056

OPPORTUNITIES

Prestigious artist-run gallery in the heart of Chelsea gallery district. Limited number of memberships now available. For information send SASE to Pleiades Gallery - 530 West 25th St (4th Fl) NY, NY 10001-5516 or call (646) 230-0056

CELEBRATING ITS 43RD YEAR, PRESTIGIOUS ARTIST-RUN GALLERY IN THE HEART OF SOHO IS SEEKING NEW MEMBERS. FOR INFORMATION PLEASE SEND SASE TO PHOENIX GALLERY, 568 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10012

SOHO GALLERY is currently reviewing artists' portfolios. Please send slides, resume & SASE to: Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, NY, NY 10012

WWW.NEWYORKARTWORLD.COM is currently reviewing artists portfolios for web gallery showcase. 212-228-0657 E-mail info@newyorkartworld.com

WEST SIDE ARTS COALITION welcomes members from all areas. Visual arts exhibits, theater events, multi-media opportunites. Phone: 212-316-6024 e-mail: wsacny@wsacny.org

FOR RENT

GALLERY FOR RENT • Upper West Side, well equipped, by week, street level. 212-874-7188

GALLERY FOR RENT • Midtown area (2,000 Sq. Ft., Heavy traffic location) By week or Month. 212-245-6369

SERVICES

FINE ART PACKAGING Shipping supplies (wholesale & retail) • Private mail box • Lamination • Free Estimate • EZ-Mail, Inc., 217 E. 85th St., NYC 212 772-7909, 212-982-1956

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR ARTISTS Specializing for 20 years in quality slides & 4 & 5 transparencies of fine art. Bob Sasson, 212.675.0973

MIND/BODY

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is a mutual assistance self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings. Don't hesistate to call our Manhattan Chapter for meeting information: 212-517-9820

CHORUS MEMBERS WANTED

Non-sectarian chorus welcomes anyone with a desire to sing. No audition, no experience required. Join now. Monday rehearsals, 6:30-8:30 pm, 9th Ave./28 St. Jack Eppler (212) 475-2702 e-mail: je11@is7.nyu.edu

FOR CLASSIFIED LISTINGS
Call or Write: 217 East 85th Street, PMB 228, New York, NY 10028 (212) 861-6814
e-mail: galleryandstudio@mindspring.com

Babeck: A Nightmare Terrain Evoked Exquisitely in Ink

Drawings as finished works of art, rather than as preparatory sketches or studies, can have a power all their own. Babeck, a young artist born in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, employs pen and ink on paper to create often harrowing graphic statements of pain and protest that are as complete as any painting; yet, they are made all the more affecting by the stark simplicity of his medium.

In his recent solo exhibition, "The War," at Artsforum Gallery, 24 West 57th Street, Babeck joined the distinguished company of draftsmen such as Leonard Baskin and Jorge Luis Cuevas with a series of drawings inspired by—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say salvaged from—his first-hand experiences in a deeply troubled land.

For those among us who value Goya's suite of etchings "Disasters of War" and his drawings chronicling the horrors of Napoleonic occupation as highly as his paintings, Babeck's images come as a real revelation. It is always exciting to encounter an artist driven by forces fiercer than fashion, and Babeck fills the bill admirably with his pen dipped in the acids of indignation delineating an inner world where history merges with imagination to conjure up scenarios at once harrowing and strangely beautiful.

Few artist possess the ability to scour the subconscious so productively. Babeck confronts his inner demons unflinchingly, conquering and taming them to do his graphic bidding in drawings that simultaneously seduce and repel us with their intrepid exploration of the naked psyche. That his draftsmanship is so innately lovely and possessed of such delicacy of line makes this sense of ambiguity all the more disquieting, for Babeck's eloquent pen

"Kiss"

transmogrifies the stuff of myth and fairy tale, reflecting its fanciful personages through a dark mental looking glass, evoking a landscape as fanciful of Tolkien's Middle Earth, albeit perversely ravaged by war and ironically annotated by the passages from Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche "Beyond Good and Evil" that the artist appends to his titles.

Thus the powerful drawing entitled "Crime and Punishment," depicting a hooded executioner holding an axe above a severed head that rests on a blood stained tree-stump is accompanied by the quotation, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you." In this, one of Babeck's darkest, most densely worked drawings, the point is driven further home by the fact that the hooded avenger's eyes are as dead and devoid of all emotion as those of his victim.

In another remarkably accomplished drawing, entitled "Kiss," the imagery is considerably more enticing—at least at first glance—owing to the shapely female nude which dominates the composition, her Godiva-like tresses flowing out in intricately billowing patterns that morph into watery waves. Only on closer inspection do other, more disconcerting, images emerge from the ostensibly decorative linear filigree the artist has wrought with such finesse as to initially camouflage what it will gradually reveal: the face of a monstrous swordfish issuing from one of the nude woman's sensually swelling hips and the bat-wing adorning her back, as well as a large decomposing skull with octopoid tendrils with which she appears to be erotically engaged, as she puckers her lips for the kiss of the title. Again, the image is enhanced by a quote from Nietzsche: "In revenge and in love a woman is more barbarous than man."

In other pictures as well, Babeck employs visionary imagery, annotated by appropriate quotes from a German philosopher whom he obviously regards as a kindred spirit, to explore some of the darker reaches of the human soul. That he draws so exquisitely is what makes his work of more than passing interest.

—Jorge Santiago

Seeing Grandma Moses Anew at Galerie St. Etienne

With Norman Rockwell resurrected in a major museum survey and Outsider art all the rage, what better time than now for a Grandma Moses revival?

Since her name has passed into the language, and since her influence has been so pervasive on everything from the quaint "Americana" scenes on fabric and dinnerware designs to children's book illustrations, we tend to think that we know more about Grandma Moses than we actually do.

Those of us who were kids in the 1950s were dimly aware of her as a figure in the grown-up news whose longevity made it handy to pronounce certain of our teachers and other ancients "as old as Grandma Moses." Yet, I suspect that few among even those of us who grew up to be the kind of adults who concern themselves with art have looked closely enough at her paintings to distinguish them from those of her many imitators, both among so-called outsider artists and faux-primitive commercial hacks. Nor do we fully remember how vital a role she played in the popular mythology of her time.

Like the Hollywood "Sweater Girl," Lana Turner, Anna Mary Robertson Moses, who took up painting at an advanced age after spending much of her life toiling on farms in upstate New York and Virginia, was discovered in a drugstore. In 1938, a traveling collector named Louis Caldor chanced upon some of her pictures in her local upstate pharmacy, where they were displayed as part of a "woman's exchange."

