VOL. 5 NO. 3 FEBRUARY-MARCH 2003 New York

# GALLERY & STUDIO

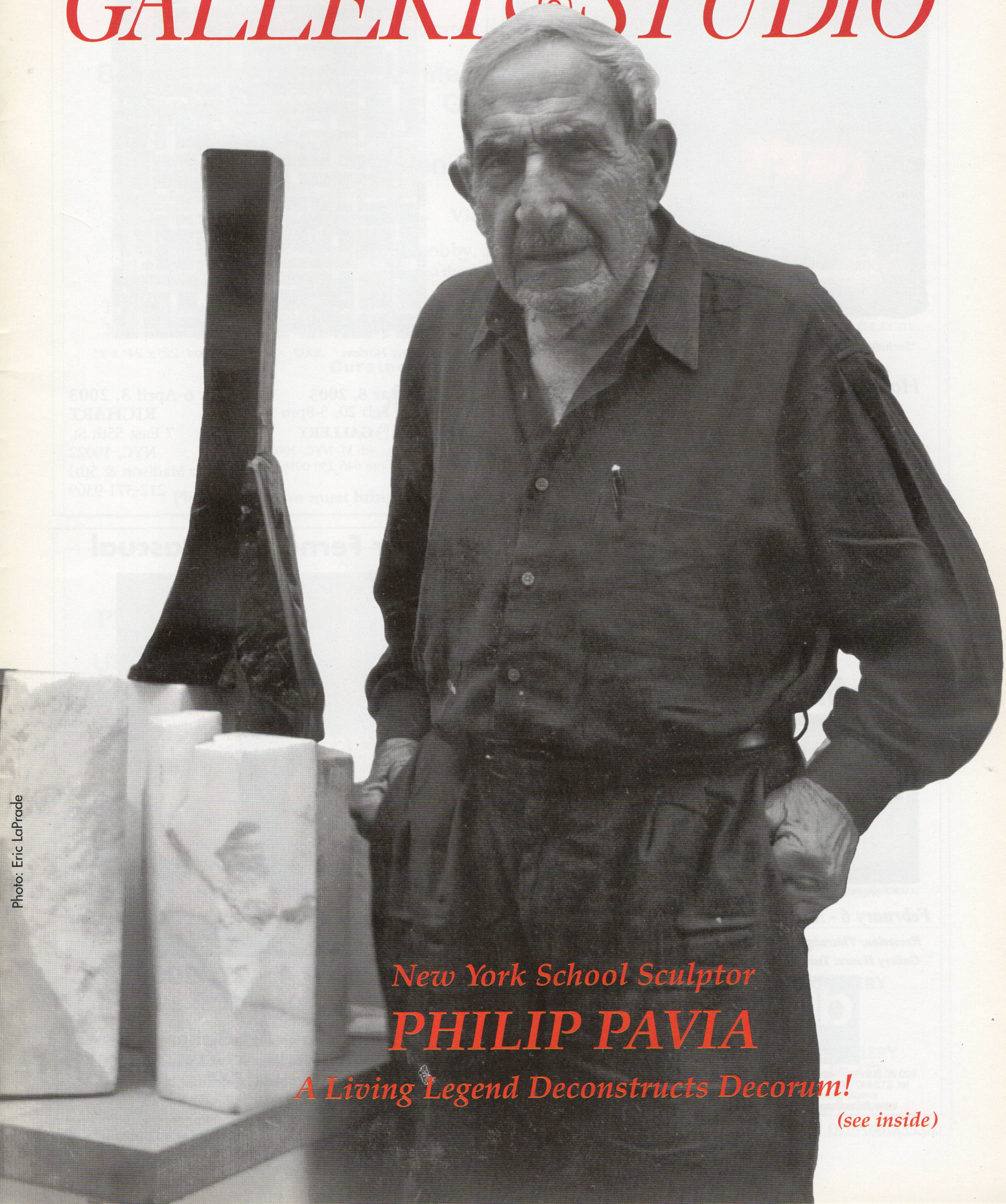


Photo: Eric LaPrade

*New York School Sculptor*

## PHILIP PAVIA

*A Living Legend Deconstructs Decorum!*

*(see inside)*

## Erma Martin Yost ≈ Felt Works

"Secluded Settlement," 2002, Felting, Monoprinting, Stitching, 24" x 26"

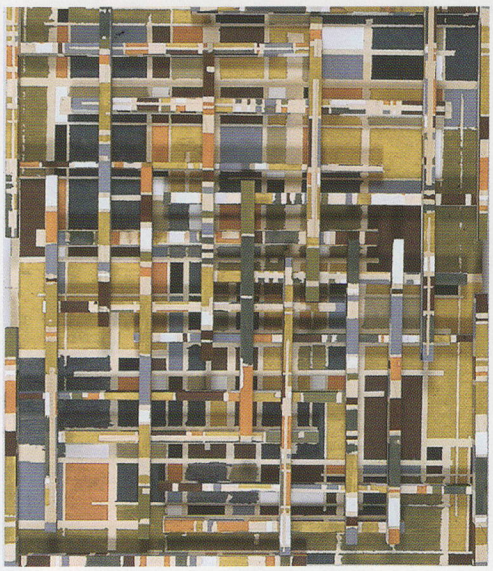
***Hand-Felted and Stitched Constructions***

thru February 15, 2003

noho gallery

530 West 25th St., 4th Fl, NYC, 10001
Tues - Sat 11 - 6pm 212 367 7063
www.nohogallery.com

## EDUARDO TERRANOVA



*"Crossing Harlem," 2002 Acrylic on Wood 22" x 24" x 4"*

**Feb 18 - Mar 8, 2003**
Reception: Feb 20, 5-8pm
**PLEIADES GALLERY**
530 W. 25th St., 4th Fl, NYC, 10001
Tues - Sat 11-6pm 646 230 0056

**Jan. 6-April 3, 2003**
**RICHART**
7 East 55th St.
NYC, 10022
(btwn Madison & 5th)
212-371-9369

## *Jinx Lindenauer*

## *Sculpture*

### *Recent Work*

LA MONTAGNA BIANCA • Carrara White Marble

***February 6 - March 1, 2003***

***Reception: Thursday, Feb. 6, 6-8 pm***
***Gallery Hours: Tues. - Sat. 11-5 pm***

db
DENISE BIBRO FINE ART, INC SPACE 4

529 W. 20th St. 4th Fl. • NY, NY, 10011
tel. 212 647-7030 • fax. 212 647-7031
e-mail: bibroart@aol.com
www.dbibrofineart.citysearch.com

THE CHALLENGE • Carrara White Marble and Bronze

## César Fernández Pascual

"Untitled," 2002, Mixed Media, 100cm x 120cm

**February 4 - 27, 2003**

Reception: February 14, 6 - 8 pm

**World Fine Art Gallery**
511 West 25th St., 8th Floor, New York, NY 10001
646-336-1677 wwww.worldfineart.com
Tues - Sat 12 - 6 pm

# I **love** Manhattan

An exhibition that celebrates the versatility of our city featuring

**Benny H.V. Andersson**
**Donna Cameron**
**Carlos Esguerra**
**Melissa Fleming**
**Gerda Kastl**
**Bill Heard**
**Jolene Varley Handy**
**Raúl Manzano**
**Patti Mollica**
**Joanne Turney**

**February 1-28, 2003** **Viewing hours: Monday-Friday, 8-6**

**Equity Office Properties Lobby**, 850 Third Avenue, New York, NY (51st Street)
Special thanks to Steven Rendiero

The artists' work can also be seen at **www.ManhattanArts.com** and Manhattan Arts International Gallery
200 East 72 Street, New York, NY by appointment only (212) 472-1660 Email: info@ManhattanArts.com

**Curated by Renée Phillips, Director**

Manhattan Arts INTERNATIONAL
A Network of Artrepreneurs

**Please note: You must bring this announcement for admission to view the exhibition.**

## GLOBAL CROSSROADS
## PHOENIX GALLERY ARTISTS
•
LINDA HANDLER, Director's Choice

ADER • BAUER • BISSO
BLANK • BROWN • CARLIN • CARTER
DELBANCO • Di BELLA • DEON
DONO • FIRESTEIN • FLETCHER
FLYNN • GAZDA • GOLDSMITH
BOUZARD-HUI • KIM • LEE • McHUGH
MOORE • NESTORY • SHARP
SNYDER • VUILLAUME

**February 5-March 1, 2003**
**Reception: February 20, 6-8 pm**

phoenix gallery
568 Broadway at Prince St., Suite 607 NY,NY 10012
(212) 226 8711 Fax (212) 343 7303
http://www.phoenix-gallery.com
Tues - Sat 11 - 5:30 pm

## CHICAGO ARTISTS
of
**THE FINE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY IN CHICAGO**
at
**VIRIDIAN IN CHELSEA**
**January 2003**

Mary Ellen Bartyzel • Roger Bole • Bob Brasher
Charles Gniech • Dan Godsel • Tom Graham • Mary Graham
Kathleen King • Marion Kryczka • Irene Maloney
Elizabeth McKay • Sophia Pichinos • Deborah Pieritz
Diane Pivonski • James Tansley • Mel Theobald
Blair Trueblood • Frank Vodvarka • Roland Kulla

VIRIDIAN ARTISTS
530 W 25th St., #407 Chelsea, NYC 10001
Tel/Fax 212 414 4040 www.viridianartists.com
Tues Sat 10:30 - 6PM

---

**VIRIDIAN ARTISTS**
at
**THE FINE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY IN CHICAGO**
**July 2003**

**FINE ARTS BUILDING GALLERY**
410 South Michigan Ave. Ste 433
Chicago, IL 60605
312 913 0537 www.fabgallery.com
Wed - Sat 12 - 6 PM

# G&S Highlights

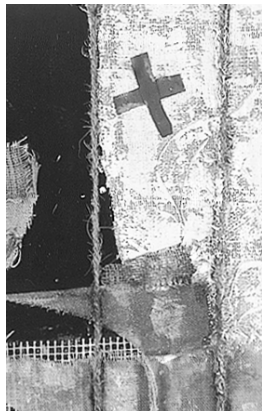
***On the Cover:***
*Legendary sculptor* ***Philip Pavia*** *is still going strong, still in fighting form at 90. (New York Notebook, centerfold.)*

*The cover photo is by* ***Eric LaPrade,*** *a portrait and figure photographer who lives in New York City. His pictures have appeared in* The New York Times, *among other publications.*

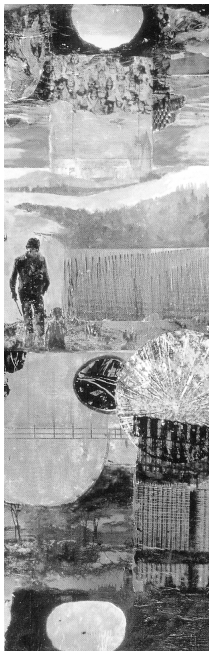
***Nicholas Down, pg. 4***

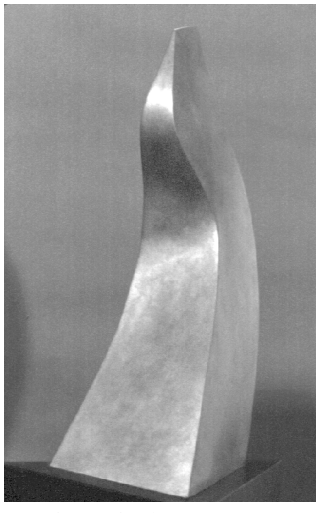
***Frederick Hart, pg. 7***

***Joseph Cornell, pg. 8***

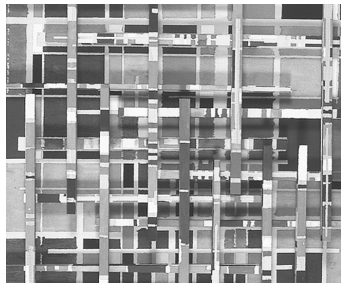


***César Fernández, pg. 5***





***Jinx Lindenauer, pg. 13***



***Eduardo Terranova, pg. 9***

***Regina Stewart, pg. 32***

***Erma Yost, pg. 3***

*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**

# Erma Martin Yost Explores Notions of Domesticity and Shelter

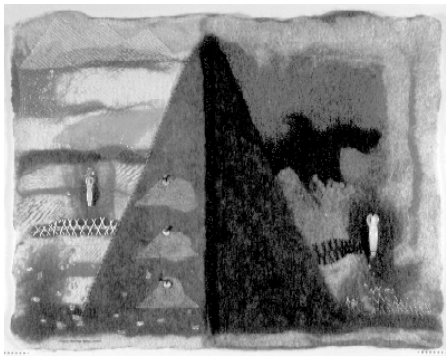
Erma Martin Yost has always seemed to have a complex relationship to both the fiber art movement and feminism. In the first regard, for example, while any movement would be happy to claim an artist of Yost's caliber for one of its own, even while expressing admiration for her work as a whole, some fiber artists have had mild reservations about her penchant, in past exhibitions, for showing her pieces under glass. Since tactility is so much a part of what fiber art is supposed to be about, some of them have simply felt that Yost's "barriers" have hampered the more "touchy feely" aspects of her work. Happily, the minor qualms of these fiber art purists should be put to rest in her new exhibition, where the glass has been omitted from the frames and the viewer can experience the surface textures more directly.

From this writer's point of view, however, such quibbles, minor as they may be, have always been irrelevant in Yost's case. For while her work is included in the permanent collection of the American Crafts Museum, and has also been discussed in "The Art Quilt Book" by Robert Shaw, as well as several other similar volumes, Erma Martin Yost is by no means a fiber artist in any conventional sense of the term. Rather, she is above all else a fine artist who chooses to avail herself of some of the materials and means of fiber crafts, and recognizing this distinction at the onset is paramount to understanding and appreciating her work.

As for the feminist aspects of Yost's work, these are even subtler, since her stance is invariably poetic and personal rather than stridently political, even while she raises questions about the traditional roles of women in society and in art that are pertinent and pointed.

Indeed, in terms of both both her long and ongoing involvement with fabrics as a medium for artmaking and her relationship to women's issues, it is important to note that Erma Martin Yost descends from a long line of Mennonite quiltmakers whose traditional craft techniques she has adapted freely for fine art purposes, and that this same family background has obviously caused her to examine the meaning and evolution of women's lives from a perspective quite different from that of other woman artists who tackle such issues.

The abiding affection that Yost obviously still feels for her traditional heritage with its family values that transcend the glib and pejorative contemporary spin that has been put on that term by those who would appropriate it for their own perverse purposes, comes across strongly in the piece she calls "Home Place," in her newest exhibition "Felt Works, Hand-Felted Stitched Constructions," at Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, through February 15.



*"Day Tent/Night Tent"*

In "Home Place," the title itself having all the resonance of a term of endearment, we see faded family album images of the artist's mother and maternal and paternal grandmothers, as well as the farm house in which the artist grew up, set within the bolder outline of a simple, archetypal house-symbol known as "school house" in the lexicon of decorative patterning. Flowing around and into the staid geometry of this rudimentary dwelling is a cursive border that Yost adopted from a decorative motif her mother often included in her quilts. This seems an especially affecting tribute from a sophisticated contemporary artist to the simpler but no less sincere and serious artistry of those who proceeded her and, to some extent, informed her aesthetic sensibility.

In technical terms, however, Yost has gone even further back in choosing felt, an archaic textile form that predates spinning and weaving by several thousand years, as the medium for her newest body of work, featured in her fifteenth solo show at Noho Gallery. Felt originated when nomadic people subjected wool to heat and moisture, pounding it until it matted into a cohesive structure so durable that they could use it as covers for their transportable tents. Thus it seemed to Yost a most auspicious material in which to explore the themes of shelter and of "architecture as visual metaphor"— a significant theme for Yost, since while the women in her family were quilters, the men were builders. She employs hand-dyed felt, with its vibrant colors and subtle meldings of tone and texture (which occur when the wool is moistened with soap and water, then layered and meshed by being rolled up in mats) in combination with monoprinting, hand-stitching, and heat transfer —techniques she has used in earlier work— to create a rich variety of effects that make her new compositions her most "painterly" to date. In fact, Yost's felted works have an almost Expressionist intensity, and their compositions are more unabashedly pictorial than many of her previous works— where geometric abstract qualities derived from quiltmaking were prominent— in that they often depict dwellings within poetically evocative landscapes.

This new pictorialism is particularly prominent in pieces such as "Sea Shelters," where rhythmic waves rise behind a simple house in a fanciful landscape where turtles roam (and also ride the waves), their ornate shells serving as yet another witty visual metaphor for shelter. Then there is "Day Tent/Night Tent," which harks back to the yurts (felt tents) of the aforementioned Mongolian nomads who roamed Siberia in the Ice Age. Here, Yost merges material and metaphor in a synthesis as seamless and durable as the manner in which the separate woolen pelts meld, tooth-to-tooth, to create the felt itself.

Equally evocative in another manner, having more directly to do with womens' role in the domestic scheme of things in the more or less modern world, is another picture called "Domicile," into which Yost has incorporated images of women busy with everyday activities such as sewing, cleaning, and serving food, derived from old-fashioned patterns for embroidered "tea towels" showing women's chores for the seven days of the week. These images are seen in windows, offering glimpses of the hidden world in which women have traditionally toiled. That these images of the "work that is never done" are stylized in the manner of comic strip drawings lends the piece a Pop quality, which can also be seen in another work entitled "Two Times/ Two Rooms."

In this piece, two felt panels are held together by eyes and hooks of the type used to fasten corsets in a format resembling an open book. Within it, images of a Renaissance woman and an Andy Warhol portrait of Marilyn Monroe are juxtaposed with miniature prom dresses and those ubiquitous little houses. The contrasts inherent in these disparate yet related images speak volumes about the distortions of identity that women have been heir to down through the centuries.

And it is precisely Erma Martin Yost's ability to cover so much historical ground and make statements so profoundly universal, even while remaining true to the particulars of her own heritage, that makes this exhibition of relatively intimate works so important and rewarding.

—Ed McCormack

# The Visionary Abstractions of Nicholas Down Come to Soho

There is something special, something rarefied, in the peculiarly ambient light of Scotland as it emanates from the moody sky and animates the surface of the surrounding sea that inspires some of our most profoundly gifted modern painters.

In the 1950s, John Schueler was lured by that light to the degree that he left New York City when it was the nexus of the Abstract Expressionist movement, taking up residence in a small, secluded town in the Western Highlands, where he produced his greatest work.

More recently, another fine abstract artist, Nicholas Down, had an exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, in Soho, of paintings inspired by his spiritual kinship with Abstract Expressionism, as well as by his travels to Scotland's Highlands and Islands. These paintings, like those of his predecessor Schueler, are products as much of his engagement with art history as of his direct experience of nature. For like Schueler, Down, who was born in Kampala, Uganda, in 1957, and now resides in England, is a scholar and an intellectual as well as a painter. He has studied the writings, as well as the works, of masters like Paul Klee, De Vinci, Cezanne, van Gogh, and Gauguin in the course of formulating his own aesthetic objectives . But perhaps his most important influence Mark Rothko, whom he quotes in his artist's statement as follows: "Pictures must be miraculous: the moment one is completed the intimacy between the creation and the creator is ended. He is an outsider. The picture must be for him, as for anyone experiencing it later, a revelation, an unexpected and unprecedented resolution of an eternally familiar need."

*"Unio Mystica"*

A physician by profession, Down began painting for his own pleasure, but his work entered the international art arena when he participated in several European group shows in the 1970s. Since, his reputation has grown with important solo shows in England and the U.S., culminating in his recent exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, entitled "A Wide Listening Sky."

Of the works included in this show, William Zimmer, an art critic for the New York Times, wrote "All of Nicholas Down's paintings are a commingling of nature and emotions, yet each is a fresh statement," and Robert Mahoney, a contributor to Time Out New York said, "Down transforms the light of the Scottish landscape into luminous mindscapes expressive of a somber resolve."

Such enthusiasm is hardly surprising, given the breadth and scope of Down's new paintings, which differ from those of Schueler in that their overall mood is mysteriously nocturnal, rather than a transcription of daylight skies. With few exceptions —most notably "One Day a Flower of Flesh Will Grow," with its vortex of circular strokes surrounding a glowing red orb, and "A River Sutra," which is built on rhythmic swirls suggesting the movement of water as seen from above— Down's compositions tend to focus on horizon-lines. More exactly, their forms suggest night skies, shadowy land masses, and broad expanses of sea. Yet even while they are dramatically evocative of such natural elements, they function autonomously in purely abstract terms with their horizontal streaks of deep blue and violet, enlivened by luminous areas of red and white that play off strikingly against the darker, more somber hues. The drama of light and darkness in Down's paintings often makes one think of J.W. Turner's "tinted steam," as well as the eerie nocturnal landscapes and seascapes of the eccentric American visionary Albert Pinkham Ryder. Woefully ignored in his lifetime but later much admired by many abstract painters, Ryder once said, "I saw nature springing into life upon my dead canvas. It was better than nature, for it was vibrating with the thrill of new creation."

*"Being Still" Oil on Board 19" X 10" 2002*

Down's work also calls to mind John Constable, the great English romantic, whose "scientific" observations of nature included sketches of cloud formations, and studies of the effect of light and atmosphere on sky, water, and land. Indeed, Down's use of white pigment against darker color masses recalls the white daubs, applied with a palette knife, that critics of his time referred to as "Constable's snow." Down, however, appears to proceed more intuitively in the manner of his Abstract Expressionist predecessors, creating his compositions with bold gestures intended not so much to duplicate the effects of nature as to convey a sense of its underlying forces and energies. As a contemporary painter, schooled in the master painting class in abstract art at Brunel University, he is much less concerned with superficial appearances than with essences that can serve him as springboards to personal expression.

And serve him they do, quite splendidly, in compositions such as "The Gift at the Summit," where massed blue forms in the lower portion of the composition could suggest rugged rock formations, the area of blue shot through with bits of white directly above them could appear to be flowing water accented by bits of foam, and the horizontal streaks of luminous red at the center of the composition evoke a sense of the last fiery moments of sunset glowing through the darkening sky. At the same time, aside from such interpretation, the picture is just as compelling in strictly formal terms and works as total abstraction. Indeed, the temperament and subjective preferences of the individual viewer determine the degree of representation to be read into any given painting by Nicholas Down, making his work successful on several levels simultaneously.

Although "The Gift at the Summit" is an oil on gesso board, Down also works in faster drying acrylic paints, watercolors, or whatever seems to suit the subject at hand. He has been known to rub glazes of resin-oil pigment over an underpainting of tempera into which he had initially drawn and scraped with various implements. In other works, he experiments accidental effects achieved by combining charcoal, water, and/or acrylics on paper, panels, and other surfaces primed with gesso. At the same time, he is also proficient in the more traditional medium of oil on linen, as seen in "Remembered Infinity," where he also departs from his horizontally-based landscape composition to create a work where figuratively suggestive calligraphic forms are set against sinuous streaks of blue, violet, and white. (Here, the figurative feeling in the essentially abstract forms whets one's appetite for a series in progress, reportedly based on the New Testament theme, "The Stations of the Cross.")

Encountering the work of this painter for the first time in his recent solo show at Montserrat Gallery, one was aware of having made an important discovery. One can only anticipate future exhibitions by Nicholas Down with pleasure. —Maurice Taplinger

# César Fernández: The Marriage of Tactility and Elegance

One need only think of Velazquez, Goya, and Picasso, to be reminded of the great contribution that Spain has made to world culture from the seventeenth century to the modern era. And while Antoni Tapies may not be quite on a par with that transcendent trinity, he is certainly a candidate for greatness, in terms of his contribution to contemporary painting in the period following World War II, when he created a credible, peculiarly Spanish equivalent of Abstract Expressionism that is most often referred to as "Art Informal."

It is this tactile mode, characterized by an overriding concern with the materiality of the surface itself, that the contemporary Spanish artist César Fernández extends even further and refines in his own manner in his exhibition at World Fine Art Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, from February 4 to 27.

Judging from this, his first American solo show, the most significant quality that distinguishes the work of César Fernández from that of his famous predecessor and those younger artists who followed him is its singular elegance. While retaining the textural ruggedness that we associate with this manner of painting, Fernandez adds an element of refinement and restraint that lends his work a unique subtlety, as well as a formal quality that contradicts the term "Art Informal" by virtue of its impressive organization.

*América*

Indeed, César Fernández could be said to be closer to the French painter Georges Braque than Tapies in the exquisite formal balances that we see in a painting such as "Desembarco." Here, roughly rectangular forms in characteristically subdued earthy hues created with cut and glued burlap are centrally clustered in a beautifully conceived composition. While these forms could suggest architectural allusions —specifically, clustered skyscrapers in a cityscape— and while this likeness is further enhanced by two vertical shapes that could resemble elongated clouds, it does not seem relevant to read such meanings into the paintings of César Fernández.

To do so, in fact, would probably be to misread his intentions, for he is an artist obviously more concerned with abstract form, space, and color harmony than with anecdotal subject matter. Yet, at the same time, the shapes that he chooses to put next to each other can often be so evocative that one is tempted to make such allusions—particularly in a work such as "America," where the overlapping brown burlap forms clustered in the lower portion of the composition bear a striking resemblance to a Spanish galleon with a red cross emblazoned on its white sail.

Perhaps it is to discourage such subjective interpretations, however, that César Fernández avoids assigning titles to most of his compositions. Thus he encourages the viewer to contemplate his boldly delineated cut or torn shapes for the sheer delectation of their formal relationships. And these prove more than sufficient to compel one's interest and provide visual and tactile delectation, with their artfully shredded edges and sensual surface textures, created with various weights and weaves of burlap, from thick to gossamer, and their closely harmonized earth colors juxtaposed with bold areas of black and piquant yet restrained accents of brilliant red.

These strident bursts of red have a decidedly visceral feeling, set against darker, more somber areas of brown, ocher, or black. Contained within narrow, irregular shapes, arranged in either horizontal or vertical configurations, they could suggest slashing wounds to the surface of the painting or trickles of blood. Yet, César Fernández's compositions are not particularly violent, especially when compared to the punctured, pocked, distressed surfaces of Tapies and others who also explore tactility as an expressive element.

Although this artist employs texture aggressively, taking obvious pleasure particularly in the frayed and curled edges where his forms converge, his compositions are generally possessed of an elegance that evades most of his peers. Individual forms are graceful and can often appear weightless, despite the roughness of the sackcloth materials that he employs as collage elements, particularly when he scumbles white pigment over them, allowing bits of the natural beige or brown fabric to show through. This technique creates a cloud-like sense of amorphousness that contrasts tantalizingly with innate the physicality of such materials, adding to the tension between the visual and tactile elements that enhances the "push and pull" of his compositions.

Because he has been reticent about showing his work for much of his life, absorbed more with solitary creation than with seeking fame or fortune, César Fernández comes to us as a mature and full-blown talent. To encounter him at this late date is to find oneself in the presence of an elusive master whose work comes as a genuine revelation. One can only hope that now that he has seen fit to share his vision with us, further exhibitions will soon be forthcoming.

—Maurice Taplinger

# Repetition as a Way of Life in the Art of Jean-Pierre Vuillaume

For Andy Warhol repetition was a way of expressing ennui; but for the French painter Jean-Pierre Vuillaume, the repetition of certain shapes serves quite the opposite purpose.

"I see repetition as being life," Vuillaume says in an artist's statement explaining his latest body of work. "I make shapes that I keep repeating many times in the same picture. I like arranging these shapes in the given rectangle of a canvas. I like organizing the layout with as many shapes as possible in the most harmonized way."

Trained in traditional realism at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Vuillaume's first solo show in 1982 featured paintings of many apples. Lined up, they seemed identical, but on closer viewing one realized that each fruit was painted with the specific character of a portrait. Indeed, Vuillaume also painted actual portraits that he repeated many times, and in these one can only assume that the variety in repetition had to do with the minute painterly nuances that occur even in the most exacting likeness by the human hand. Even while employing a traditional technique, Vuillaume's conceptual approach subverted the traditional purposes and meanings of portraiture in a cunningly postmodern manner.

In a subsequent series, Vaillaume subjected the human figure to even more radical variations, particularly with an image of a man tossing an infant playfully in the air, created by cutting silhouetted shapes from mylar and repeating them in vibrant colors against a luminously mottled color field.

Vuillaume's most intriguing use of repetition to date, however, was seen in his recent New York solo show at Phoenix Gallery, 568 Broadway, in Soho. Here, the artist did away with recognizable subject matter altogether, in the interest of concentrating solely on printing, over and over again, shapes created with a filled plastic bag dipped in acrylic. Although his intention was completely nonobjective, the resulting paintings turned out to be paradoxically evocative, suggesting a host of subjective allusions that seemed to shift and alter the longer one looked at them.

On entering the gallery, the brilliant red, pink, and orange hues of the repeated forms initially suggested to this writer Pop images of greatly enlarged lipstick prints. Their sensually swollen contours and puckered linear inner networks set against softly flowing soft blue or green grounds that Vuillaume achieves by manipulating diluted acrylics on paper stretched out on the studio floor provoked the fanciful mental image of some sultry Amazonian giantess making a moue and imprinting her lips, one at a time, again and again on oversized sheets of pastel tinted tissue !

*"Twisted Prints"*

...But no sooner had one registered this perception than the same forms began to suggest all manner of other images, such as huge, fluorescent kidney beans, stylized autumn leaves, cells, or bacteria wiggling under a microscope. And contrary to Warhol's deadpan presentation of serial imagery to parody mass production and project a sense of boredom, it became clear indeed what Vuillaume means when he says that, to him, repetition signifies life in all its constantly shifting permutations.

"This work, at first sight absurd, comprises something that brings me closer to nature and the natural order," the artist himself has said of these paintings, which reflect the repetitive patterns occurring in universal systems, yet finally retain their abstract autonomy.

In the first painting in the series (all of which were created with acrylic paint on paper mounted on canvas and uniformly titled with the phrase "Prints of a plastic bag with something twisted in it"), some forms are cut off by the edges of the picture space. In all of the subsequent paintings, however, each form is contained within the rectangle of the composition. The decision to make each form complete and discrete seems a significant one, since it heightens by compression the energy of Vuillaume's compositions, while enhancing their formal integrity. It is as though the artist discovered his forms in the first painting and captured and fixed them in place in the compositions that followed.

Although he has been exhibiting in France since 1977 and his work is in many private collections, as well as in the permanent public collection of Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, in Paris, this show at Phoenix Gallery was his first in the United States. According to his resume he has "worked alone for a long time, rarely exhibiting, and says that his path has been long and slow."

This may explain, in part, why the paintings of Jean-Pierre Vuillaume possess such mature conviction and come across so convincingly. For unlike the desperate, shtick-driven art one sees so much of today, they have the look of having come about through an unhurried process of sincere search and discovery. —Ed McCormack

# The Late Frederick Hart Continues to Challenge Avant Garde Orthodoxy

Because he had not only accomplished a stellar body of work during his lifetime, but also left behind several important completed sculptures, working models, and maquettes not yet editioned in bronze, clear acrylic resin, or cast marble at the time of his death, the distinguished American sculptor Frederick Hart continues to surprise and delight us posthumously.

Hart's solo exhibition seen at CFM Gallery, 112 Greene Street, during the month of March, includes major older works, as well as new releases that bolster his standing as a unique figure in contemporary art.

One of the pieces to be previewed is "The Source Bust," an abbreviated version of an important large bronze that Hart had always wanted to see editioned in this form, according to Neil Zukerman, the owner and director of CFM Gallery and one of the sculptor's most ardent champions.

In its original incarnation as a full-length outdoor fountain with water issuing from the luminous crystal orb that the bronze figure bears in her extended hands, "The Source" was hailed by Frederick Turner, poet and former editor of the Kenyon Review, as "a metaphor that celebrates the unblocking of the ancient springs of art and inspiration."

In contrast to the unfettered nudity of many of Hart's most familiar sculptures, the figure in "The Source" is modestly cloaked and hooded, a muse with a decidedly spiritual quality, an ethereal being embodying what Turner refers to as "moral beauty."

To even attempt such a symbolic embodiment in our cynical age is an act of considerable courage, yet Hart brings it off splendidly. "The Source Bust," like the full length bronze, is a defiant gesture of passionate humanism in an art climate rife with sophomoric irony. This is wholly characteristic of the tendency to continually challenge the prevailing aesthetic tendencies of his time that made Hart such a bracing presence in the contemporary art scene and will make his work a force to be reckoned with by future art historians, whose daunting task it will be to separate the merely trendy from the truly enduring.

Even now that various forms of figurative art are again in the ascendancy, Hart's stance still seems radical in more ways than one. For his refusal to separate the spiritual from the sensual must exasperate some of his more conservative supporters as much as his adherence to certain classical values rankles his detractors.

Consider, for one thing, that Hart's

*"Arm of Adam"*

"Ex Nihilo" sculptures for the facade of the Washington National Cathedral contain some of the comeliest nude figures in twentieth century art. Of course, by way of qualifying that statement one can invoke the supposed sacredness of "holy matrimony", pointing out that the model for all of the female figures in "Ex Nihilo" was Hart's beautiful wife Lindy, his muse and the one great love of his life.