Unlike Schwab's Drugstore, on Sunset Boulevard, which promptly became a magnet for Hollywood hopefuls, that humble country apothecary shop was not suddenly swamped by aspiring artists. Nor did the Moses family do more than simply pshaw when Caldor vowed to make Grandma a Big City Art Star.

Imagine their surprise, then, when after being turned down by some less insightful venues, Caldor managed to get Grandma her first of several shows at Galerie St. Etienne, then newly opened, now one of New York's premier exhibition spaces for 19th and 20th century naive art, Austrian and German Expressionists like Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt, and Kathe Kollwitz, as well as contemporary humanists such as Sue Coe.

Entitled "What a Farmwife Painted," the landmark exhibition took place in October of 1940, and by the middle of the decade Grandma Moses was well on her way to becoming an American institution and a household name.

Jackson Pollock was not the first fine artist to be embraced by the post-war mass media. Grandma Moses was heard on live-remote radio broadcasts and seen on the fledgling medium of television. She was feted by President Harry S. Truman and featured in U.S. government traveling shows. Her work, like that of Norman Rockwell, gave a much needed dose of hope and optimism to a nation chastened by the recent memory of World War II and just coming to terms with the possibility of nuclear apocalypse. For, although she had known hard work and even known hardship, her paintings were invariably upbeat, celebrating the sunny side of rural life and harking back to simpler, more innocent times in a country and a world that was rapidly becoming more complicated and frightening.

All of which makes the present, post-September 11 point in time seem an especially auspicious moment to rediscover the work of this remarkable artist, who died in 1961 at the age of 101, during the important exhibition "Grandma Moses: Reflections of America," at Galerie St. Etienne, 24 West 57th Street, through March 16.

The exhibition, which was curated by Galerie St. Etienne, is intended to complement a seven-city museum tour, "Grandma Moses in the 21st Century," and includes loans from twenty North American collections.

Among the earlier paintings on view is the magnificent 1942 oil on pressed wood, "Over the Bridge to Grandma's House." This work from a private collection is a characteristically cheery vista of snowy hills dotted with farm houses, barns, and tiny human and animal figures. In the middle distance, a horse drawn-sleigh is seen crossing a small bridge, under which a child romps on a sled while two other children in the foreground traipse merrily toward the viewer. Here, as in all of Moses' best paintings, the trees are an especially expressive element, their bare branches rhythmically raking the pale winter sky.

The scene is limned with a simple, unschooled directness; yet, it evokes a truth that transcends the merely factual. Every detail appears fondly remembered and is rendered with exacting verisimilitude. At the same time there is nothing timid or fussy in the paint-handling, which has a confident charm comparable to that of Horace Pippin, another great American naive artist whose work has been exhibited at Galerie St. Etienne.

According to Hildegard Bachert, the co-director of the gallery, who knew Grandma Moses for over twenty years, the main influences on her early work were Currier & Ives prints, Saturday Evening Post illus-

Grandma Moses. Over the Bridge to Grandma's House, 1942. Oil on pressed wood. Signed, lower right. 17" x 26" (43.2 x 66 cm) Kallir 130. Copyright © Grandma Moses Properties Co., New York.

trations, and picture postcards, which she copied and even traced until she developed enough facility to create original compositions based on her memories of farm life at the turn of the century. With her growing fame, she became more aware of modern art, preferring the members of the Ashcan School (of whom she would invariably say, "They're better than me!") to the more abstract modes. Yet her pictures have an innate sophistication that recalls art historian and author Jean Lipman's opinion that the quality of the work of self-taught painters "does not vary with the degree of primitiveness but with the mental vigor and creative power of the artist."

Everywhere evident in Moses' work is what Lipman refers to as "the rich abstract design that characterizes primitive masterpieces," as seen in a later winter scene by Moses entitled "Snowed In." In this oil on pressed wood from 1957, a characteristically panoramic landscape populated by the artist's trademark tiny human and animal figures romping and working among houses and barns, the entire composition is engulfed in creamy white cake-frosting impastos that lend the scene an especially pronounced abstract power. Here, too, the trees are especially compelling, their branches covered in snow and all sweeping back in the same direction with the force of blustery gales that the viewer can practically feel.

The abstract quality in Grandma Moses' paintings is also enhanced by her habit of suggesting perspective by stacking the various elements on the picture plane, in an improvised manner more similar to Chinese art than to the vanishing points employed by schooled Western painters.

What made Grandma Moses such a remarkable self-taught artist, however, was her ability to orchestrate complex multifigure compositions and imbue them with those qualities of abstraction which Jean Lipman extolled in her 1942 book "American Primitive Painting." Especially impressive in this regard are such later paintings as "Barn Dance," 1950, and "Checkered House," 1955. The former is an especially lively picture of dancers, musicians, and horsedrawn wagons in a pastoral setting that clearly shows the influence that Moses' work must have had on more sophisticated artists such as Adolph Dehn and Doris Lee.

The latter painting "Checkered House," 1955, is one of Moses' most visually fanciful pictures, owing to the unlikely black and white tablecloth checks covering the house of the title. It looks like something out of a story book, but the unusual house actually existed. A landmark in Cambridge, not far from the Moses home, it was the headquarters of General Baum during the Revolutionary War, and later, according to Grandma, "it was a stopping place for the stage, where they changed horses..."

Although the checkered house burned down in 1907, Grandma had seen it many times and postcards existed for her to refer to when she painted it, set within a snowy landscape and surrounded by characteristically lively figures engaged in various rural activities. Here, as in all of her paintings, there is the sense of a real place made magical by the alchemy of memory.

Hildegard Bachert remembers Grandma Moses as a much more complex personality than "the simple farm wife" of popular legend, adding that such a phrase stereotypes her unfairly.

"She had natural poise, and a hospitality that was tempered by reserve," the gallerist recalls fondly. "She treated everyone, from ordinary people to the President of the United States, in a way that put them at their ease and made them feel comfortable with her. At the same time, you knew when you were in her presence not to overstep your bounds."

Like Emily Dickinson and Lorine Niedecker (a somewhat less famous poet whose rich inner life was also belied by an unassuming exterior), Anna Mary Robertson Moses was an American original whose work demonstrates that genius can result as much from an artist's limitations as from his or her abilities.

Although she was self-taught and the present exhibition is timed to coincide with the annual Outsider Art Fair at the Puck Building, Grandma Moses was less an outsider than an American icon, a good will ambassador as familiar to many as Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. Yet, as this enlightening exhibition gives ample evidence, it is as an artist with a vision woven thoroughly into the American grain that she will always be remembered.