Yet the fact remains that these figures are seductive in the most earthly way, and to say otherwise is to practice a kind of coy Victorian hypocrisy which requires extolling a work of art in exalted terms while slyly concealing one's enjoyment of its more "prurient" qualities. Obviously, Hart's definition of moral beauty was far broader than Frederick Turner gave him credit for.

Indeed, the extent to which Hart's sculptures embrace the sensual as an aspect of the sacred becomes even clearer when individual figures are removed from the context of what is arguably the most prestigious religious commission of the last two centuries. Thus isolated, surely no one can deny that "Ex Nihilo Figure No. 6 —female," one of the new bronze editions unveiled in this show, is a classically appealing vision of feminine beauty, unapologetically sexy.

We know from his press material that Frederick Hart held deep religious convictions. According to Tom Wolfe, his close friend and supporter, he experienced such a profound religious epiphany while executing the sculptures for the facade of the National Cathedral that he converted to Catholicism. At the same time, Hart also possessed a complex artistic sensibility and was by no means puritanical. To deny sensuality, Hart's sculptures seem to tell us, is to deny that the beauty of the human body is an essential part of the Creator's master plan.

It is less complicated, not to mention less controversial, to extol the sensual qualities in "The Three Graces," a new release in clear acrylic resin, which ranks with Hart's other major works in the medium, several of which are also in this show, including "Prologue," "Appassionata," and "The Kiss," and the three variations of "Illuminata."

In "The Three Graces" we enter the more permissive realm of pagan myth, rather than of Christian theology. As handmaidens of Venus, these girlishly graceful nudes share her fabled attributes. Unhampered by such moral ambiguities as trouble the pious, the comely trio cavorts freely, personifying the three phases of love: Beauty, arousing Desire, leading to Fulfillment. But even this secular interpretation of the time-honored theme, put forth by humanist philosophers of the 15th century, is subtly altered in clear acrylic, the modern medium Hart perfected so definitively that any other artist who attempts it is in double jeopardy of being seen as an imitator and suffering by comparison to his mastery. For the medium itself, so luminous and ethereal, adds an element of spirituality to this subject that counterbalances its innate sensuality.

Another, less ambiguously spiritual highlight of this exhibition is "Cross of the Millennium," the clear acrylic resin crucifixion hailed by Pope John Paul on its initial unveiling as "a profound theological statement for our day." Here, the radical element is Hart's depiction of the figure suspended weightlessly within the translucent cross rather than impaled upon it, suggesting a Zen-like transcendence of suffering that marks a daring departure from Christian tradition.

Such complexity, confounding as it must be for those conservative souls who would wish to claim him as an exemplar of their own narrow aesthetic ideology, is part of what makes Frederick Hart such a profoundly fascinating artist, in death as he was in life.

—Ed McCormack

# Joseph Cornell's Aesthetic Amusement Park

As odd couples go, Joseph Cornell and Allan Stone take the prize— the former a fey, reclusive mama's boy from Queens who frankly admitted that he could neither paint nor draw, the latter a worldly no-nonsense lawyer turned art dealer whose natural element was the macho world of the Abstract Expressionists. Yet, at one point, the artist even recruited the gallerist to help with the carpentry on some of his box constructions!

Stone chronicled his professional relationship with Cornell, concluding that he was "one-third poet, one third Yankee trader and one third crazy," in a witty catalog memoir for the major exhibition "Joseph Cornell," which ran from October 30 to December 20, 2002, at Allan Stone Gallery, 113 East 90th Street.

The poet part of Cornell inevitably calls to mind Emily Dickinson. Like her, he was an eccentric, hermetic genius who eschewed bohemia to pursue his poetic obsessions behind cover of a conventional facade. Old maid Emily sequestered herself in the family manse in Amherst, catering to her prominent lawyer father, hiding her immortal verses in a drawer. Lifelong bachelor Joseph holed up in a little Archie Bunker house on Utopia Parkway with his domineering mother and disabled brother, only subwaying into Manhattan to visit galleries or scavenge in used book stores and junk shops for the odds and ends with which he conjured up what the poet Charles Simic called his "dime-store alchemy."

Although he met or corresponded with many prominent art world figures, Cornell was most at home in his cluttered basement workshop, concocting unclassifiable little masterpieces like the ones that made the show at Allan Stone akin to a dreamlike aesthetic amusement park.

The show was rich in the delightful juxtapositions of ordinary objects that transcend their humble origins to create surreal material metaphors, as seen in "Untitled (Jupiter in Pisces)," a 1958 box construction in which a toy rubber ball doubles as a globe and a lunar orb and a wine-bottle cork, set against a deep blue sky-map, inexplicably evokes both mineral matter on earth and the pocked surface of the moon.

***DETAIL: "Untitled (Aviary)" 1950-52***

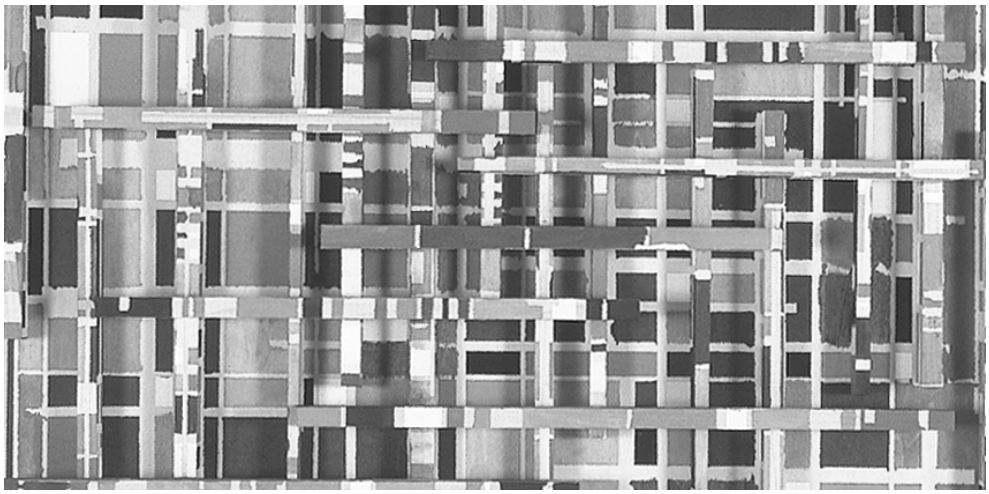
Exhibited here for the first time are a group of miniature works seemingly inspired by party favors and the tiny prizes that used to come in cereal boxes—the type of nostalgic trifles Cornell alone could elevate to the level of high art. Some of these involve scatterings of discrete doodads—a red ball in an atmospherically tinted box; paper cut-outs, postage stamps, and an antique timepiece altered to contain a minuscule cosmos; screws, marbles, and a handwritten text —that create enigmatic mental associations and predate conceptualism. Cornell's playfulness also comes across in works with moving parts inspired by children's games, some with moving parts, such as a series of "sand boxes" and "du Lion d' Or," another box construction from 1958, with rubber balls that slide back and forth across rails.

One of the more salient features of this particular show, however, was how innately painterly many of the boxed works tended to be, despite Cornell's frequent claims to possess no such abilities. Allan Stone's taste for the sheer delectation of pigment seemed prominent in many of the selections, including "Untitled (Aviary)," with a bird cut-out set against a tactile background of crusted, cracked white enamel; "Oeuvres Diverses," in which a particularly shallow box becomes a frame for "an action painting" made with blue sand that changes its composition whenever its position is shifted. Then there is "Untitled (for Tina), ca. 1960 (verso)," in which the rivulets of artfully placed brownish stains dribbling down a reproduction of a Renaissance pencil portrait anticipate certain effects later exploited profitably by Rauschenberg.

Indeed, the longer one studies Cornell, the more obvious it becomes that this most hermetic of artists had a huge influence, not only on legions of kitschy box fabricators (among them the actor and amateur artist Tony Curtis, a frequent visitor to Utopia Parkway), but on genuine talents like the late "mail art" maven Ray Johnson. And while Cornell cannot be called either a painter or sculptor in any conventional sense, it is not for nothing that giants like Willem de Kooning and Marcel Duchamp were among his earliest supporters and most faithful fans.

—Ed McCormack

# "Submerged Pictorialism" in the Art of Eduardo Terranova



*"City Blues" 2001 Acrylic on plexiglass*

Anyone who has paid close attention to evolving tendencies in abstract painting, over the past three decades would probably have to concur that the most significant difference between modernist and postmodern abstraction is the latter's more permissive attitude toward subject matter. That the artist need no longer feel compelled to deny any allusion to external reality as a matter of principle has revitalized abstract painting in a manner that would have been unimaginable when the restrictive and tremendously influential theories of Clement Greenberg still held sway. To put it simply, liberated from intolerant notions of "purity," certain contemporary abstract painters have introduced a submerged pictorialism that animates their compositions in new and vital ways.

One such artist is Eduardo Terranova, whose solo show can be seen at Pleiades Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, from February 18 through March 8, with a reception for the artist on February 20, from 5 to 8 PM. (A smaller, yet equally representative selection of works by Terranova is also on view, presently through April 3, at Richart, 7 East 55th Street.)

Born in Cali, Colombia, now a resident of New York City, Terranova studied at the Zurich Institute of Technology and the New York Institute of Technology, earning degrees in architecture and linguistics. Although he has exhibited widely at venues ranging from the National Arts Club in Manhattan to the Museum of Abano Terme, in Pedua, Italy, many New Yorkers first became aware of his work when he was selected by Larry Rinder, curator of contemporary art at the Whitney Museum, for inclusion in Pleiades Gallery's prestigious 20th annual juried exhibition last year.

A practicing architect, Terranova states that he started painting "as a rebellion against the creative constrictions of applied architecture." He further states that he endeavors to "capture the dynamics of the pulsating city using a spatial deployment of a grid revealing the many social perceptions of objects as extensions of architectural spaces." As a painter he espouses "an architecture of events: geometrical, iterative, lineal and choreographical," relying upon his spatial sense to create "event spaces, field events, matrixes and conceptual paradigms through the studies of field spaces."

Indeed, the dynamics of urban structure, as well as the rhythmic patterns of city life, are everywhere evident in Terranova's acrylic paintings and assemblages (or "sculptural paintings," as he prefers to call them), created with found and painted wood, as well as in the works he calls "lightboxes," such as the piece entitled "City Blues, " reproduced here.

The latter works are painted in acrylics on specially lightboxes, so they are illuminated from within. Working on both sides of the plexiglass, Terranova explores qualities of light that were originally inspired by stained glass windows in churches that he renovated in his capacity as an architect. However, rather than religious inconography, the compositions of his lightboxes are comprised of intricate grids that project a more secular rather than spiritual energy as it manifests in the modern city, with its maze-like spatial permutations. By layering rectangular shapes that change significantly when the light inside the plexiglass box is switched on or off, Terranova creates abstract compositions that reflect the mutability of the urban scene: its speed, its depth, its flux, its ever-shifting shapes and shadows, from the play of daylight on various surfaces to the glow of neon and endless windows against the nocturnal skyline.

In these works, too, the light coming through the plexiglass focuses attention on yet another unique aspect of Terranova's work: its restrained painterliness. By this, one means the degree to which this artist employs gestural elements within a strictly schematized geometric format to create a contrast between loose and taut paint handling.

These contrasts work in concert with his exquisite spatial dissections to create compelling compositional tensions, and are achieved by virtue of a skillfully controlled drip technique. Perched on a ladder, Terranova drips liquefied acrylic paint from his brush onto his plexiglass, canvas, or wood support at precisely calculated angles. Unlike Pollock's cataclysmic swirls, however, Terranova's dripped lines run in a single direction, until he reverses position to layer skeins of thinned pigment that overlap with the first ones, forming grids that are the salient feature of his architectonic compositions.

The all-important grid serves as an armature to support a host of subtle allusions in the art of Eduardo Terranova, as seen in the assemblage— or sculpture painting— entitled "Crossing Harlem," where overlapping strips of painted wood project the composition into three dimensional space. Here, the palette of muted red, green, and ocher hues is inspired by the African garb of women on 125th Street, which the artist noted during a visit there. These, in turn, evoke the earthy tones of Cubism as transmuted through the influence of tribal sculpture on the art of Picasso and Braque. Thus Terranova merges personal perception with art historical reference points to create a confluence of poetic allusions fully as complex as the visual structuring of his compositions.

Equally evocative, of both the constant reconfiguring of our urban environment and of jazzy hard-edged aesthetics in the Mondrian mode revamped in three dimensions for the postmodern age, is another dynamic piece in painted recycled wood entitled "Under Construction." In yet other works, such as "Persistence of Events," Terranova evokes a fourth dimension of time and space with painted wood panels that can be slid back and forth on tracks to form variable compositions. ("Persistence of Events" may also be a seminal work, in that Terranova's omnipresent grid is here overlaid by calligraphically curving lines that he is presently exploring in a new, as yet unexhibited, series of works interpreting music in visual terms.)

On evidence of this exhibition, any work forthcoming from this artist is well worth anticipating. For Eduardo Terranova is a painter whose complex approach to form and space promises to considerably enrich the still-evolving vocabulary of postmodern abstraction. —Ed McCormack

# Calligraphers Celebrate the Korean-American Century

According to Sang-Dong Rho, head of the calligraphy department at Seoul Arts Center, in Seoul, Korean calligraphy is markedly different from its Chinese and Japanese counterparts. While Chinese calligraphy is strongly influenced by Confucianism, and Japanese calligraphy is influenced by Zen Buddhism, in Korean calligraphy we find a combined influence of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shamanism, Sang-Dong Rho maintains.

While other Korean experts maintain, conversely, that the basis of all Korean aesthetics is Taoism, with its emphasis on the essential harmony between man and nature, all agree that Korean calligraphy has a directness, power, and energy distinctly its own. And these qualities are much in evidence in the work of Kwon, Myoung Won, Kwon, Oh Sil, and Kim, Myung Ja, three widely-exhibited Korean calligraphers whose work will be featured in an exhibition at the Empire State Building, 350 Fifth Avenue at 34th Street, from March 1 through 31.

Like a previous exhibition by the same trio of calligraphers at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, in Washington D.C. , this one is being presented to celebrate the centennial of Korean immigration to the United States, which began in 1903, when a group of 102 adults and children settled in Hawaii to escape the colonizing of their country by Japan.

Certainly one of the highlights of the opening ceremony for the exhibition will be a calligraphy demonstration by Kwon, Myoung Won, who is especially well known in Washington, D.C., where he has two pieces in the Smithsonian Institute of Natural History, and where he has given prior performances to educate the community about Korean culture. Working with a broom-sized brush on long paper scrolls spread out on the floor, Kwon, Myoung Won captivates his audiences with his strong, sinuous strokes, which writhe with serpentine grace.

"I started studying calligraphy because of a saying, 'Calligraphy is a mirror of one's innermost feelings," Kwon, Myoung Won says. "The work ahead decides the brush size and type and the size of paper that I use. The texts are quotes from Korean poems and literature from verses from the Bible. I then proceed with power and a steady hand."

Oh Sil is a powerful calligrapher in her own right. At once precise and poetic, her pieces have been praised for "strokes that are stunningly fast and strong." In her illuminations of "Thy Silence" and "Patriot Song," her brushes dances nimbly.

Kim, Myung Ja combines a fluently brushed characters with an equally swift delineation of plant forms in her scrolls, which combine elements of calligraphy and ink painting. With black ink and touches of watercolor, she exemplifies the close relationship between writing and drawing in Asian art.

*Korean Calligraphy by Kwon, Myoung Won*

Together, these three notable calligraphers celebrate the beauty of Korean culture and the contribution that Korean people have made to the the United States since arriving here one hundred years ago. Their evolution from poor agricultural laborers to pillars of the community should serve as an inspiration to us all. —Byron Coleman

# Spiritual Evolution in the Art of María de Echevarría

María de Echevarría, who was born in Argentina and has lived in the United States since 1969, is a painter known primarily for her landscapes, which she has exhibited extensively in New York City, as well as elsewhere in the country and abroad. To some of her newest paintings, however, de Echevarría has added figures that evoke affectingly poetic meanings.

These works were among the highlights of de Echevarría's latest solo show, "Let the Paintings Speak," seen recently at 2/20 Gallery, 220 West 16th Street, the proceeds from which were donated to charities in Argentina through A.S.D.A. (Association of Wives of Argentine Diplomats), to help alleviate the widespread hunger, particularly among children, in that economically troubled country. (The music played during the reception was composed by the American composer Richard Martinez.)