—Ed McCormack

WSAC's "Versatility" Group Show Was Well Named

As a curator as well as a painter, Carole Whitton is not one to get stuck in a single groove. This was clear in the pointedly titled group show "Versatility of Expression" that Whitton put together recently for the West Side Arts Coalition at Broadway Mall Community Center on the center island at Broadway and 96th Street.

In it, Whitton showed two strong acrylics on paper that were a decided departure from her usual style, yet were informed by her unique "abstract realist" sensibility. Both were in a horizontal format and featured an energetic application of paint in horizontal streaks. "Morning Calm" depicted a boat basin in cool hues interspersed with bright bursts of color, while "Blazing Sunset" lived up to its title with its vibrantly variegated hues and vigorous paint handling.

Jack Dittrick is another restless spirit who is constantly finding new subjects for his inventive 3-D assemblages of painted foamcore. Here, Dittrick depicted subjects such as football players and fish platters with a characteristic combination of good cheer, eccentric wit and literal detail.

Carrie Lo, a newcomer to the WSAC, combined linear grace of Chinese ink painting with more intense Western-style color areas in a lively group of watercolors. Lo's close-up composition of sensual pink flowers contrasted dramatically with a picture of two small children romping in a meadow. Both, however, possessed a lovely lyricism.

One might say that Linda Lessner takes an intriguingly dim view of landscape, creating oils and pastels in which moody shadow play prevails in a manner somewhat akin to that of Robert Kipniss. Whether painting trees in a field under a cloudy sky or snowy woods reminiscent of the famous poem by Frost, Lessner's saturations of chiaroscuro lend her compositions unique emotional undertones.

Miguel Angel Mora, on the other hand, creates hardedge abstractions with an inexplicably expressive quality. In Mora's acrylic painting "Temple of Eternity," interlocking geometric shapes and a palette of red black and gray were employed to dynamic effect in a composition that combined a mysterious sense of ancient cultures with emblematic formal power.

Jennifer Holst also surprised us in this exhibition, departing from her familiar landscape mode for a trio of small, strongly composed paintings apparently derived from aerial views and maps. Each was entitled "Port Abstract" and dominated by black silhouetted shapes that, like Rorschach tests, somehow suggested all manner of other subjects as well.

Eleanor Gilpatrick demonstrated once again her superb coloristic skills in a large landscape and two smaller acrylics on canvas of a figure and a still life. In each case, Gilpatrick's unexpected combinations of hues turned a relatively simple composition into a major chromatic event.

Byung Sook Jung was represented by three refreshingly unpretentious miniature paintings in which nudes and interiors bathed in golden auras took on a nostalgic glow, as though filtered through veils of fond memory.

Ruth Friedman, "That Building"

Ruth Friedman's vigorous and accomplished realist watercolors captured the light, color, and speed of New York City with considerable panache. Friedman's masterly control of her difficult medium enables her to create compositions that are remarkably detailed, even while retaining the freshness and immediacy essential to aquarelle.

Gail Rodney showed several skillful, same-size pastels in which a single, meticulously rendered object such as an onion, a maple leaf, a pepper, or a crab claw, etc., were presented in a matter of fact manner, as in a rebus.

Playfully surreal, the wispy watercolors of Renee G. O'Sullivan are distinguished by a witty and poetic lightness of being. O'Sullivan's paintings of a snow-filled room interior and flying cups and saucers were especially delightful.

By contrast, one can only marvel at the temerity that it must have taken for Elton Tucker to title his splashy, violently energetic mixed media abstraction "September 11."

—Lawrence Downes

George Tkabladze: Reconnecting to a Grand Sculptural Tradition

All too often, sculpture has been treated as the poor relation in the family of modern art. This attitude was perhaps expressed most scandalously when a well known critic who will remain nameless until this writer can locate the source of the quote was rumored to remark that sculpture was simply "something you back into when you're trying to get a better look at a painting!"

Perhaps this dismissive attitude evolved in the first place because so many critics and art historians have tended to emphasize assemblage and other hybrid art forms developed by people who were primarily painters over the genuine accomplishments of artists committed to time-honored sculptural methods and mediums. This may have been inevitable, since collage and its offspring, assemblage, came out of the Cubist movement. It naturally followed suit that the work of part-time sculptors was able to upstage that of full-time sculptors, while other full-time sculptors who wished to keep pace with modernism began working in welded steel and various mixed media.

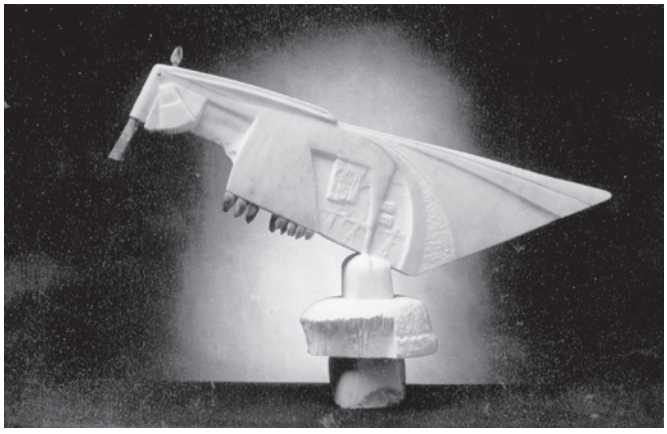
In more recent times, however, without rejecting the legacy of Cubism, we have seen a revival of interest in and appreciation for sculptors who work in more traditional mediums such as stone, yet create work that is innovative, as well as expressive.

Exemplary in this regard is George Tkabladze, a widely exhibited sculptor born in Kutaisi, Georgia, who lives and works in Washington D.C., and whose solo show "From Zero to the Sun" can be seen at World Fine Art Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, from March 5 through 30.

"Art, namely sculpture, has a prerogative with regards to free perception, in that it enables an artist's own universe, or an idea, to be conveyed in a language that can be understood by anyone," Tkabladze has stated. "Sculpture allows me to explore these ideas about my existence. I'm drawn to stone as a material because of its history: it was once part of something larger. Coupled with its unforgiving nature it becomes a challenge to bring new life to it."

And indeed he does, in pieces such as "Strange Bird," a work in marble depicting an angularly avian figure that harks back to the birds depicted in Egyptian hieroglyphics, as well as in the designs of the Aztecs and other ancient civilizations. Within the body of the bird are smaller human figures that also suggest primitive symbols. At the same time, the piece is thoroughly contemporary in its quirky inventiveness and its bold semi-abstract thrust, forging a vital link between past and present plastic concerns.

"Sun for Everyone," is a somewhat more abstract piece in which Tkabladze explores intriguingly interlocking forms within a shape that merges elements of both the circle and the rectangle. Here, the various elements could suggest figurative allusions, yet they elude easy definition in order to draw the viewer's attention to spatial contrasts and elements of openness and closure.