The figures in de Echevarría's new paintings are as ethereal as the landscapes they inhabit. Faceless, featureless, gracefully gowned, they have the appearance of spectral, rather than corporeal, beings. They seem suffused by light, at one with the luminous auras that enliven their surroundings with an unearthly glow. The artist has stated the she introduced these figures to "express cherished emotions and experiences," and indeed they do seem to be be

*"Selection"*

conduits of feeling, just as her landscapes invariably evoke the emotional effect of nature, as opposed to merely mirroring the lay of the land. In the manner of angels, spirits, or other symbolic emissaries from distant realms, these beings suggest elusive spiritual meanings, as seen in the oil on canvas entitled "Selection," where a single, wraith-like blue figure appears in the lower left area of the composition, which is dominated by a large, red, rectangular shape, glowing through blue and violet mists like the portal to some alternate reality. Here, as in all of de Echevarría's paintings, her subtle layering of translucent oil glazes creates a sense of infinite imaginative spaces, shot through with delicate modulations of soft yet vibrant hues.

By virtue of her luminous layering, de Echevarría imbues her paintings with a mystery and depth that gives them a decidedly metaphysical dimension. This quality is especially dramatic in the oil on canvas called "The Dead Don't Die," the title of which makes it safe to assume that the three figures wearing blue, purple, and pink cloaks, seen convening in a landscape bathed in brilliant green auras, represent spirits.

By contrast, another oil entitled "Woods in Flame" suggests a more natural event; yet the ring of fire and smoke at the center of the composition, amid blue sky and mountains, appears equally mystical —or, at very least, visionary— in its own manner. Other paintings, such as "House of Dreams," and the triptych "The Woman, Her House, and it's Tree" employ somewhat more abstract forms in a manner that is no less evocative. The latter work is especially intriguing with its central panel, containing the indistinct image of a woman's head, sandwiched between more gestural and roughly geometric elements.

In these and other paintings in this exceptional solo show, María de Echevarría revealed exciting new facets of her deeply personal, unabashedly spiritual aesthetic vision.

—Lawrence Downes

# Major Talents from France and Italy at Gelabert

The recent group exhibition "French and Italian Contemporary Artists," presented by Aurige International LLC, of Paris, France, at Gelabert Studios Gallery, 255 West 86th Street, demonstrated several distinctive approaches to representation.

The French painter Marie-Laurence Gaudrat has won many prestigious awards and designed sets for theater and cinema, including the James Ivory film, "Jefferson in Paris." Here, Gaudrat was represented by a group of oils on canvas of figures and landscapes. The figure paintings are tall vertical portraits of women, seen full length in profile in pensive poses, holding books. Although garbed in modern dress, these slender young women suggest muses or other symbolic figures, albeit of a decidedly bourgeois caste.

There are classical qualities to Gaudrat's landscapes as well. These manifest themselves in the austerity of her compositions, as well as in her paint handling, with its contrasts of transparency and opacity, of glazes and impastos.

If one were to compare her technique to any contemporary master it would probably be Balthus, whose landscapes are in many ways more subtly nuanced than the paintings of nubile pre-pubescent nudes for which he has achieved notoriety.

While Marie-Laurence Gaudrat does not indulge in the sort of salacious subject matter for which Balthus is known, her oils are similarly succulent— especially in landscapes such as "La vallée de Saint-Basile," with its delectably pigmented surface, its luscious colors, and its lilting compositional rhythms.

Featuring luminous blue skies, enlivened by shapely cumuli giving way to blue mountain ranges verdant rolling fields, the landscapes of Marie-Laurence Gaudrat evoke the lush bucolic qualities of the French countryside with admirable panache and considerable poetic power.

Gérard Jan, a native of Toulouse, who works in a studio in nearby Saint-Jory, and is widely celebrated in France and abroad for his etchings, monotypes, and pastels, emerges here as a poet of forgotten places. Elements of aged and neglected architecture figure prominently in his etchings, which are superbly atmospheric and evocative. Decaying walls, areas of old brick, empty windows, and overgrown weeds conspire in Jan's compositions to create a sense of genteel desolation. Abandoned bridges and gnarled tree limbs, set against white skies in unpeopled spaces, speak eloquently of faded glory, of damaged dignity, captured in a meticulously detailed technique.

Jan depicts textures, tones, and shadows

*Marie-Laurence Gaudrat*

with particular effectiveness to imbue impassive inanimate surfaces with emotional resonance. His monotype "Nature morte" is especially impressive in this regard, with clustered oil cans and a funnel defined by areas of light shadow, its tonal drama reminiscent of Chardin.

Equally adept in color as in monochromes, Gérard Jan also showed vibrant pastels of pastoral landscapes and comely nudes. The latter works were especially notable for their contrasts of earthy sensuality and formal austerity, particularly in pastels such as "Plein soleil" and "L'attente," in which the shapely forms of nude female figures are set off by sharply defined areas of color vibrant color.

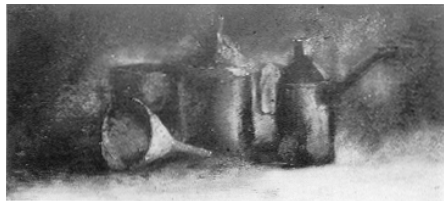
At a relatively young age, Gérard Jan has achieved a mature mastery that is quite extraordinary, which he tempers with exquisite restraint to create pictures that resonate with subtle meanings and sheer visual appeal.

The Italian painter Christian Bernabè works in the demanding medium of egg tempera, employing its unique translucence and luminosity to imbue his paintings with pristine beauty. Bernabè hints at the love of order, of the harmonious arrangement of all the elements of a composition, that lies at the heart of his aesthetic philosophy and obviously governs his approach to form in the title "Collocation of existence." In this smoothly limned egg tempera painting enhanced with gold leaf, the figure of a young woman wearing a floral patterned minidress dominates the composition.

Seated in a chair draped with red fabric, its myriad folds expressively delineated, her bare feet as meticulously detailed as the delicate, serenely composed features of her beautiful face, she is a formidable presence indeed. However, what makes the picture succeed so splendidly is that, for all its monumentality, this figure does not exist in a vacuum; such ostensibly tangential elements as the elongated poplar trees seen through an arched portal behind the figure and the portion of a mysterious wheel in the foreground are equally essential to the composition.

Impressive in quite another manner, the mixed media ink and pastel drawings of Diane Toury distinguish themselves for their brevity and fluidity. The undulant grace movement of feline subjects such as an ocelot or a panther are captured with economy and deceptive ease. Indeed, Toury appears to inhabit the skins of her subjects when she draws them, so accurately does she capture the rhythms of their movement, so total seems her identification with these lovely yet lethal creatures who pounce with the speedy silence of a pencil or brush alighting on an image.

Michèle Arnaud, on the other hand, employs pastels on tinted paper to evoke the atmospheric nuances of a world transformed by personal vision. As in Asian painting, the human figure is generally dwarfed by nature— or, in some



*Gérard Jan*

works—by urban walls and buildings. At times exotically veiled or robed, the figures of Michele Arnaud are engulfed in ethereal mists and auras of color that invests these works with their own peculiar poetry.

By contrast Jean Levasseur exploits the material qualities of oil paints to their utmost in vigorous seascapes notable for their tumultuous compositions. Juicy impastos laid down in energetic strokes create the material sensation of crashing surf, rugged rocks, and floating clouds. Lavasseur's paintings succeed simultaneously for their depiction of natural subjects and their innate and autonomous abstract qualities.

Then there is Catherine Arnaud, whose oils on paper are marked by an exquisite spatial sense that lends them a timeless beauty. Pale yet luminous hues are employed by the artist to evoke autumnal woods, purple mountain peaks, bodies of water and the occasional small figure in a manner that suggests nature transmuted through the magical properties of memories and dreams.

All told, this exhibition presented some of the most gifted artists at work in France and Italy today.

—Maurice Taplinger

# Contemporary Artists Guild Returns to Cork Gallery

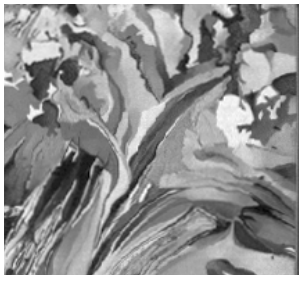
Founded in 1968 by Gertrude Sappin as Contemporary Artists of Brooklyn, the Contemporary Artists Guild changed its name in 1975, when it expanded to include members from New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

CAG's 35th Anniversary Exhibit, at Cork Gallery, Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center Plaza, 65th Street and Broadway, from February 6 through 17 (with a reception on Sunday, February 9, from 3 to 5 PM), is characterized by the lively stylistic diversity that also made its previous surveys in the same venue so successful.

*Doris Wyman*

In true postmodern fashion, traditional realists such as Brenda Tribush are included along with more abstract painters like Doris Wyman, and the contrasts that they present prove complementary.

Brenda Tribush shows a still life in pastel called "Persian Coffeepot," notable for its darkly burnished color areas and handling of light on reflective surfaces. Doris Wyman is represented by a large abstract painting, "Dancing Above the Sea," combining lyrical evocativeness with exquisite spatial tensions and a sumptuous sense of color, proving that poetic and formal qualities need not be mutually exclusive.



*Lisa Robbins*

Elisa Decker demonstrates an ability to extract abstract essences from nature in an oil on gessoed paper in which gnarled and twisted tree limbs are skillfully evoked in translucent glazes. By contrast Lisa Robbins captures the rush and gush of organic growth in sinuous, surging strokes in her oil on canvas, "Seedlings." Then there is Elizabeth Delson, whose flowing gestural composition "Wind on the Waves," is centrally concentrated, with bold circular strokes set against a white field of gessoed paper. Rose Sigal Ibsen also relies on spontaneity to carry the day in her untitled picture with clotted areas of gray ink painted wet-into-wet against washes of pale blue watercolor.

*Isabel Shaw*

Equally energetic in another manner is "Cats Cradle," in which Belle Manes builds an intricate and rhythmic composition with areas of pink and blue bracketed by a lively angular linear calligraphy. One of the true masters of contemporary Chinese painting in a classical mode, Choey Kwak Kay is represented by an ink and watercolor painting, "Fish," in which swerving lines capture the movement of water in a few spare strokes. Isabel Shaw's sculptures in bronze and steel depict gracefully elongated figures that combine sensuality with psychological resonance.

Olive Reich employs watercolor in quite an opposite way in "Tribute," an affecting image of Old Glory flying from a crane above Ground Zero, the ruins of the Twin Towers and the all-enveloping smoke rendered with meticulous atmospheric exactitude.

*Olive Reich*

Emily Mehling shows wood sculptures in which robust forms carved from cedar, such as those in "Albuquerque, the Cactus," take off from natural shapes to create sensual organic abstractions. By contrast, the mixed media sculptures of Florence Wint are witty assemblages of found and altered objects that compel one's attention with unlikely juxtapositions, such as a robotic figure within a riotously adorned dress form or a pair of intricately patterned disembodied legs on which a world globe appears to be gingerly balanced.

*Florence Wint*

Another sculptor, Sondra Gold, moves easily between geometric and organic forms, as seen in the striking contrasts inherent in her painted steel piece, "Triangles #16" and her more figuratively suggestive bronze, "Flee."

*Lisa Feldman*

Smooth organic forms twist and turn in muscularly knotted permutations in Lilly M. Tussey's untitled piece in white marble. Then there is Lisa Feldman's virtuosic glass sculpture, in which the pages of an open book stacked on four closed volumes suggest flapping wings about to take flight.

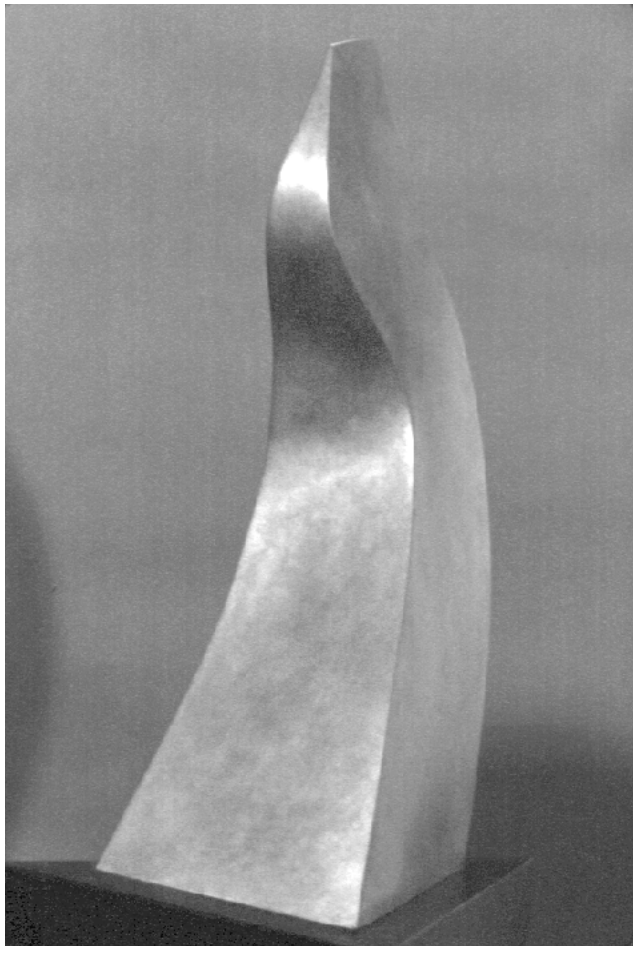
For a leisurely viewer, this is a richly rewarding exhibition, a delightfully varied treasure trove of contending aesthetic tendencies coexisting harmoniously. For a reviewer, pleasure is mixed with frustration at not being able to include descriptions of other works by gifted artists such as Alton Tobey, Marianne Schnell, and Mark O'Grady, among several others whose work invariably warrants serious attention.

—J. Sanders Eaton

# Sculptor Jinx Lindenauer Expands the Modernist Dialogue

Those of us who were fortunate enough to catch Jinx Lindenauer's first New York City solo show one year ago were made immediately aware that an important contemporary sculptor had arrived among us full blown.

Although Lindenauer's work had been included in several previous group exhibitions in prestigious venues such as The National Arts Club and The Sculpture Center, among others, and her work is well known to certain private collectors around the country who own some of her pieces, her solo debut gave full evidence of a mature and learned sculptural sensibility nurtured unhurriedly. Surely, Lindenauer was well prepared for her auspicious emergence as a force to be reckoned with, having been trained in stone carving at the Art Students League, Parsons School of Design, and the Detroit Institute of Art, as well as in Brussels, Belgium, and Pietrasanta, Italy.



*"Isadora"*

The promise of Lindenauer's first solo show is more than fulfilled in her second one woman exhibition, "Sculpture– –Recent Work," at Denise Bibro Fine Art, Inc., 529 West 20th Street, from February 6 through March 1. (There will be a reception for the artist on Thursday, February 6, from 6 to 8 PM.)

Apart from its formal attributes, which are considerable, one of the first aspects of Jinx Lindenauer's pieces that strikes one is their drama. In this regard, it is interesting to learn that before she took up sculpture, Lindenauer worked in theater as an actress, for then one can fully appreciate and trace the dramatic genesis of her work in her present medium. Perhaps the piece where this dramatic element is most obvious is "The Challenge," comprised of two triangularly carved slabs of Carrara white marble that form a dynamic, upwardly thrusting configuration, suggesting a scale considerably more monumental than its actual size. In the triangular space between these joined shapes, a small, simplified bronze figure is poised, clinging for dear life as it attempts to ascend. The formal qualities of the piece enhance the sense of human struggle that the figure so clearly symbolizes—particularly the austere, icy white surface of the marble, which makes the ascent seem all the more perilous. Yet there is a heroic quality to the diminutive figure, a sense of determination that recalls a statement attributed to the artist: "Because stone is so demanding and unforgiving, it provides the greatest challenge and warrants the greatest respect."

While "The Challenge" can be seen to allude to the struggles peculiar to art-making, as well as to the more universal human struggle to survive (which in the case of the artist, of course, are interchangeable), Lindenauer's bronze "Remembrance" evokes a deeply affecting memorial to the thousands who lost their lives in the terrorist destruction of the Twin Towers, with its three tall forms pocked with window-like perforations. While one stands golden and upright, two have an ashen gray patina and lean sideways as though captured in mid-collapse. While the two gray towers have a ghostly, elegiac quality, evoking a sense of loss and grief, the golden tower suggests hope, renewal and the indomitable spirit of those who stand for truth and freedom. Here, Lindenauer appears to be assuring us that people of good will will invariably prevail against the destructive forces of evil.

Yet another bronze, "Isadora," appears to pay tribute to the great dancer Isadora Duncan; or at lease it appears to invite that interpretation by virtue of its singular grace, which takes the form of a single curvaceous shape that commands space like a wave, rising to a point in an ever-narrowing flow from its base. By contrast, another in finely-veined white Italian marble, entitled "Cathedral Rock," evokes a sense of mass and majesty as still and eternal as a mountain.