"Strange Bird"

Much more suggestive of human anatomy, albeit anomalously distorted, are the two pieces entitled "Mystery 1," and "Mystery 2." In both of these pieces in pristine white marble, George Tkabladze explores flowing organic forms that twist and turn upon themselves, their contours as sensual as the overtly erotic surrealism of artists like Hans Bellmer and Dorothea Tanning. True to the title of these pieces, however, Tkabladze, creates forms that are more difficult to pin down, as they appear to morph before one's eyes, suggesting hips and breasts and feet or faces without taking on the specific characteristics of any of those body parts. In "Mystery 1," there is a sense of merging figures, perhaps in erotic embrace, while "Mystery 2" is a more monolithic form with crevices and orifices that create sudden shifts of negative and positive space within a single overall shape that appears to allude to a large, mask-like face.

Analogies with body parts, as opposed to full figures, are everywhere evident in these two pieces, with their forms as fluid as the most biomorphic drawings of Andre Masson. Yet George Tkabladze brings about a metaphorical transformation of their human attributes that prevents them from becoming in the least prurient. Through this distancing of desire he achieves a personal iconography that is truly transcendent.

In this regard his work, and particularly the two latter sculptures, has qualities in common with the pieces that Alberto Giacometti created in the late 1920s, before he turned to the craggy, emaciated figures for which we now know him best. Tkabladze, however, has the advantage of a contemporary artist's overview of modern art history, which enables him to also incorporate elements more reminiscent of Jean Arp's work from the 1930s, particularly the anatomically allusive limestone sculpture "Garland of Buds."

Only a primitive, faced with the problem of starting from scratch to reinvent modern sculpture, could elude such comparisons. George Tkabladze, however, is anything but a primitive. He is a consummately sophisticated sculptor and his work holds its own admirably in the best company.

—Dorothy K. Riordan

Hilda Green Demsky: Landscape Transformed

As her exhibition last year at Pleiades Gallery demonstrated, Hilda Green Demsky is one of our most gifted contemporary landscape painters for her ability to extract abstract essences from nature and create compositions that are as effective in purely formal terms as they are evocative.

Demsky continues to develop and expand upon her "New Naturist" style in her latest solo show, at The Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts, PACE University, at 3 Spruce Street (between Park Row and Gold Street), from February 25 through March 20th. (There will be a reception for the artist on Wednesday March 6, from 4 to 8 PM.)

Demsky, who has won numerous awards, including a Fulbright Fellowship to The Netherlands, has traveled to different parts of the globe to find inspiration in varied terrains. She added a less earthbound, more metaphysical dimension to her work as well, after being invited to observe a space shuttle launch as the recipient of a Christa McAuliffe Fellowship, and embarking on what she calls her "extraterrestrial" subjects.

In her recent oils on canvas, drawn from travels around the northeastern and southwestern states, Demsky depicts geysers,

"Spiritual Repose"

waterfalls, and towers of rock in paintings that harness the energies of such natural phenomena to create some of her most vibrantly active compositions.

In the canvas called "Spiritual Repose," for example, a distant vista of mist-shrouded mountains and pines set against a luminous sky gives way to torrents of water tinged by rainbow hues, flowing down a natural corridor bordered by craggy boulders. By contrast, the focal points of another oil entitled "Bridal Veil Falls" are the brilliant blue and violet rock formations that dominate the foreground, over which a narrower body of water trickles down to feed the flow of the stream below. Here, in the deep green foliage and the almost iridescent colors of the rocks, Demsky creates chromatic contrasts of a neo-Fauvist intensity. While unlike anything found in nature, these colors create an optical sensation that approximates the dynamic effects of light on various natural elements.

In the canvas called "Convergence," the colors are closer to those in nature. Demsky's succulent and bold brushstrokes, as vigorous as those of Neil Welliver, capture the frothy white rush of water over earthy brown rocks. In this tautly organized horizontal composition, Hilda Green Demsky reveals her thorough grounding in the legacy of Cezanne and other masters of modernism who employed landscape as a springboard for formal exploration. At the same time, the painting displays all the quirky vitality and natural immediacy that makes her work unique and original.

—Maureen Flynn

Caichiolo, Duprat, and Zisser: Presences and Allusions

Marisa Caichiolo, Johanne Duprat, and Mike Zisser are two figurative painters and one abstract painter with very different approaches, each of whom made an impressive showing in their recent solo exhibitions at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway.

Marisa Caichiolo's female nudes are painted in the manner of a latter day Edvard Munch. At once gaunt and sensual, limned in variegated strokes of strident, somewhat acidic color, they cling and embrace in a manner that suggests a marriage of anxiety and eroticism. Caichiolo is as close as we come in contemporary art to having a genuine fauvist sensibility. Her brushstrokes have the untamed beauty that caused one critic to label that movement "wild beasts." At this late date, however, one can appreciate this type of painting for its aesthetics qualities, rather than its shock value.

And there is much to appreciate in Caichiolo's work, particularly her large diptych of two monumental nudes snaking around each other like living arabesques.

Caichiolo combines a sinuous line, to lasso the sensual contours of her figures, with a vibrant palette that conveys a sense of urgency and heat. Her bold compositions contribute further to the cumulative power of her paintings, which sidestep the pitfalls of much contemporary figure painting by eschewing irony for emotional directness.

The Canadian-born artist Johanne Duprat also takes the female figure as a subject. Duprat's oils on canvas owe something to the Amazonian figures of Tamara de Lempicka, an influence she freely acknowledges. Duprat, however, frees her figures from the sleek Art Deco settings that the earlier artist favored, bringing them out into the clear fresh air of the larger world, where they take on a wholesomeness reminiscent of Renoir. Especially striking in this regard is Duprat's tall canvas of a larger than life goddess, draped in a towel, emerging from a disproportionately small pool that enhances her monumental presence.

Other compositions by Duprat are pervaded by a sense of romantic melancholy, as seen in her painting of a woman with a classical profile gazing out from her bed at a nocturnal sky. Beside her on a small night-table, an overturned cup with coffee spilling out suggests insomnia and unease, reflected in the title, "Nothing for Certain."

In all of Johanne Duprat's paintings, there is the hint of a narrative subtext supported by a bold formal armature that endows the composition with a complementary aesthetic appeal.

The figure is felt, rather than fully seen, as a submerged presence in the abstract acrylics on canvas of Mike Zisser. In the series that Zisser calls "The Solitude Suite," intriguing iconic shapes are precisely defined in space by soft, subtly textured color areas. Although the austere forms suggest the genre of painting normally classified as "hard edged," Zisser's edges actually blur slightly, lending their meetings and mergings a more expressive quality that enhances the inexplicable allusiveness of these ostensibly abstract compositions.