In contrast to the raw, primordial power of "Cathedral Rock," another major piece called "La Montagna Bianca," carved in Carrara white marble, is notable for its refined complexity, its surface smooth as porcelain, its forms flowing in configurations simultaneously sensual and precise. Something of a formal tour de force, the latter piece recalls the interaction between smooth organic curves and sharper geometric elements that distinguished the work of the estimable French sculptor Andre Bloc, although distinguished by Lindenauer's unique formal vocabulary.

Indeed, the sculptures of Jinx Lindenauer transcend the angst and uncertainty of the present period in art history, to continue and expand upon the ideas of purity and austerity that characterized modernism, in an ongoing dialogue that makes her work important and timelessly compelling.

—Maureen Flynn



See page 15 for review

# Intellect Informs Intuition in the Oils of May Bender

Certain artists create their best work in times of crisis, and abstract painting has never been more stimulatingly embattled than at the present moment in art history. To place one's faith in the truth of the pure painterly gesture in an era of conceptual strategies requires a conviction, not to mention a courage that, in career terms, is tantamount to putting one's very life on the line.

Even when she paints the figure, as she often does, May Bender is essentially an abstract artist. This places her right in the middle of the fray, and no artist makes a better case for the ongoing vitality and viability of lyrical abstraction, judging from Bender's latest exhibition, which ran through January at Artsforum Gallery, 24 West 57th Street.

Much postmodern abstract painting exploits ambiguity as a survival strategy, playing both ends from the middle, even adopting an ironic stance that is antithetical to the romantic, existential, go-for-broke gamble on the gesture that put what Clement Greenberg called "American-type painting" on the map. May Bender eschews the self-protective strategies of postmodernism in favor of reviving the sense of daring that made Abstract Expressionism so fresh and exciting. Her paintings seem to insist that the heroic spirit is still possible in American painting. And they make that claim with a directness and a passion that is ultimately convincing.

Thus to encounter Bender's large oil on canvas "Crescendo/Cerebration XVII" is to have one's own faith in pure gesture renewed. For here is a sweeping lyricism, a palpable life-presence, an unabashed physicality that harks back to when one first encountered the sheer power of "action painting," and experienced oil paint on canvas as gut-level visual/visceral sensation, rather than merely a vehicle of pictorial content.

*"Yellow: 4th Wave of Light/Cerebration XXII"*

One literally relives that thrill in "Crescendo/Cerebration XVII," with its roiling rhythms, dramatic chiaroscuro, and a compositional grandeur that is rare in the art of today. As the first word of the title suggests, the violent rhythmic movement of the dark forms, interacting stormily on a pale ground and lit intermittently by conflagrations of red, is symphonic, intuitive, emotional. Yet the second word that Bender has affixed to this work (as well as to all of the paintings in her recent series) reminds us that in sophisticated art, no matter how lyrical or free its execution, intuition is invariably informed by intellect, gesture mediated by thought.

This duality also manifests strikingly in "Yellow: Fourth Wave of Light/Cerebration XXII," where luminous yellow and orange forms flare evocatively, and "Complexity/Cerebration," with its muscular thrusts of red as visceral as one Soutine's flayed carcasses. Both canvases, like the others in this series, exemplify Bender's desire to create "conceptualizations of the wanderings of the mind portraying the dynamics and energy of color, texture, and form."

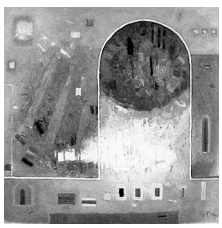
That May Bender realizes such conceptualizations primarily through the liquid fluidity of her paint handling suggests that her faith in the primacy of gesture has paid off handsomely.

—Jeffrey Dalton

# Cross-Currents of Figure and Abstraction

A dialogue between the abstract and the figurative enlivened three recent group surveys at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway.

In "Abstract Perspectives," Varya gave geometric shapes a floaty, visionary quality by virtue of fanciful compositions and soft, predominantly blue color harmonies invigorated by piquant bursts of brilliant red.



*Varya*

Vladimir Hristov combined angular figurative distortions with contemporary fragmentation with notable elegance. Betty Eastman created a delightfully disconcerting effect with extreme distortions of scale in compositions that deconstruct the figure, enclosing its separate elements in rectangular abstract areas.

*Betty Eastman*

In "Contemporary Narratives," visual storytelling took a postmodern form in the paintings of James Maher, where figurative elements are blocked in with bold areas of color, yet still manage to convey specific information, as seen in his painting of a man in a jail cell hemmed in between shadows and patterns. On the other hand if Joe Griffith is telling stories, they are of a strange, cartoony kind akin to those of Carroll Dunham, albeit animated by Griffith's own zany take on semi-abstraction.

*Vladimir Hristov*

Hiroko Takayama combines scrawled words and phrases with vigorous gestural forms in paintings that convey spontaneous energy and the sense of complex, somewhat elusive, subtexts just below the immediacy of the surface pyrotechnics.

Then there is Adam Pasich, whose simple compositions involving bold, colorful geometric shapes and numerals combine visual pizzazz and semiotic suggestiveness in a highly original, aesthetically pleasing manner.

In "Figuring Reality," Neil Nelson's portraits of Pop celebrities such as Elvis Presley are notable for their mellow evocativeness ala Chuck Close, as opposed to the garish treatment given similar subjects by the likes of Andy Warhol and Peter Max. Timothy Zacchetti combines skillfully figurative images with autonomous textures, patterns, and colors to create compositions that succeed on several levels simultaneously. Bault's intriguing painting of a flatly rendered red figure set against a plain ground suggests Michelangelo's famous drawing of the male anatomy, as well as a multiple-limbed Hindu god. Donna-Lee Pierce K's severely cropped painting of a woman's bare back made the figure an occasion for a vigorous abstract composition.

*Neil Nelson*

While abstract and figurative modes of expression were once diametrically opposed, in recent decades artists have brought them closer together. Indeed, the group shows discussed here indicate that their aims are now often identical.

—Wilson Wong

# At Noho: A Plethora of Pleasures Preserved "On Ice"

At Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, a winter group show, aptly titled "On Ice," featured fifteen artists whose work exemplified the variety and vitality to be found in the booming Chelsea art scene.

One of the more physically imposing pieces was "Curtain Cage #III," a flax and handmade paper mobile by Pat Feeney-Murrell, a frequent exhibitor whose work is invariably intriguing. Suspended from the ceiling, its dangling, perforated, paint-mottled, clumped-together strips suggested the entrance to a cosmic car-wash. Contrastingly intimate, yet commanding in its own quiet way, "Letter to Colette," a mixed media work by Daniele Marin presented a poetic semiotic puzzle with an indecipherable text overlaid by tiny mirrored bits and discs sprouting delicate silver threads. Although Marin is known for larger works and installations, here she revealed a more intimate and hermetic aspect of her sensibility.

Katherine Crone combined conceptual elements and an evocative naturalism in "A Year on Accabonic Harbor," a work in handmade paper with multiple photographic images of a sunset arranged within a long, horizontal box. The edges of the photo-images, bent back like the pages of a "flip-book," gave the viewer fragmented glimpses of text.

In a mixed media tableau called "Marginal Men Walking," Siena Porta merged sculpture and painting with funky flair, wielding a loaded brush to unite a 3-D trio of comatose Everymen with a gestural backdrop. Like George Segal, Siena Porta imbues rough-hewn figurative fragments with a palpable human presence and chilling social resonance. Another sculptor, Joan Zuckerberg showed a small ceramic piece called "Co:Emergence," in which flattened, furling shapes suggested some hybrid object somewhere between an airplane and a stylized bird. Zuckerberg's simultaneous allusions to the organic and the mechanical, the soft and the hard, created a sense of tactile ambiguity that verged on the disconcerting.

At least two of the painters in this show explored notions of "abstract realism" : Stephanie Rauschenbusch showed two sparkling watercolors of Venetian scenes in which the vibrant pastel colors of buildings and wiggly watery reflections on the canals advanced to the picture plane, intriguingly contradicting the implied deep space of the drawn perspective. Rauschenbusch's meticulous technique enhanced the spatial tensions, particularly in "Venetian Rose and Yellow."

Conversely, Rebecca Cooperman keeps her sinuous shapes nailed tightly to the picture plane in her oil on canvas, "Enlightenment." Thus for all the literalness of her rhythmically interlocking plant forms, Cooperman's flat color areas and overall composition encourage an unambiguously abstract reading.

Zarvin Swerbilov's bold hard edge paintings are distinguished for their brilliant color areas, curvaceous shapes, and emblematic compositions. Swerbilov's canvas "King Tut's Conception" was simultaneously austere and sensual.

Hyeon-Seok Lee, on the other hand, mixes hard edges with quirky shapes and an offbeat kandy-kolored palette of pinks and pastel hues. Lee also adds a soupcon of Pop to the mix with the bar-code in his painting "Meta-Object," presumably a wry comment on the commodification of the art object.

An opposite approach to abstraction was seen in Sheila Hecht's acrylic painting, "All Moist Yellow," where a sense of spontaneous gesture carried the day. Hecht's alternately graceful and violent calligraphic strokes, streaks, and nervous lines scratched into a thickly impastoed golden field projected a sense of energy, immediacy, and untrammeled vitality.

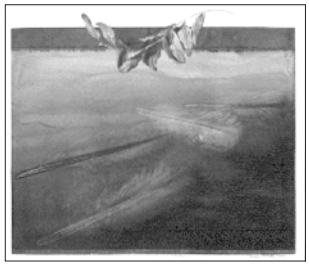
Others employed gesture toward more figurative ends: Diana Freedman-Shea's "Buildings with Lime Green Triangle" afforded a vertiginous bird's-eyeview of downtown towers. Freedman-Shea's fluent, succulent strokes make shadows and areas of color morph from realism to abstraction in the blink of an eye. Hester Welish has her own way with gesture in her small oil "Celebrating Dance." With muscularly generalized forms akin to those of Diebenkorn and other California figure painters, Welish captured the movement of three dancers whirling as one.

Amarillis Kroon shows alliances to both Abstract Expressionism and European modernism in "Poppies," a floral still life with linear forms floating over neo-cubistic color areas enlivened by collage elements and gold leaf. Dynamically, Kroon combines the niceties of Pattern Painting a la Robert Kushner with more stringently Hofmann-esque "push and pull."

Lynn Friedman's landscapes, such as "Afternoon Sun," are light-filled and atmospheric in a manner that appears to single handedly update the "Luminism" of American painters of the mid 1800s such as Fitz Hugh Lane and John Frederick Kensett for the postmodern era. Friedman's fondness for hefty gold frames enhances the retro-elegance of her glowing canvases, without hampering their freshness and immediacy.

Then there is Dianne Martin, whose monotypes with watercolor are notable for her ability to successfully combine elements of the meticulous and the spontaneous to achieve an unusual synthesis of strong composition and ethereal poetry. Especially exquisite in this regard was Martin's "Gold Rise," with its detailed image of a delicate golden plant form suspended above a soft blue field faintly imprinted with the phantom outlines of graceful feathers.

—J. Sanders Eaton



*Dianne Martin*

*Sheila Hecht*

*Danièle Marin*

*Pat Feeney-Murrell*

# NYAEA Gala Celebrates 55 Years of Aiding Artists; Badboy Honoree Philip Pavia Deconstructs Decorum!

It was one of one of those increasingly rare decorous occasions in the New York art world, with men and women dressed like grownups in jackets and ties and dresses and pearls and not a naked pierced navel or pair of artfully distressed boutique jeans anywhere in sight. The members of New York Artists Equity Association had gathered amid the genteel drawing room elegance of The National Arts Club for that venerable organization's 55th Anniversary Awards Dinner, honoring the art dealer David B. Findlay Jr. and the sculptor Philip Pavia.

The invitation had specified "Festive Attire," harking back in spirit to an era when even bohemian artists made an effort to dress for openings and parties—the very era celebrated in the journal compiled and designed by Regina Stewart, artist and executive director of NYAEA, for the event.

The dual themes of the lavishly produced journal— which included a letter from President Bush congratulating New York Artists Equity Association for its fine work on behalf of artists and concluding "Laura joins me in sending our best wishes"—were two related scenes that, in their time, flew far below the radar of such official recognition: The Club, an important hangout and forum for the Abstract Expressionists, founded by Philip Pavia in the late forties, and the artist-run cooperative galleries that flourished on East Tenth Street from the fifties into the sixties.

As Regina Stewart pointed out in her opening remarks at dinner, the significance of those two scenes eludes even most art historians. To set the record straight, Stewart solicited personal essays for the journal from Tenth Street veterans like Alex Katz, Milton Resnick, Selina Trieff, and Philip Pearlstein, among other luminaries. Indeed, we felt honored to find ourselves in such distinguished company when we contributed a nostalgic account of our own membership in the Brata Gallery (one of only a handful of the original artist-run co-ops on Tenth Street to survive into the sixties) and we were fascinated by the memories of those who were there in the very beginning.

Chief among them is Philip Pavia, a review of whose brilliant solo show of sculpture at Broome Street Gallery appeared in the February/March 2002 issue of Gallery& Studio. More recently, Pavia was profiled by Kay Larson in The New York Times, and there will be a major exhibition at Sage College in Albany, early in 2004, centering on the seminal art journal, "It Is," which he published from the late fifties to the early sixties with his wife, the painter Natalie Edgar.

Pavia's role as a major player in the early days of the New York School was brought home to us a few years ago, when we interviewed Willem de Kooning in East Hampton. The late painter's short-term memory was already in such decline that he had to keep confirming details about recent events with his young assistant Tom Ferrara. Yet, he seemed to have total recall when the subject turned to Pavia and The Club, saying, "None of us had any idea we were making history. We were just a bunch of artists arguing and bragging and telling each other where to get off."

Although the Cedar Bar on University Place (where painter Joe Stefanelli tells us in the journal that he did his "post-graduate work") would eventually become the legendary watering hole of the Abstract Expressionists, de Kooning told us, "At first, we didn't even drink that much, only coffee. We used to hang around this cafeteria on 8th Street, until they got fed up with us because we didn't spend much money and we got a little loud sometimes. Then, when we got kicked out of there, Pavia had this idea to start a club. Since Pavia had enough money to pay the rent, we backed him because we needed a place to go..."

Pavia himself, now 90 and still as sharp as a stone carver's chisel, recalls that the original hangout de Kooning referred to was the old Waldorf Cafeteria on 6th Avenue and 8th Street. Contradicting de Kooning's claim that they were kicked out, he says the artists met at the Waldorf "the whole of World War II," and adds, "Five years of wartime is a long time of meeting in a cafeteria and often we talked about a private club."

They called it simply The Club because, typically of that contentious bunch, no one could agree on a name. With its serious art arguments and semi-organized panel discussions leavened by much drinking and dancing, The Club became a refuge for American artists who felt beleaguered by the influx of refugee European Surrealists whom Pavia describes, colorfully, as being like "an occupation army."

Pavia grumbles about how he and his Abstract Expressionist pals felt they were being "bombarded" by refugee artists who "slowly, but with great skill, took over all of the 57th street galleries and museums." He says: "If we approached the refugees speaking quietly, they would stop talking. To them, we were spies."

At the same time, Pavia fondly recalls seeing Marcel Duchamp playing chess with Edgar Varese in Washington Square Park, and confessed his awe to Kay Larson about seeing figures like Max Ernst, Andre Breton, Piet Mondrian and Yves Tanguy in the flesh, saying "there were geniuses walking the streets, you know."

The next generation of New York painters, who came of age in the fifties, had to contend not only with these European geniuses, but

*Regina Stewart (Center) with Suzanne Donnelly Jenkins and Paul Jenkins*

with the American artists of Pavia's generation who had recently ascended to their own greatness. Since the uptown galleries were now doubly "occupied," the Tenth Street scene was born out of dire necessity.

Especially informative in this regard was the painter Fred Mitchell, one of the founders of the Tanager Gallery, who spoke at dinner and recalled walking on 4th Street near the Bowery with fellow artist Angelo Ippolito in 1952. They had both had an unsuccessful day trying to interest uptown galleries in their work and were disgusted with the art establishment's apparent disinterest in the new art that was brewing downtown. Noticing an empty storefront that had once housed a barbershop, they decided, as Newman put it, to "take things into our own hands."

Recruiting fellow artists Lois Dodd, Bill King, and Charles Cajori to help with the $55 monthly rent, they opened the Tanager Gallery, which moved to 90 East 10th Street a year later, becoming the forerunner for a scene that would eventually include the Brata, Phoenix, Area, Hansa, Camino, James, and March Galleries—as well as others, such as Gallery 84, the Aegis, Aspects, and Stryke, which opened as the decade progressed.

Other veterans share their vivid recollections in their journal essays: Lois Dodd who often minded the store at the Tanager, as artist members were called upon to do, recalls that "Landes Lewitin and Aristodimos Kaldis were frequent visitors. Less frequent but very supportive of the gallery were Jack Tworkov, Bill de Kooning, and Milton Resnick, all of whom had studios nearby."

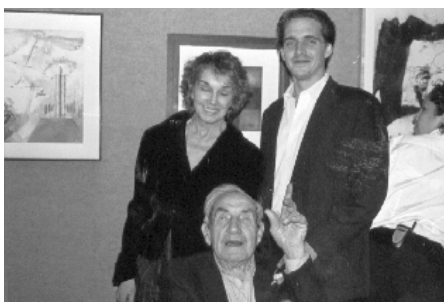
Alex Katz, also remembers getting valuable encouragement from de Kooning when he had his first show at the Tanager of the deadpan figures with which he was eventually to make his international reputation: "There were those who liked it and others who didn't, but I mean really didn't," he recalls of the work, which went against the gestural grain of the period. But de Kooning told him, "They look like photographs but they are paintings, and don't

*All photos by Ruth Fortel*

let them knock you away from it."

Budd Hopkins, a member of the March Gallery, recalls sitting for a show of explicitly erotic paintings by Marcia Marcus and playing host to a less distinguished visitor when "a local wino came lurching down the stairs into our basement gallery. He stood in the middle of the small exhibit space and looked around, but it took him a few minutes to take in what he was seeing. 'My God,' he said finally, 'thish is the real thing!'"

Then there is Philip Pearlstein who, during his first solo show at the Tanager, experienced an incident that combined, in the most surreal way, elements of the previous anecdotes: "One afternoon Bill de Kooning, who had been sleeping like a Bowery bum on the outside



***The Pavia family: Natalie, son Paul and Philip.***

metal staircase to the entrance of the building when I arrived, unexpectedly came into the gallery. He excused himself and said, 'Do you mind if I talk to you about your paintings? I looked at them before.' I said I would like that very much. He proceeded to go to each painting in turn around the room; there were probably ten paintings in the room. He analyzed each one in terms of how I organized it, and told me how he thought I could have made it stronger. It was an absolutely astounding experience."

Painter Cecily Barth Firestein has the distinction of being the only continuous member of the only co-op that survived from the heyday of Tenth Street to the present: the Phoenix Gallery, now located in Soho.

"I have been a member since 1959, less than a year after it was founded at 40 Third Avenue (The Bowery)," she wrote in the journal. "At that time the gallery membership was comprised of about twenty-some male abstract expressionists, and the monthly meetings were very macho, loud, and argumentative. How this group of artists ever agreed on anything, aside from going to the Cedar Bar after the meeting, was amazing. One thing they did agree on was that there should be some women artists in the gallery."

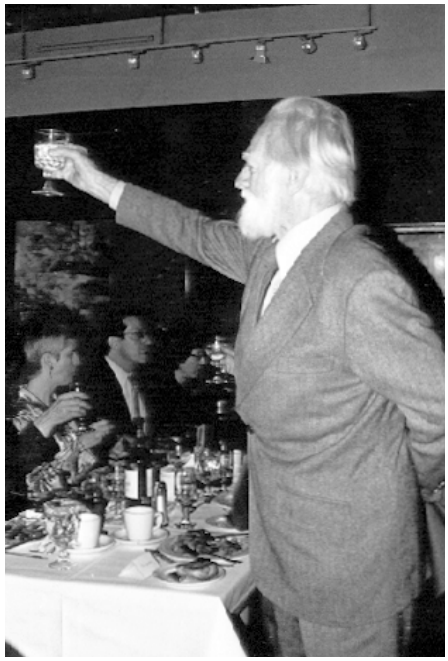
Although she herself would never be so blunt as to say so, the fact that besides being one hell of a painter Firestein was an exceptionally attractive young woman may have prompted those macho expressionists to arrive at such an enlightened attitude in that pre–"P.C." era.

Linda Handler, a sculptor and the director of the Phoenix Gallery in its present incarnation, informed us at the National Arts Club that Philip Pavia was once her teacher, "the best teacher I ever had"— another example of the continuity that still exists in some sectors of the New York art world, for all the transient trendiness that garners so much attention in the mass media.

Certainly a sense of community prevailed at dinner, where we spoke with Doris Wyman and Marianne Schnell, two frequently exhibited New York painters who co-chaired the event. With characteristic enthusiasm, Wyman extolled the virtues of her friend, the Chinese painter Choey Kwok Kay and praised Regina Stewart's creativity and energy in assembling the anniversary journal. With equal enthusiasm, Schnell told us that she is at work on a new series of canvases in which she has added colored grounds, a departure from her signature style of colorful shapes afloat on white fields. In their work for NYAEA, both women are tireless crusaders on behalf of their fellow artists, making frequent trips to Washington D.C. to lobby on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts.

***Changing of the guard: Speakers (L to R) Louis Newman, David Findlay Jr., and Fred Mitchell.***

Other moments that we remember impressionistically amid all the festivity: Rose Sigal Ibsen digging down into her purse to present someone with a beautiful miniature ink painting in her distinctive calligraphic style; white-bearded painter Paul Jenkins, looking every bit as dapper as he did in Fred W. McDarrah's photographs of the downtown art world in the 1950s (Jenkins was amused to learn that, long ago in our Zelig-like existence, we worked for his late uncle, the famous Hearst editorial cartoonist Burris Jenkins, Jr., who didn't understand his abstract paintings, but was proud of him anyway, and would show us his exhibition catalogs and ask what we thought of of his nephew's work) ; Jack Stewart (Regina Stewart's teacher at Cooper Union before he became her husband), whose meticulous pencil portraits of the backs of peoples' heads reveal as much about the character of his sitters as any full frontal view, reassuring a prospective subject who was concerned about his thinning hair: "Don't worry, it makes a better composition if there's some open space!"



***Paul Jenkins proposes a toast.***

In the nostalgic spirit of the occasion, one of our favorite and funniest painters, Olga Sheirr, reminisced about her mentor, the Greek emigre artist Aristodimos Kaldis, fondly recalling his authoritative manner, his gregarious nature, his gruff kindness, and even the unusual long hairs that sprouted like insect antennae from the bridge of his prominent proboscis. In response to a frivolous question about why an Irishman like himself would end up a painter instead of a poet, Mark O'Grady replied, "Because I can't spell!"

Although the talk flowed as freely as the wine, everyone directed their full attention to the podium once the honors ceremony began. In her introductory remarks, the ever elegant and eloquent Regina Stewart regaled the room with an amusing anecdote about rummaging through the Cedar Bar's "mildewed filing cabinets" to find photos of its famous patrons for the journal, then gave a succinct historical summary of The Club and the Tenth Street Galleries.

Next up was National Arts Club president O. Aldon James Jr, a gentleman of such singular style that it seems as though an exclamation point rather than a period should follow his first initial. James, who launched a laudable lawsuit against a snooty neighbor on behalf of a group of minority high school students whom he claims were rudely ejected by her from Gramercy Park, cited The Club's long relationship with NYAEA and warmly referred

*(continued on next page)*

## New York Notebook

***National Arts Club President, O. Aldon James Jr. commissarates with Regina Stewart.***

to the event as a "family night."

And indeed the mood was familial as other speakers followed, among them the art historian and critic Irving Sandler, painter and Tanager co-founder Fred Mitchell, and Louis Newman, director of David Findlay Jr. Fine Art, who presented the NYAEA Award for Distinguished Service to the Visual Arts to "my friend, my boss, David Findlay Jr."

Findlay, who recently mounted a splendid exhibition in his 57th Street Gallery featuring the founders of the Tanager Gallery, thanked NYAEA for all that they do for artists, which includes lobbying for grant funding, supporting artists in matters related to copyrights and estate taxes, offering reasonably-priced medical insurance, and assisting needy members with interest free loans, among other essential services.

As to the honor being bestowed on him, Findlay quipped, "As Samuel Clemens once said when he found himself in a similar situation, 'My father would have been pleased and my mother would have believed it!'"

Findlay went on to speak with sincere humility about his "great admiration for artists and what they do for us," noting that it is not easy to spend so much time alone in the studio; that, for all the wonderful stories about the lively social life at The Club and the Cedar bar, it can often be "a lonely life."

While Findlay was going on about this, we couldn't help reflecting on a chat we'd had just a few minutes earlier with realist painter Vincent Arcilesi. An artist in a long, great tradition if ever there was one, Arcilesi expressed bemused wonderment at New Breed wunderkinds like Jeff Koons and Mark Kostabi who hire regiments of art students to labor in shifts in their studios like factory workers, actually painting their pictures for them. We told him we blamed it on Warhol, remembering how when we used to write for his then fledgling magazine "Interview" in the early seventies, we'd go up to his studio—the Factory!—and see Gerard Malanga and Ronnie Cutrone working away like Santa's elves on his paintings, silkscreening the photographs of celebrities and society folk that Andy would then touch up with a few facile strokes of a brush, careful not to get paint on his tie or blazer. Yet we also remember how wistfully Andy had once talked over lunch at Brownie's health food restaurant, around the corner from the Factory, about "real painters" like de Kooning and Kline, who had inspired him as a young artist, departing for once from his impassive, blase pose to express an admiration verging on awe.

Four years ago, when we first started publishing Gallery&Studio, the painter Rudy Bram, an old friend from the Tenth Street era, asked us who we hoped our readership would be. Without a moment's hesitation we answered that while we hoped our publication would appeal to a wide range of people—artists, young and old, collectors, gallerists, art lovers of all stripes and degrees of sophistication—our ideal reader would be the kind of conscientious, passionately committed, professional artist who belongs to New York Artists Equity Association and is in it for the long haul, rather than to simply conform to a current fashion, garner publicity and make a quick, cynical killing in the market. (Thus the tag-line on our cover, "World of the Working Artist.")

***Will Barnet pays tribute to an old friend.***

Now, as we listened to Findlay speak and looked around the room, thinking of all the distinguished NYAEA members, past and present, who have been members of NYAEA—people like the great African-American artist Jacob Lawrence, who was president of the organization right up until his untimely death last year—we felt more strongly than ever that these were the people we hoped to address in this magazine.

Indeed, the next speaker personified our ideal reader as well as anyone possibly could: the urbane and venerable American painter and printmaker Will Barnet who, over the course of his long and prolific career has explored geometric abstraction and biomorphism to arrive at the exquisitely formalized figurative compositions for which he is celebrated today. Now in his early nineties, Barnet spoke with the lucid vigor of a much younger man, praising his friend and contemporary Philip Pavia in those rare and glowing terms with which artists transcend their natural rivalries to pay tribute to a treasured peer. He extolled "the weight, the power, the sensibility of space" in Pavia's stacked marble forms, comparing their heroic qualities to temples in Egypt or Africa, pointing out that his pieces capture a sense of "civilizations being formed and structured." He added that Pavia has a tendency "to not keep too even," so that his monolithic slabs of marble often appear to be on the verge "of tumbling over, like civilizations can tumble over." (This last remark seemed especially apt at a time when our own civilization often seems on the verge of collapse.)

Chosen to present the final NYAEA Award for Distinguished Service to the Visual Arts to Philip Pavia was Gerard McCarthy, curator of Gallery Korea and a critic for Art in America. Rather than coming to the podium, Pavia remained seated, letting McCarthy bring the award and the microphone over to his table. Then the diminutive but stocky sculptor rose from his seat, and jabbing a stubby finger in the air like Edward G. Robinson in "Little Caesar," launched into a riotously extemporaneous acceptance speech that instantly deconstructed the decorum of the occasion.

Although McCarthy had noted affectionately a few minutes earlier that Pavia "comes across as a tough guy," one could hardly have been prepared for the sculptor's hoarsely piping Godfather voice, nor for the stream of colorful profanity that issued forth from his scowling countenance once he had built up to a full head of steam. His monologue, at once feisty and learned, ranged from the accomplishments of the ancient Greeks to the frontier spirit of the Abstract Expressionists— although he could not resist giving his painterly colleagues the back of his hand by reminding them that all the great works of the Greeks were created in marble.

Pavia then segued into a diatribe so politically incorrect that it had some guests agape while others tittered uneasily, regarding the supposed superiority of Western art over that of the East, growling, "We have the Beauty," and concluding with a familiar four-letter expletive followed by the word "you!"

At this point, Regina Stewart returned briefly to the podium and, with a wry little smile, remarked dryly, "I think we can say it's been unanimously determined that that's a good closing line!"

***The grand finale, Pavia speaks! Gerard McCarthy grins.***

But the guest of honor, arms flailing, and lips moving without benefit of the microphone, continued to hold forth in mime for several seconds more.

Singlehandedly, the famously pugnacious Philip Pavia had revived the gloriously contentious spirit of The Club for a new era.

* * *

# New Faces at Pen & Brush

A not-for-profit organization of professional women in the arts which has numbered some of the most distinguished women in the country among its membership since its founding in 1892, The Pen in Brush, Inc., at 16 East Tenth Street, recently mounted its Second Annual Non-Member Exhibition. Although prizes were awarded in various categories, everyone included could be considered a winner, given the opportunity they were afforded to exhibit in this highly esteemed venue.

*Gabriela Dellosso*

Hilda Green Demsky made a strong impression with an oil of water rushing over rocks at once specific and as vigorous, for its bold, gestural brushwork, as any Abstract Expressionist canvas.

Although abstract, the curvaceous thrust of Emily Mehling's vibrant acrylic painting, with its sensually rounded forms, was decidedly figurative, as its title, "Female Anatomy," confirmed.

Contrastingly realistic, Deborah Seymour's skillful pastel, "The Conversation," focused in close-up on a woman holding a cocktail glass. Equally incisive in its own manner, Chun Myung-Ja's unusual monochromatic oil self-portrait captured the artist with a brush in her mouth and a rapt expression, obviously transported by the act of painting.

Ruth Friedman captured the life, light, and movement of a busy intersection in her vibrant watercolor "On the West Side." Michiyo Fukushima also employed aquarelle to give us another consummately urban image, in her picture of fruits and street reflections in a green grocer's window.

Andrea Placer's "Homebody," was a drawing of an owl perched in a beloved tree, its textures evoked with expressive pencil strokes. Sue Kutosh also made made a striking statement in graphite with "Self Portrait, Halloween 1999," showing the glamorous artist in bewitching makeup and a festive mood. Gabriela Dellosso demonstrated the distinctive attributes of drawing as a medium unto itself with her "Portrait Study." Leslie Watkins' luminous and poetic oil "Riverbank" evokes sinuous trees, pink-tinged clouds and a simple dirt road.

Special mention, too, should be given to "Chinatown," a 3-D mixed media construction by Natasha Beshenkovsky, in which a little boy blew soap bubbles out a tenement window over a melange of restaurant and shop signs.

Laura Gorman's oil, "Tiny" captured a moment of transition between childhood innocence and adult awareness with the image of an adolescent boy wearing a baseball mitt, momentarily distracted by a willowy young woman leaning seductively against a chainlink fence in a playground.

*Terry Ferrier*

And Terry Ferrier demonstrated real virtuosity in her watercolor "Soldier's Monument" with its detailed and atmospheric treatment of an urban subject.

The wonderful thing about a show such as this, free of thematic or stylistic constraints, is how handily it moves from representation to abstraction, demonstrating the nonsectarian kinship between various forms of expression. Among the more abstract pieces, one standout was "Time Ahead," a mixed media assemblage by Ellen Faith Daniels, with its bold contrasts between geometric shapes and calligraphic elements. Then there was Harriet Sadow, who combined flowing forms and luminous hues in a composition in oil that, while essentially abstract, was strong in natural allusions.

Several other talented artists, regrettably too numerous to mention here, also contributed to making this one of the season's more engaging group exhibitions.

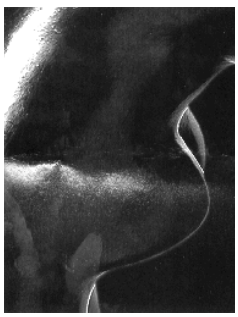
—J. Sanders Eaton

# Mexican Sculptor Iacome Embodies Meaning in Form

The Mexican sculptor who exhibits under the single name Iacome cannot be compared to many other contemporary artists who work in three dimensions. As close as one could come would be to liken the witty brevity of his figurative simplifications to those of Tom Otterness or to call to mind the few sculptural forays of the late graffiti-inspired painter Keith Haring. If one looks more carefully and deeply at Iacome's sculptures however, it becomes clear that they draw inspiration from a source more ancient closer to his home and heart: the Aztec and Mayan masterpieces which also influenced the aforementioned North American artists in a more distant and superficial manner, diluted by the Pop and cartoon imagery.

These purer pre-Columbian influences, filtered through the sensibility of a sophisticated man just as acutely attuned to the aesthetic advances of his own century, distinguished Iacome's recent exhibition at Broome Street Gallery, 498 Broome Street, in significant ways from the handful of artists on this side of the border who might be construed as his stylistic peers.