In Zisser's statement of intent, he confirms these hints of elusive content with poetic phrases evoking "seated travelers on solitary journeys under the moon," which bring into sharper focus the combination of cursive and circular shapes in canvases such as "Mind/State I," where the figurative suggestions are more clearly readable.

It is their compositional clarity and exquisite color harmonies, however, enhanced by the restrained sensuousness of their surfaces, that make the paintings of Mike Zisser succeed on two levels simultaneously.

—Peter Wiley

Jessica Fromm: Updating "American-Style Painting"

In a recent radio interview, Frank Stella recalled the moment, early in his career, when he encountered a painting by Caravaggio in a museum and made the exhilarating discovery that all good painting, whether representational or abstract, is the same; that "painting is painting," because its reality lies in the language of painting itself, rather than in the embrace or rejection of subject matter.

Perhaps because this writer was thinking about the work of a more recent abstract painter named Jessica Fromm, in preparation for writing the following preview of her upcoming exhibition in Chelsea, the interview with Stella (or at least the portion of it that he happened to hear while searching the dial for classical music) reminded him of how the definitions and conditions governing abstract and representational painting have shifted and evolved over the past three or four decades.

Like Frank Stella, Jessica Fromm is an adamantly abstract artist who makes serious demands on the language of painting in her muscularly painted, vibrantly colorful, compellingly immediate compositions. Fromm, however, differs from Stella markedly in her desire to regard the artwork as more than a discrete and autonomous "object" with no frame of reference outside of itself, as well as in her determination to invest it with emotional content and impact. Thus, while Stella insisted famously early on that "what you see is what it is," Fromm seems to be telling us that an abstract painting, at the present point in art history can, and should, harbor a great deal more.

In fact, Jessica Fromm speaks of making "emotion more directly accessible" in an artist's statement accompanying her newest exhibition, "Darker Days: Current Work," at Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, from February 19 through March 9.

"Previously, I used indirect means to express emotion," Fromm writes, going on to explain that "Where color had been exploited before to express location in space and the passage of time, it is now used primarily as a vehicle to convey emotion. I am developing a new palette, which I seek to relate in more expressive ways and have explored new tonalities along with variations in paint quality. In order to 'load' my work with emotion, I have given myself directly to the color relationship, allowing it to become the primary and driving force of the painting."

For an abstract painter to express such ideas represents a liberating departure from the doctrinaire view of the post-war period, dominated as it was by the criticism of Clement Greenberg and others who decreed that the only elements worth considering seriously in any work of art were its formal qualities. Fromm appears to be firmly in the forefront of the undeclared movement by certain postmodern artists to develop a New Abstraction, unbeholden to the now outmoded strictures and taboos against content once imposed by self-declared tastemakers and critical kingpins in the Greenbergian camp.

At the same time, the new paintings of Jessica Fromm fulfill all of the critical criteria that Greenberg once espoused for what he called "American-Style Painting," in that her approach springs from and expands upon the gestural mode of Abstract Expressionism. Indeed, Fromm cites Franz Kline, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still as "particular favorites" in her formative years and expresses gratitude to Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, whose example she obviously cherishes.

"Untitled"

These are Fromm's aesthetic ancestors, yet she is not cowed by their eminence, nor is she unwilling to take a more inclusive, postmodern view than was generally thought permissible in their time, fraught as it was with the necessity to choose sides. Fromm's work, then, seems to demonstrate what lyrical, gestural abstract painting can aspire to be in the more pluralistic climate of the year 2002.

Indeed, it was Clement Greenberg himself who, in one of his seminars at Bennington College in 1971, stated that "once you begin asking about what options are open to art at any given moment, you run the danger of making predictions about art," and concluded that "in principle, anything can happen in art tomorrow."

Nonetheless, Greenberg would probably be surprised by what painters such as Jessica Fromm are doing today; which is to say: reconciling formal concerns with all manner of intriguing personal content that might not have seemed at all viable a relatively short time ago, when the lines of demarcation were firmly drawn for a revolution that has since been fought and won.

Fromm is especially effective in her current exhibition at making the emotional elements in her work "not only more accessible," but the primary subject of her paintings. In a painting such as "Reflections," for example, the lyrical composition of swirling blue and green forms could suggest a Monet-like pastoralism. Yet, in the context of Fromm's overall aesthetic agenda, the painting is equally suggestive of a state of internal repose, and the title should be taken in a metaphorical rather than a lyrical sense. By contrast, "Tempest," with its bold gestural strokes and deeper purple-violet and blue hues, enlivened by strident areas of muddy yellow, projects a less ambiguous sense of emotion as its energetic motor.

One would be missing the point, however, to read any of Jessica Fromm's paintings as graphs of specific emotions, for the content of abstract painting is invariably private, preferably obscure. Although emotional content figures prominently in Fromm's canvases, it is generally covert and should be regarded as the underlying force that drives their pictorial dynamic.

Thus, it is hardly necessary to analyze or interpret the extra-pictorial content of a painting such as the large triptych entitled "Bang!" A buoyant centerpiece of the exhibition with its fiery palette and soaring forms, this is a work that one can savor for its vibrant lyricism alone. Equally exhilarating in another manner is the smaller canvas called "David's Red," where vigorously dispersed strokes of yellow and white calligraphy coalesce into lively personal symbols set against a luminous red field.

Looser, bolder calligraphic elements also figure prominently in "Morphosis," where they dance against a brilliant golden yellow ground, forming sensual shapes and linear contours akin to the biomorphic forms that both de Kooning and Arshile Gorky liberated gesturally from the confines of Surrealism.

In this beautiful large painting, as sensuous of surface as it is sensual of gesture, as well as several others in this splendid exhibition, we can discern most clearly how Jessica Fromm enriches and expands the perimeters of American-Style Painting for the postmodern era.

—Ed McCormack

The Expressive Postmodern Postminimalism of Nobuko Tanabe

In order to fully appreciate the accomplishment of the Japanese artist Nobuko Tanabe, whose solo exhibition was seen recently at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, it is necessary to take a look back at developments in abstract painting and sculpture over the past four decades.

In 1965, critic Barbara Rose, in an influential essay in Art in America entitled "ABC Art," described the advent of "an art whose blank, neutral, mechanical impersonality contrasts so violently with the romantic, biographical abstract expressionist style which preceded it that spectators are chilled by its apparent lack of feeling or content."

Although Rose referred to this art as being pared down to the "minimum," the term Minimalism didn't catch on and come into regular usage until the late sixties.

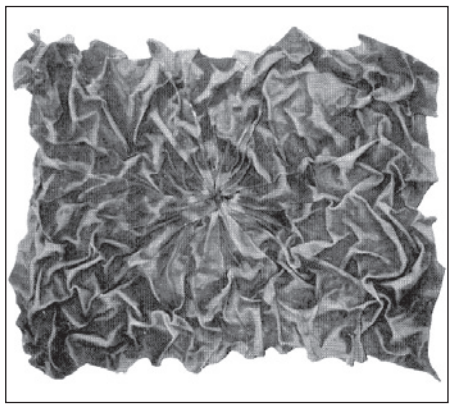
While Minimalism is generally regarded as the first important international art movement to be pioneered exclusively by American artists (Abstract Expressionism is often so credited, but two of its major figures, Willem de Kooning and Arshille Gorky, were foreign-born), there was also a school of Japanese Minimalists known as Mono-ha (roughly translated: School of Things) in Tokyo between 1968 and 1970.

Indeed it could be argued that while American Minimalism had been influenced by the severe, hard-edged geometric styles of artists such as Ad Reinhardt and Barnett Newman, which newer artists like Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Ronald Bladen—took the innovations of these earlier artists to new levels of reductiveness, Mono-ha, while also somewhat beholden to those same early geometric painters and sculptors, had at least some of its roots in the exquisite reductiveness that has been evident in Japanese culture for many centuries.

Tanabe (second from left) with guests at her opening reception

Minimalism came to dominate the art of the late 1960s to late 1970s in much the same way that Abstract Expressionism dominated that of the 1950s.

As always, when a movement assumes such prominence, there is invariably another movement waiting in the wings to usurp it. Normally, this new movement is in direct opposition to the reigning movement. Postminimalism, however, a term coined in



"Blue"

Artforum by critic Robert Pincus-Witten in 1971, as its very name indicates, was not so much an opposing tendency as an attempt to restore at least a measure of expressiveness to a movement that was threatening to paint itself into a corner, as it were. There was a brief return to true Minimalist principles in the late 1980s, when certain young artists reacted against the excesses of Neo-Expressionism, but this was soon upstaged by Neo-Geo, a short-lived phenomenon generally regarded as a bogus-movement combining parodistic elements of Pop and conceptualism with geometric austerity.

Through all these permutations in the American art world, however, the spirit of Mono-ha has remained an integral element in contemporary Japanese art, perhaps because it springs from a more venerable cultural source. Indeed, much art in Japan since the 1980s has been referred to as "Post-Mono-ha," and it is certainly in this light that the work of Nobuko Tanabe must be viewed.

To begin with, Mono-ha was primarily a sculptural movement, and Tanabe's work by its very nature bridges the gap between painting and sculpture. While her pieces are hung on the wall in the manner of painting, they also have sculptural qualities, since they are created with fabric on supports that give them the heft and dimension of objects. Indeed, certain works, such as "Creeping" have very pronounced sculptural qualities. "Creeping" is an imposing piece with an obsessive quality akin to the San Francisco Beat Generation artist Jay DeFeo's legendary work "The Rose."

For all their reductiveness, Tanabe's pieces are equally allusive, their crumpled surfaces covered with folds and crevices that suggest aspects of human anatomy as well as plant life. "Creeping" resembles a large flower, while another especially imposing piece called "Assimilate," for example, can remind one of a human heart. Other works suggest craters, wombs, anuses, stars, explosions, or all of these things simultaneously. At the same time, Nobuko Tanabe's pieces retain their autonomy and their integrity as objects, and titles such as "Blue," "Appear," "Myth" and "Genesis" are generic enough to indicate that she does not particularly intend for her works to allude to specific subjects.

While the simplicity and the impassive physicality of Tanabe's pieces is an offspring of Minimalism, she does not favor the uniform monochromes of many of her predecessors. In regard to her palette, her chromatic complexity is closer to that of such Color Field painters like Jules Olitski, with luminous gold, green, and yellow hues lit by a metallic quality that creates a sense of light permeating the surface.

In certain other works, such as "Blue," however, Tanabe does employ one color to saturate the entire piece, which is composed of many wave-like ripples radiating out from a central fissure and extending in serrated tips all around the edges. Here, as in all of her pieces, Nobuko Tanabe brings an unprecedented degree of expressiveness and allusiveness to a basically reductive style, bringing the Minimalistic aesthetic into harmony with Postmodernism with a resourcefulness that seems characteristically Japanese.

—Maurice Taplinger

Neil McIrvine: Embodying Spirit in Flesh

Born in Scotland, now an Australian citizen, Neil McIrvine employs the nude figure as a vehicle for expressing "The Human Spirit," as he calls his most recent series of paintings, exhibited recently at Agora Gallery, now located at 415 West Broadway, 5th floor.

As McIrvine defines it, the human spirit means "the essence of what makes us human, the thing you can't see, touch, smell, hear or taste but is most definitely there."

In McIrvine's large oils on canvas, various parts of the body are seen in close-up, defined dramatically by areas of light and shadow. One of the first things that strikes the viewer is the tactile surfaces that McIrvine achieves with layers of underpainting built up in to thick impastos.

"Angel #2"

Although the figures and body parts are painted with great anatomical accuracy, the roughly textured surface contradicts to some degree the realism of the image. Rather than imitating the texture of flesh, the artist makes the sensuality of the thickly applied pigment a surrogate for the sensuality of skin. And the effect is all the more compelling for by this substitution of the actual for the illusory McIrvine calls attention to the alchemy by which good painting achieves its goals. In this regard, he appears to be as self conscious an artist as any abstractionist, and as fully determined to maintain the two dimensional integrity of the picture plane, even as he employs shadow play to suggest a contradictory sense of depth. This apparent disparity creates spatial and pictorial tensions that further enhances the power of his paintings, lending them a complexity that belies their relatively simple compositions.

In "The Human Spirit #19," McIrvine employs an extremely vertical format, six feet tall by eighteen inches wide, and fills it with half of a face, from below the eyebrow to the chin. Deep shadows, as in a high contrast photograph, engulf and define the features. The one eye that is visible is closed and the lips are slightly parted. Shadows well beneath the curve of the chin. This partial image of a face evokes a sense of serenity that suggests a spiritual epiphany.

This spiritual quality is even more spelled out in "Angel # 2," in which a severely cropped winged figure with downcast eyes and hands clasped in prayer fills another large canvas, albeit of more horizontal proportions. Although angels are supposedly without gender, robed beings of numinous indeterminacy, this one is nude, clearly female, comely.

In other paintings, such as "Shyness," the composition is so compressed that the sex of the figure is not discernible.Yet, as in all of Neil McIrvine's paintings, we are mesmerized by the sense of a powerful human presence.