Perhaps one of the most poignantly pointed pieces in this regard is the sculpture called "All That I Have," in Iacome's recent solo show in Soho. This work in resin depicted a characteristically abbreviated figure, seated with crossed legs in the manner of a Yogi, arms outstretched and palms upturned. With simple eloquence, the gesture projected a sense of humility, dignity, and self-knowledge that spoke volumes about Iacome's love and gratitude for his rich artistic legacy. (Given this ability to combine the ancient with the modern, his legacy might also be said to include the experimental Museum "Echo," created in the early 1950s by the European sculptor Mathias Goeritz in Mexico City, where Iacome has his studio.)



*Sculpture detail*

In terms of the Western tradition, Iacome's treatment of the figure can be compared in some ways to that of Jean Arp, for his ability to reduce the human anatomy to a few fluid forms that encapsulate its complexity and motion. Unlike his great predecessor, Iacome does not veer into total abstraction, so great is his faith in the human figure as a vehicle for meaning and emotion, as well as for expressive form. However, Iacome's kinship with Arp can be seen especially well in his nude female figures such as Penelope, in both its resin and its bronze incarnations, with its sensual, simplified, single continuous form flowing up from and back into its base. In Iacome's nimble and appreciative hands the female anatomy commands space with the grace of a lovely calligraphic arabesque.

Another aspect of femininity is captured by Iacome in considerably more detail in the bronze sculpture called "265 Days," which depicts a kneeling pregnant woman. In this piece one sees the classical grasp of anatomy that the artist abstracts so effectively elsewhere fleshed out more naturalistically to convey the serene beauty of an expectant mother counting the days to delivery.

More characteristic in their near-abstract simplicity are pieces such as "Madonnina Di La Luce," and "Walking Man," both notable for their expressive urgency. Then there is "My Knee," in which the subject of the title is wittily depicted in bronze as a disembodied, squared off-form burdened by what appears to be a bar-bell, suggesting the new sensations that beset one in maturity.

In these and the other works in bronze, resin, wood, and mixed media, Iacome demonstrates an impressive ability to embody compelling forms and meanings in a variety of materials.

—Peter Wiley

# "Abstracts and Other Flats" at Broadway Mall Community Center

The wisdom of the West Side Arts Coalition's general practice of having artists curate group shows was validated once again by the recent exhibition "Abstracts and Other Flats," conceived by artist/educator/cable television personality Dee Winfield and seen at Broadway Mall Community Center, on the center island at Broadway and 96th Street.

Winfield put together a lively and varied group of works, including two of her own dynamic oils: "Power on Red," a large portrait of a beautiful young woman with a huge, magnificent Afro flowering against a vibrant red ground and another large canvas called "Hatted Nude." The latter work, in which the curvaceous model was seen from behind, is a veritable ode to the unique beauty of brown skin, limned with warmth and sensitivity to minute nuances of light and shadow.

A veteran jazz trombonist and composer as well as a painter, Dick Griffin approaches his canvases with a decidedly musical sense of movement and freedom. Griffin's large abstract composition "Love in the Air #5" is a sumptuous feast of luminous rainbow hues executed in broad sweeping strokes.

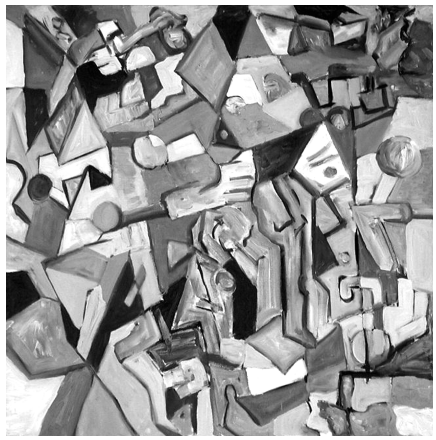
By contrast, the untitled figurative paintings of Alison Uljee appear to depict a transient realm of bleakly undifferentiated public spaces, such as atriums, terminals, or malls, where shadowy figures gather and huddle, yet wallow in their inner alienation. Like Francis Bacon, Uljee projects a powerful and disconcerting view of the human condition.

Public places also figure prominently in the atmospheric city paintings of Brenda Rodriguez Epstein, albeit from a more sunny perspective. Epstein's "The Metro Diner" is an especially engaging evocation of an old fashioned eating place, depicted with Hopper-esque realism, capturing the timeless quality of an urban street.

Robert Daniels is a painter with the ability to move gracefully between figurative and semi-abstract modes of expression. Daniels' versatility is demonstrated in the striking contrasts between his print "The Children," with its soft hues and warm humanism, and "Three to the Fourth," in which the skillfully distorted figures and strident colors project a more funky, neo-Picassoid mood.

Then there is David Shrobe, who merges the figurative and the abstract in paintings such as "Gangsta," where a boldly simplified fedora is the single recognizable object among a variety of nonobjective forms. Shrobe's vigorous brushwork and mellow yet offbeat color combinations lend his oils a juicy freshness.

A strong sense of cultural identity distinguishes the acrylic paintings of Al Johnson, in which African themes emerge from darkly delineated forms. Johnson's talent for transforming ethnic icons into personal myths is especially evident in his visionary canvas"Pharaohs," where shadowy figures surround a huge, mask-like face in a mysterious nocturnal setting.



*David Shrobe*

Landscape is transformed in another manner in the small yet formidable oils of Neeci Sims, with their boldly simplified shapes laid down in a rough neo-primitivist style akin to Marsden Hartley. Sims' raw power is at its best in "Emerald Walk," with its rhythmic patterns of verdant hills, and in "Rooting," where a bare black tree appears to writhe in the grasp of a deep purple whirlpool.

Each of the artists chosen by Dee Winfield for "Abstracts and Other Flats" projected a strikingly personal vision, making the exhibition a delectable stylistic sampler.

—J. Sanders Eaton

# The Daring Male Nudes of British Artist Keith Barrell

Although the male nude was a favorite subject of the ancient Greeks, and was also featured prominently in the work of old masters like Leonardo and Michelangelo, with the exception of a few pioneers like Charles Demuth and Paul Cadmus, images of naked men were all but absent from mainstream modern art until the emergence of contemporary artists such as David Hockney and Robert Mapplethorpe opened up new avenues of unfettered expression.

One of the most accomplished interpreters of the male nude to come along since is Keith Barrell, a painter, sculptor, ceramicist, and printmaker from London, whose work is on view through February 15 at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway.

Trained at Rochdale School of Art and Hammersmith College of Art, Barrell says of his work, "My inspirations are rooted in the classical sculpture of Greece and art of the Far East, together with figurative sculptures from Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries...For the past few years I have continued to draw from the male figure and have produced watercolors, life-size ceramic sculptures and paperworks, by developing images that are derived from the male torso."

Barrell's mastery of anatomy gives him an edge over others who work with similar imagery. This can be seen especially well in his watercolors, many of which have been made into postcards and have found an appreciative following outside the gallery scene. These are executed in a meticulous realist technique on handmade paper and derived from Barrell's own drawings and photographs of the model.

While some of the aquarelles set the figure against the stark whiteness of the paper for dramatic effect, others incorporate backdrops that serve as "props." Some of the latter relate directly to the title of the picture, as seen in "Stairway to Heaven," where the full frontal male nude stands before an ornate wrought iron staircase, its scrollwork mirroring his sinewy musculature. Here, as in most of Barrell's paintings, the figure's head is cropped out of the composition, in order, one presumes, to focus attention on the torso and prominent genitals, making no secret of the artist's erotic intention.

In another frontal view, "Metamorphosis," the figure is intersected by bare tree-limbs, while in "Rock Climber," the model is seen from behind, ascending a craggy structure that, once again, rhymes visually with the sharply defined muscles in his biceps and back. As in all his watercolors, Barrell's mastery of anatomy imbues the figure with a palpable presence, while his focus on the body to the exclusion of facial features or personality enhances the relationship of his work to the art of classical antiquity.

For all their unabashed explicitness, these pictures also have a kind of cool detachment that puts the emphasis on their aesthetic, rather than their more prurient, qualities. This sense of classical remove is even more emphatic in Barrell's stoneware clay sculptures, modeled in low relief to be mounted on a wall or placed against an appropriate background. The fragmented quality of the pieces further enhances the suggestion of archeological artifacts or Greek statues eroded by time.

Another, especially novel, innovation by this artist are his ceramic garden pots, depicting the male anatomy from hip to thigh, with openings at the top to hold foliage. These pieces, at once witty and well made, are yet another facet of Keith Barrell's unique talent.

—Peter Wiley

# Luis Casaravilla: Gesture Tempered by Geometry

Often the development of an artist's style must go through several phases before arriving at its most mature expression. Luis Casaravilla, who was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, where he studied painting at the National School of Fine Arts, and now resides in Washington D.C., started with abstraction and surrealism. Subsequently, he worked his way through collage and periods of representation, before completing the circle of aesthetic growth with the abstract paintings for which he is known today, many of which are in private collections around the world.

A veteran of several successful solo shows in Uruguay and the U.S. who also participated in the International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Florence, Italy, Casaravilla's most recent solo show, "New Works," was seen at Jadite Galleries, 413 West 50th Street, a venue which has distinguished itself by introducing some of the most interesting artists from Latin America to the New York art scene.

What immediately struck one about Casaravilla's exhibition was its stylistic diversity, kept skillfully in check by an overriding harmony. As well as any painter at work today, Casaravilla proves that a true style can be determined by a strong individual character, rather than by the selfconscious, superficial superimposition of habitual motifs to establish a recognizable stylistic signature. This recognition on the part of the painter allows him to move freely from gestural

*"Untitled," acrylic on canvas*

compositions, created with energetic, seemingly impetuous brush strokes, to more stringently organized geometric canvases, as the spirit moves him. Because his formal explorations are governed by a singular sensibility, his wide-ranging approaches to form and color are invariably brought into harmony by his painterly authority. Even at his most spontaneous, Luis Casaravilla is an artist who always knows exactly what he is doing. Thus his untitled abstractions comprised of bold, serpentine strokes of color that project a sense of untrammeled energy work perfectly in concert with other paintings, such as "Under Construction," which are considerably more geometric.

While the latter canvas is essentially abstract, it alludes to urban architecture and its composition is created with overlapping rectangular forms. These forms stand in sharp contrast to the flowing, sensual, curvaceous shapes seen in many of Casaravilla's more recent acrylics on canvas, with their dynamically writhing compositions. Yet for all their contrasts with his more austerely composed works, these new paintings succeed so splendidly by virtue of Casaravilla's ability to temper their gestural freedom with an underlying sense of structure and depth.

In one untitled abstraction, variegated strokes of blue, green, and white are interwoven with a broad brush to create a composition so muscularly compressed that it seemingly threatens to explode the canvas from its stretcher bars. By contrast, in another untitled gestural abstraction, vibrant red, blue, and yellow hues laid down in contrastingly loose strokes suggest a lyrical chromatic shower. Yet another painting is composed with intricately braided, ribbon-like color areas that are at once rhythmic and precise in a manner that tempts one to risk redundancy and term them "Neo-Futurist."

Whatever one wishes to call the paintings of Luis Casaravilla, however, they are impressive for their synthesis of freedom and structure, sensuality and austerity. His recent exhibition at Jadite Galleries showed Casaravilla at the top of his form.

—Maurice Taplinger

# Tracey Keller's Pet Portraits Mirror Our Animal Selves

To capture the individual personalities of animals requires a special sensitivity and skill. The avian pictures of the great naturalist- painter John James Audubon, for example, are splendidly accurate ornithological studies; yet they capture the general characteristics of various species rather than the specific character of a particular bird.

The paintings of the contemporary Australian artist Tracey Keller are quite another matter. In her recent solo exhibition at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway, Keller proved that animal portraiture need not be only fur-deep. For she gives us the unique personal quirks of her four-legged (or finned or winged) subjects with uncanny and penetrating specificity.

Some of Keller's portraits are commissioned by pet owners who want to immortalize their pampered pooches, pussycats, or parakeets. Others are what she calls "quirky animal" paintings, in which she takes often surreal liberties with wild or domestic beasts that just happen to catch her fancy.

For her pet portraits, she travels internationally on a monthly basis to accommodate a large clientele. In lengthy photo sessions, she gets to know her subjects while gathering source materials to paint from. Her painstaking approach pays off in images such as "Gracie," which depicts a black and white bull-dog, its head tilted slightly to one side and its tongue sticking out, against a vibrant blue ground. Keller's bright acrylic colors and the cropped, "in-your-face" composition gives the large canvas considerable impact.

Indeed, one of the things that makes Keller's paintings much more than simply charming pictures of cute animals is their considerable formal qualities. Her compositions work just as effectively for their abstract design elements as for their subject matter, as seen in "Trevor," her painting of a blue-black cat with a white breast and paws set against a brilliant red background. Here, as in the previous picture, "Gracie," the animal is painted at an angle that makes it appear to be looking up at the viewer. In this position, only the cat's two fore-paws are visible, giving him an anthropomorphic resemblance to a man in a white shirt and dark suit with his hands crammed into his pockets.

Tracey Keller's "quirky animal" pictures are even more fanciful for the poetic liberties that they take with her subjects. In one, a large goldfish with enormous, bulging

*"Bruno, Chiquita & Chanel"*

eyes practically fills the entire circumference of its round bowl, which appears to be floating in space against a green background.

Then there is another picture wittily titled "Someone's Self Portrait," in which a large orangutan with its limbs wrapped around its head and body in a comic "woe is me" configuration fairly fills the perimeters of the canvas itself.

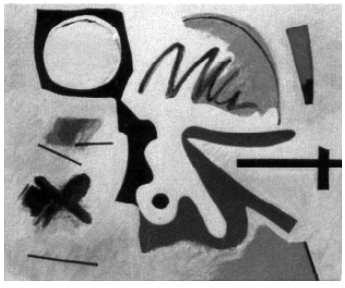
Here, as in all of her pictures, Tracey Keller makes us identify to a remarkable degree with her animal subjects, compelling us to smile at the realization of how much we share in common with them, even as we admire her accomplished acrylic paintings for their purely formal attributes.

—Marie R. Pagano

# WSAC: A Survey of Postmodern Abstraction

One of the true pleasures of writing art reviews is the chance to discover fresh talent. Such is the case with Garfield McIntyre, a painter whose work one encountered for the first time in "Abstract 2002," an exhibition of the West Side Arts Coalition, seen recently at Broadway Mall Community Center, on the center island at Broadway and 96th Street.

McIntyre is an artist possessed an innate sophistication and elegance whose non-objective paintings in oil and encaustic are notable for their rich waxen surfaces, unusual compositions, and bold yet subtle color combinations. Although there are no recognizable elements in McIntyre's paintings, his compositions are based on "real space" and fairly pulse with a sense of chromatic charge held in check by a tantalizing formal compression.



*Meyer Tannenbaum*

A more familiar artist who surprised us with his latest work is Meyer Tannenbaum, whose "Direct Impact" series continues to evolve and expand his impressive array of painterly effects. While previous work by Tannenbaum explored a wide range of methods of paint application with invariably innovative results, these new canvases unveil a lively vocabulary of gestures, forms, signs and symbols that amount to a whole new language for this veteran painter.

Miguel Angel Mora has been showing a great deal lately and with each exhibition he appears to pare down and refine his approach. Here, Mora presented two powerful black canvases in which bits of broken glass take on a gem-like beauty carry the thrust of the composition, particularly in the painting called "Broken Dreams of Perfection," where bits of crisscrossed wire within the glass shards add to the subtle tension.

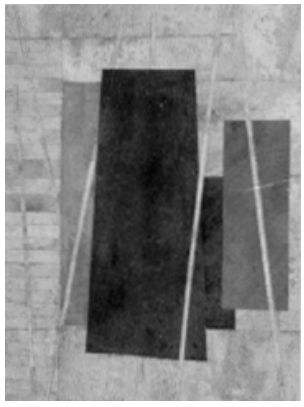
In her "Themes and Variations" series, Peg McCreary's painterly gestures generally focus on a central form, resembling an abstract star-burst. Although McCreary's colors are subdued and the forms are not distinct, they project a sense of pregnancy, of something struggling to emerge from behind the surface, that lends her compositions considerable thrust and energy.

By contrast, Maryann Sussoni seems primarily concerned with gesture that weds the instantaneous to the eternal, much in the manner of Zen ink painting. Being a contemporary Western artist, however, Sussoni invests her acrylic paintings with material substance through the layering of many loose, rhythmic strokes to build subtlety modulated fields with a quality reflected in her title, "Inner Light."

Maria De Simone showed three collage paintings in which minimal compositions, built with simple rectangular shapes, are combined with lush effusions of deep and pale blue hues, as well as another collage notable for its close color harmonies in the yellow range. De Simone's pieces are at once exquisitely crafted and transcendent, like visual haikus stripped of all extraneous elements.