—Marie R. Pagano

Over 120 Years of "The Figure" at Allan Stone

Faced with a group exhibition such as "The Figure," seen recently at Allan Stone Gallery, 113 East 90th Street, one realizes immediately that it would be folly to even attempt an orderly review. This survey of figurative paintings and drawings created over the past 120 years was a sprawling, star-studded affair that mingled relative unknowns with recognized masters and even included a few anonymous artists.

Among the latter "Anonymous (Viennese School)," an untitled, undated canvas of a voluptuous reclining woman wearing only a chaste white bonnet, limned in luminous oil glazes, was especially appealing.

Indeed, the classically full figured nude, a refreshing relief from the anorexic ideal favored today was also celebrated in a drawing by Gaston La Chaise, where a graceful graphite line suggested the full weight and volume of his more familiar bronze Amazons; in "La Dormeuse," a major 1923 oil by Tamara de Lempicka, and yet again in a large pastel by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, its rosy-cheeked subject looking as pugnaciously formidable as John L. Sullivan, albeit much more comely, as she posed in profile, bare-chested, hand on hip. Stephen Cornelius Roberts weighed in with one of his gargantuan oils on canvas of a monumental nude, this one tenderly cradling her huge pregnant stomach, each stretch mark lovingly delineated. The only other work that matched it for sheer size and meticulous realism was "Princess Elizabeth Francesca of Hungary and the Two Sicilies," an updated full length formal likeness of Her Highness in gold embroidered court regalia by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1806-73), a German painter known for his portraits of European Royalty.

As one would expect at Allan Stone Gallery, there were transcendent works by major figures associated with The New York School: a vintage "Woman" in graphite on paper by Willem de Kooning; a swell early self portrait by Franz Kline; a characteristically quirky semi-abstract 1941 painting of a woman wearing an ornate hat by John Graham, and "Portrait of a Woman (The Artist's Wife)," a 1930 oil on board showing Arshile Gorky to be still in thrall to Picasso's neoclassical period.

Living artists from the gallery roster were also well represented: Wayne Thiebaud by a juicy little painting of an elegant dancing couple seen from an angle that makes them appear to merge into one; Kurt Trampedach by one of his gorgeously lumpy oils of a weird, bald-domed paint-personage, and premiere photorealist Wayne Estes by a surprisingly loose figurative expressionist canvas of three men conversing whose only relationship to his more familiar work was its snapshot immediacy.

Other pleasures were more scattered and various: The recently oft-exhibited Nguyen Ducmanh wowed us once again with his gestural eloquence, here departing from his abstract mode to conjure up a palpable pair of female buttocks with utmost economy with a whiplash line in lacquer on paper. "Nude in Bedroom," was an undated pastel by Ashcan schooler Everett Shinn, possibly created as a quaintly erotic period illustration but enough to hold its own as an autonomous work of art. It was also fun to compare a 1951 painting by Balthus to "Standing Woman," painted by Daniel Ludwig in 2000 and possessed of its own unique qualities, yet looking more Balthus-like at first glance than the Balthus itself!

Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, untitled, nude

All told, "The Figure" was a thoroughly enjoyable show that, in its own casual way, reaffirmed the human image as a timeless subject.

—Ed McCormack

Marquez' Major Statement of Outrage and Grief

Artist Truman Marquez

The terrorist attacks of September 11 are still so fresh in memory, still so traumatic and immediate that they present a clear danger to any artist who endeavors to respond to them. Events of such enormity tend to mock and belittle even the most sincere artistic expression. Nothing seems quite adequate to the horror, putting the artist at risk of treading on sacred ground, of trivializing what should be treated with the utmost reverence.

If Picasso had succumbed to such misgivings, of course, we would not have "Guernica." The same can be said of "The Third of May," Goya's powerful execution scene, protesting the brutal horrors of the Napoleonic occupation. And the same goes for a new painting called "Eleven" by the Texas painter Truman Marquez, another intrepid soul who is willing to take the risks inherent in confronting an emotionally charged historical subject head-on.

Although the theme of the painting (reproduced on our back cover) requires no more explication than a banner newspaper headline, its technical aspects, with powerful images emerging with prolonged viewing from what appears initially to be a powerful abstract composition, are of considerable interest.

The prototype for "Eleven" was an earlier canvas entitled "Poles and Shadows," in which Marquez was searching for a way of superimposing images without resorting to transparency or the kind of crude layering that we see in the work of David Salle. He evolved the idea of employing multiple planes and shadows as a device for separating images and used it in a more complex manner to make images of the Twin Towers, an approaching plane, and the looming face of Osama Bin Laden emerge from the bold forms and color areas in the dynamic geometric composition of "Eleven." The manner in which these images make themselves known, suddenly slipping into our consciousness in the act of viewing the mural-sized canvas, captures some of the shock, surprise, and shock of the tragic event, as well as the sense that we all had of an unfolding mystery, as more became known about the attack.

Truman Marquez is notoriously reluctant to comment on his work, beyond having stated, "Given that I am a painter, not a writer, I prefer to allow my paintings to speak for themselves and viewed without any predetermined intent of meaning made known through my writing."

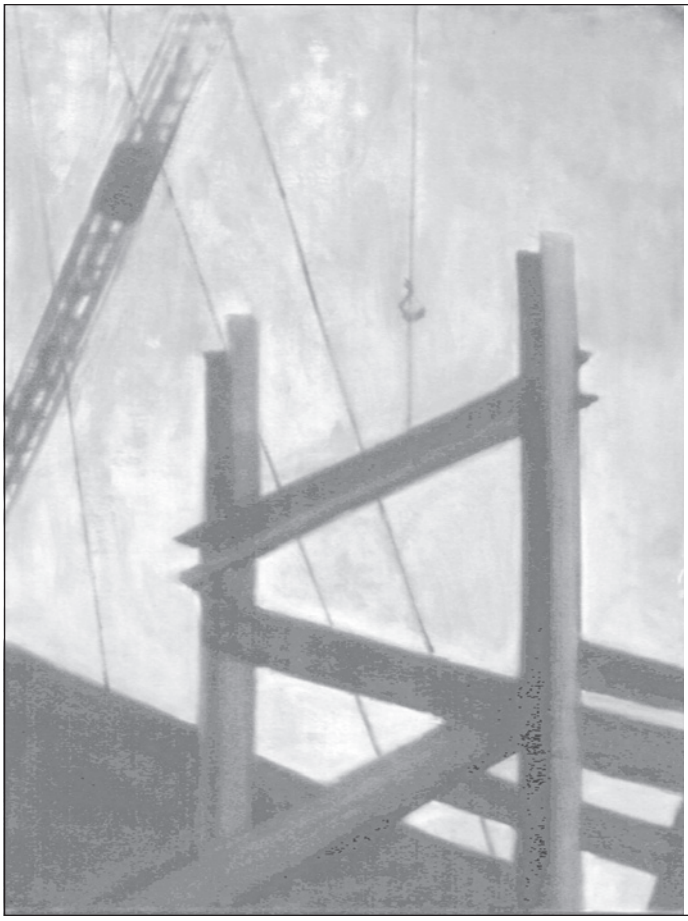
However, J. Craig Diehl, a close associate of the artist who imposes no such gag order on himself, says, "Truman has a deep love of New York, which is obvious from his enthusiasm any time the city is mentioned. He was deeply disturbed, and didn't paint for two or three weeks after the attacks."

When Marquez was almost finished with the painting, according to Diehl, he considered painting over it. Obviously, he had been driven to create the work as an emotional catharsis. But now he had second thoughts.

"He was afraid it would be misunderstood as an endorsement of terrorism, or worse, of Bin Laden. Only after encouragement from a few closest to him was he willing to go forward."

One can only be grateful that he did. For "Eleven" is a major work. It is at once a technical tour de force on a par with some of Salvador Dali's optically complex metaphysical subjects, and a statement of raw outrage that grips the viewer by the throat.

—Ed McCormack



"Construction" Oil on Canvas, 24" x 18"

Hester Welish

City Structures and Still Lifes

March 12 - March 30, 2002
Reception: March 16, 4 - 6 pm

noho gallery

530 W. 25th St., 4th floor,
New York, NY 10001
11-6 PM Tuesday - Saturday
Tel: (212) 367-7063

MAGICAL ABSTRACTS

Gloria Spevacek

Sculpture

Febuary 7 - March 2, 2002

Winter Sleep • Carrara White Marble

Reception:
Thursday
February 7
6-8 pm

Gallery hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
11:00 - 5 pm
or by appointment

db
DENISE BIBRO
FINE ART, INC.

Denise Bibro Fine Art
529 West 20th Street #4W
New York, NY 10011
t: 212 647-7030 f: 212 647-7031
www. dbibrofineart.citysearch.com

George Tkabladze

"Sun for Everyone" Marble 10.5" x 6" x4"

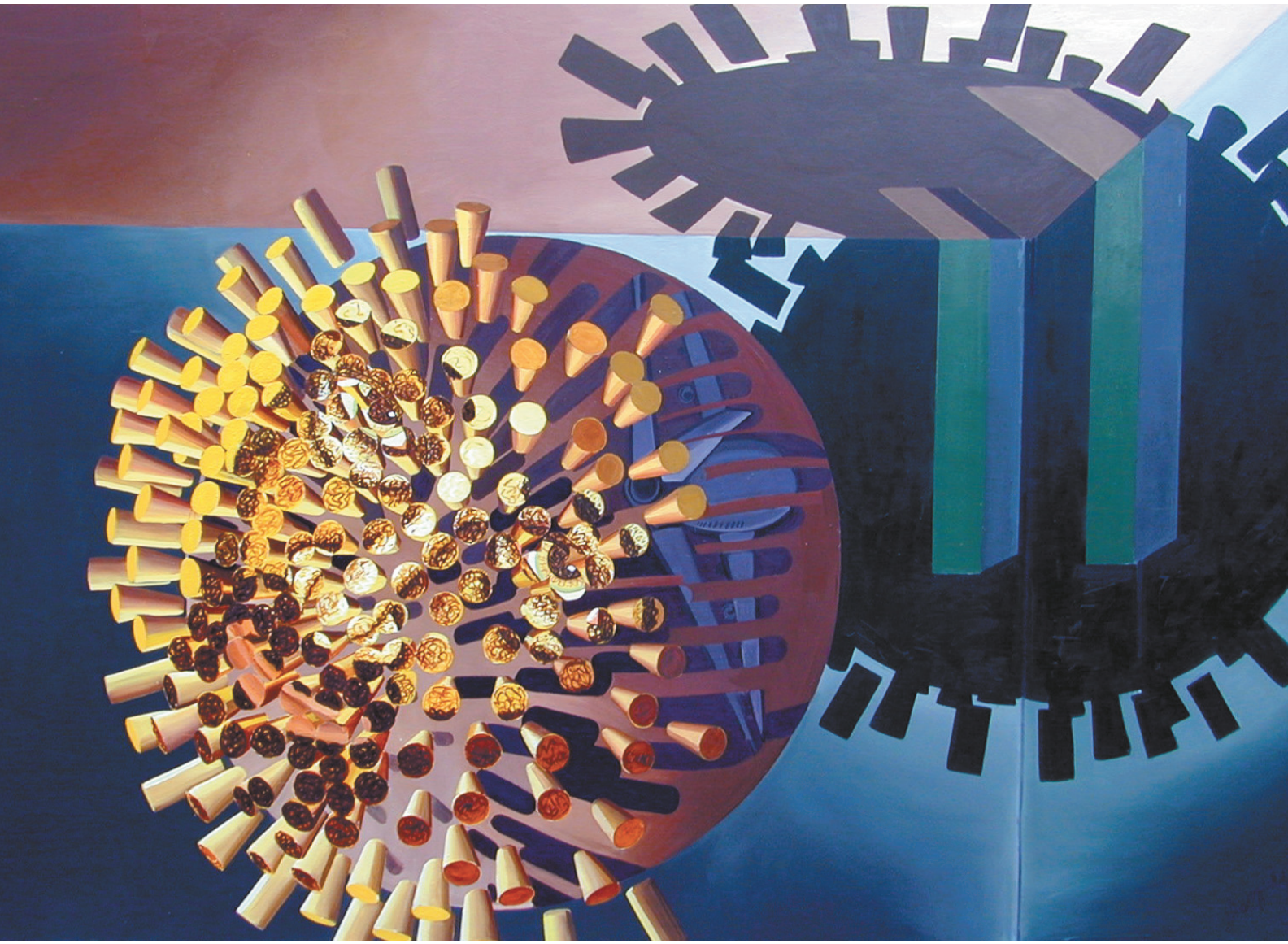
From Zero to the Sun

March 5 - 30, 2002 Reception: March 10, 6 - 8 pm

World Fine Art Gallery

511 West 25th St., 8th Fl NY, NY 10001 646-336-1677
www.worldfineart.com Tues - Sat 12 - 6 pm

TRUMAN MARQUEZ



"ELEVEN"

oil on canvas 131" x 180" www.marquezstudios.com studio 512.795.8872 agent 512.784.6069