Leanne Martinson's approach to abstraction, as seen in four oil and collage paintings, is to combine painted and torn paper with sharp, incisive charcoal lines in compositions distinguished by sweeping rhythms. Like Richard Diebenkorn, Martinson dissects space with an almost surgical precision.

An almost zany maximalism akin to the Pattern and Decoration movement pioneered by the Holly Solomon gallery animates the mixed media works of Elton Tucker. Represented here by a three-part composition entitled "The Light," Tucker layers multi-colored plexiglass panels, bits of reflective mylar, multiple mirrors, and an array of geometric shapes and dayglo hues to create dazzlingly over-the-top effects.



*Maria De Simone*

Kehinde Peter Schulz projects another kind of festivity with jigsaw-like configurations of pastel color, applied in juicy, textured strokes, which are as jazzily complex in their own manner as the canvases of Robert Goodnough. The two works in oil and acrylic that Schulz showed here were intriguing for their unique combination of expressiveness and restraint, boldness and mosiac-like complexity.

Peggy Sprung, another unfamiliar artist who seems well worth watching, showed two monotypes and one small oil on canvas that revealed a restless and eclectic sensibility. Lyrical and elusive, Sprung's compositions are at once firmly structured and poetic.

—J. Sanders Eaton

## •CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•CLASSIFIED•

**SERVICES**

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

**OPPORTUNITIES**

RECENT WORK SHOWCASE 2003, NYC group exhibition and $9000.00 awards. Deadline April 30. Send SASE for prospectus: Slow Art Productions, 870 Sixth Avenue., NYC 10001.

14TH annual Juried Competition at VIRIDIAN'S new Chelsea location:
July 1 to July 19, 2003. Juror: Robert Rosenblum: Curator, Guggenheim Museum, Contributing Editor ArtForum and NYU Professor. Cash Prizes, Group Show, Continuous Slide Show of Runners-up. Slide deadline: April 12. Send SASE for prospectus: VIRIDIAN Artists Inc., 530 West 25th St., New York, NY 10001. Or download from our web site: www.viridianartists.com

21st ANNUAL NATIONAL JURIED EXHIBITION, PLEIADES GALLERY. OPEN TO ALL MEDIA. JUROR: ANNE UMLAND, ASSOCIATE CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING & SCULPTURE, THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK CITY. SHOW: June 25th-July 12, 2003. SLIDES DUE: May 9th. Send SASE for PROSPECTUS TO: Pleiades Gallery, 530 West 25th 4th Fl., New York, NY 10001. Call: 646-230-0056

PHOENIX GALLERY 2003 NATIONAL JURIED COMPETITION: JUNE 24-JULY 16, 2003. JUROR: LILIAN TONE, ASSISTANT CURATOR, DEPT. OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NY. ALL MEDIA. AWARD: SOLO/GROUP SHOW. Deadline: APRIL 11, 2003. Prospectus: Send SASE, Phoenix Gallery, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Website: Phoenix-Gallery.com

Prominent artist-run gallery in Chelsea. No commission on sales, low dues/fees, updated mailing list, multi-ethnic. Limited memberships now available. Information: SASE to PLEIADES GALLERY, 530 West 25th St. (4th floor), New York, NY 10001-5516
or call (646) 230 -0056

BELANTHI GALLERY 25th ANNIVERSARY CELABRATION 2003-2004 Seasons
For: A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION
Submit 60 slides, phone # & SASE To: Paulette Hios, Pres Belanthi Ent. Inc. 142 Court St. Bklyn NY 11201 Further info will be provided after viewing

Established Chelsea Gallery reviews artist portfolios monthly. Send sase or visit www.nohogallery.com for application form. Noho Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001. 212 367 7063

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

17-yr.-old established midtown west international gallery, seeks new artists for next season. Street level. Share cost. Call 212-315-2740

WEST SIDE ARTS COALITION welcomes members from all areas. Visual arts exhibits, theater events, multi-media opportunites. Tel: 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

# "Chicago," Not the Musical—the Visual

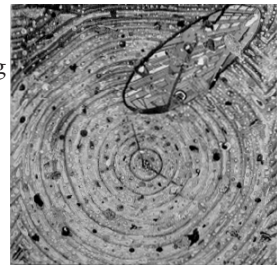
*Charles Gneich*

When you say "Chicago," New York art worldlings immediately think of the "Imagism" of elder statesmen like Seymour Rosofsky and Leon Golub or those younger painters, influenced by cartoons and Art Brut, who rallied in the 1960s under the quirky banner of the Hairy Who school. That images are still prominent in the art of the windy city, albeit more subtly interwoven with a variety of international tendencies, was evidenced in a strong group show by artists from the Fine Arts Building in downtown Chicago, seen recently at Viridian Artists @ Chelsea, 530 West 25th Street. (The exhibition is the first of a two part exchange, with a show of Viridian Gallery artists to be seen at the Fine Arts Building in Chicago in July of this year.)

As might be expected of the nation's second largest city, some artists deal with the urban experience: Roger Bole's oil painting on wood, "End of the Day" depicts commuters disembarking on a nocturnal train platform, evoking mood and movement in muted hues akin to those of well known Chicago realist Robert Sutz. By contrast, a deserted subway station takes on an almost churchly quality of gleaming mysticism in "Reliquary," a meticulous realist oil by Elizabeth McKay. Then there is James Tansley, whose acrylic painting "Spring Wall" transforms a mall-like space with reflective windows and minuscule pedestrians traversing rampways into a luminous geometric abstraction.

Other artists reprise time-honored forms in contemporary terms: Diane Pivonski's "Sanctus" updates an angel-illuminated medieval manuscript; in Mel Theobald's "Wall of Flesh," sensational digital photo-images of bodacious nude women with tattoos and body piercings, cavorting as though in a fetish contest, form a frieze encircling a big drum-shaped lightbox.

There was also plenty of solid, straightforward painting in this show, as seen in "The Clearing," an oil by Robert Brasher in which slender saplings rise above a thick carpet of autumn leaves limned in juicy flecks of color; "Fate and Future," a still life by Marion Kryczka juxtaposing human and animal skulls with a Greek vase decorated with erotic imagery; "Cork Oats," a luminous watercolor and gouache of an elegant terrace, brilliant flowers, and tangled tree limbs by Mary Graham; "Green Lake," a meticulous and atmospheric landscape by Tom Graham demonstrating the medium's painterly possibilities; as well as in another beautifully understated oil by Daniel Godsel of a handwritten letter sticking out of cloth bag casting its shadow on a wall, intriguingly titled, "I'm Sorry I." Bold painterly qualities also come to the forefront in "Morning," Charles Gniech's canvas of a sleeping man (his muscular arm wrapped around a pillow that the artist has rendered as expressive as the figure itself) and in "Sunk Again/Parameter," a mysterious abstract composition in a long vertical format by Irene Ryan Maloney that is particularly notable for its fluid formal contrasts of dark and luminous hues. Other examples of peculiarly postmodern abstraction were: Blair Trueblood's "Celestial Seed," where light and dark contrasts were also prominent in a cosmically swirling composition; Kathleen King's "Descent into Treerings," a richly textured mixed media painting in which spiraling forms create a decidedly metaphysical feeling; and "Amphora Exploration Series 3 #5," a bold, gestural charcoal drawing by Sophia Pichinos created with concentrations of energetic lines curving out like ribs from a central spine or stem.



*Kathleen King*

Roland Kulla is a Neo-Pricisionist, judging from his large acrylic on canvas, "Cermak II," its dynamic composition suggesting a close-up of a huge steel wheel and other machine parts painted in a flat red hue, with bolts and other details enhancing, rather than distracting from, its overall abstract thrust. By contrast, Mary Ellen Bartyzel's "Still" is a small, mysterious picture, resembling an Indian miniature, in which a flatly-painted stylized figure sits in the lotus position facing what appears to be a brick wall, its stalwart posture seeming to suggest the power of humility in facing life's obstacles.

The imagistic inventiveness of contemporary Chicago artists was again clear in "A Kiss Can Break Your Heart," a mixed media drawing by Frank Vodvarka in which collage line-cuts of human figures were integrated with drawn images set against a stenciled text to surreal effect. And the city's assemblage tradition, instigated by H.C. Westermann, continues in the work of Deborah Pieritz who showed three intimate and lively funk/found object pieces incorporating poker chips, dominoes and other game parts.

Reportedly, the motto that greets one on entering the Fine Arts Building Gallery on Chicago's Michigan Avenue is "All Passes — Art Alone Endures." And, indeed, the works in this stimulating show at Viridian Gallery appeared destined to pass the test of time.

—Ed McCormack

# Korean Art Takes Center Stage at Lincoln Center

By concentrating myopically on those artists and venues which are nearest at hand and most frequently publicized, one runs the risk of overlooking several distinctly different and equally viable art scenes that flourish simultaneously and feed into the mainstream in New York City. In this regard, the cultural vitality of the Korean community, commercially centered around midtown Manhattan but also extending to various nearby suburbs, was made especially evident by the recent exhibition "Korean Visions," presented by Korean Contemporary Arts Ltd., at Cork Gallery, Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center Plaza, 65th Street and Broadway.

The show presented works by 24 artists, many widely exhibited and with impressive academic credentials, working in a variety of styles. One of the artists most familiar to American gallery goers is Daniel Daeshik Choi, who was represented here by a characteristically lyrical semi-abstract landscape in mixed media, as well as two imposing sculptures comprised of large wooden forms covered with intricate calligraphy and swarming with many tiny metal figures.

Mixed media was employed by several other artists as well to make strong and original statements: Sookyung Kahng apparently used stacked paper coffee filters to create a tall totemic sculpture. Hyun Chough appeared to comment on the fragmentary nature of current events as they invade individual consciousness in an assemblage consisting of stones framed within two connected boxes, some wrapped like candies in newspapers displaying a disconcerting variety of images. A circular mirror, scrawled with enigmatic combinations of words (such as "cynical, destitute, selfish, daydream," and so on) created an intriguing sense of semiotic fragmentation in Eunsil Lee's wall relief "Who Am I?" Another artist by now familiar from previous solo and group outings was Jungwoon Kim, whose "Time" created a haunting sense of nostalgia with the painted image of a bride on an actual old sticker-plastered suitcase. Then there were Eun Kyeong Park, whose "My Shovel" presented an ornately abstracted paper cut-out of the object of the title encased within a clear plexiglass box; and Juyong Youn, who showed a remarkable large box assemblage in which a magnificent wing hovered protectively over a row of stones.

Somewhat more traditional approaches to sculpture were taken by Inchul Hwang, who showed two bronzes of streamlined, sleekly flowing forms that commanded space with Brancusi-like grace; and Barbara Han, whose mixed media piece of two craggy figures seated on stacked bricks, "Friends," conveyed a sense of volumes in space, as did her related charcoal drawing, which captured a similar weight and density in line.

Good painting was also much in evidence, in both traditional Korean and modern western modes. Among the former, Hyunsook Park captured grapes and autumn leaves with skill and simplicity; while Joo Sang Kim, fresh from a recent solo exhibition that garnered much favorable attention, extended the borders of tradition by introducing into her watercolors vibrant colors and bold rhythmic forms akin to those of American modernists such as Arthur Dove and Charles Burchfield.

Another artist who attracted considerable attention with a recent solo show was Ju Won Park, represented here by a characteristically bold abstraction in broad slashing strokes of black and brown on a white ground, creating a powerful sense of Abstract Expressionist "push and pull." Kyung Ok Yoo, on the other hand, combined painterly panache and poetic fantasy in urban and nature subjects, particularly one symbolic picture of a landscape seen through an hourglass. By contrast, Im Sun Choi makes a statement at once evocative and minimalist with an oil on canvas called "Angel," featuring a red rectangle ringed by metallic gold wiggles on an austere white field. Equally austere in another manner is "Psalm," an ethereal collage painting with a burlap form engulfed in succulent white impastos by Hae Sung Chung. Then there was Hyo-Soo Kim, whose emblematic New Image paintings in acrylic on canvas, particularly one featuring the outline of a simple house, are contrastingly bold and brilliant.

A lone photographer, Joon Park, made his presence felt with three beautiful black and white prints, ranging from desolate desert views to a dramatic nocturnal view of the New York City skyline glittering through tree limbs. And while space does not permit further description here, among the other artists who made substantial contributions to this show were Kyung Hee Park, Kyung Hee Yang, Young Choon Kwon, Dong Sook Kim, Soojung Cho, Paul Laliberte, and Won Young Chang.

—J. Sanders Eaton

# Kanako Yamada: Reservoirs of Emotion

One can't help thinking Hokusai's masterpiece "The Wave," on encountering the "Reservoir Paintings" of the contemporary Japanese artist Kanako Yamada, at Cast Iron Gallery, 159 Mercer Street, through February 12.

The Mustard Seed Manual of Painting, the definitive seventeenth century instruction tome of Asian brush technique, as influential in Japan as in China, where it originated, has much to say about the movement of water. In her modern abridgment of the manual, Mai-mai Sze writes, "Some say that water is by nature weak, so how can it be described as forming structure? I say: see how water strikes the mountain and pierces the rocks; it has supernatural strength, nothing is stronger."

Kanako Yamada, like Hokusai, shows us the supernatural strength of water, albeit in her own unique contemporary manner. A prodigy, Yamada began painting and making sculpture at the age of seven. After graduating with honors from the Asahigaoka Special Art School in Nagoya, she began her professional career as a figurative artist. But she yearned for a more subjective form of expression. Now in her early thirties, she has evolved an abstract style that reflects what she refers to as the "whirlpool" of her emotions— and through which she endeavors to make the viewer connect with his or her emotions as well.

Although she also employs color and mass, Yamada's most prominent conduit for conveying her innermost feelings in her paintings is line. In this regard, she is a quintessentially Japanese painter, even while her work can hardly be considered traditional and is very much at home within the international mainstream. Still, she retains a strong sense of her cultural identity in her abstract oils on canvas, with their swirling, sensually swelling linear forms flowing in intricate, maze-like arabesques. As a contemporary painter, however, with an extensive menu of historical precedents to draw from, Kanako Yamada need not limit herself to one particular mode or school as ancient Asian painters tended to do, adhering to either the spare, spontaneous literati style of Zen ink painting or the more decorative artisan style, with its rich use of color, gold leaf, and other embellishments. Rather, Yamada appears to draw liberally from all manner of Eastern and Western sources, including elements of Art Nouveau and psychedelia, to create her baroque abstract compositions which combine freely flowing linear elements with coloristic richness and even a hint of subtly modeled light and shadow that lends some of her forms a sense of sculptural modeling.

Yamada participated in the International

*"Untitled" 1994*

Artists Workshop 2000 (London/Kenya) and exhibited at the National Museum in Nairobi, Kenya. In the same year, she had an exhibition at Sokee, in her hometown of Nagoya, entitled "Thinking of Africa," in which burnished, earthy colors, as well as luminous greens and blues, evoked a sense of both the land and culture of that great continent. In her new show at Cast Iron, Kanako Yamada employs the sinuous movement of water to create muscularly roiling compositions with an almost symphonic emotional resonance. Sharing certain qualities in common with the surrealist-flavored abstractions of Matta and Gorky, as well as the nature-inflected compositions of post-modern abstractionists like Gregory Amenoff and Bill Jensen, Kanako Yamada is a major discovery whose work bears serious attention.

—Ed McCormack

# Renato Sossi and the Contagiousness of Joy

*"Olly's"*

One of the more prevalent concerns of many painters in recent decades has been finding new ways to put into practice the post-modern detente between the once irreconcilable poles of abstraction and representation. Renato Sossi, an artist well known in his native Brazil who recently showed at Montserrat Gallery, at 584 Broadway, in Soho, has arrived at an especially successful synthesis.

Renato is an extraordinary colorist. Working in oils on canvas, he creates compositions in which vibrant hues are applied in flat clear areas to create jigsaw-like configurations of shapes that shimmer and vibrate in a jazzy optical dance. Indeed, his generally hot hues delight the eye in a similar manner to those in the early paintings of the American artist Larry Poons. But while Poons' paintings of the late 1960s were abstract, composed with lozenge-like shapes set against brightly colored grounds, Sossi tackles complex interior and exterior settings involving a considerable amount of detail, and yet his pictures pulsate with a similar chromatic intensity.

Thus in a painting such as "Mama's Restaurant," for example, we see patrons conversing at tables, potted plants, throw rugs, wall decorations, and a complex still life of bottles, silverware, salt shakers and other objects in the foreground. All are painted in strident red, blue, green, and yellow hues that play against each other dramatically, creating a combined effect of coloristic richness that calls to mind Matisse's great painting "The Red Studio."

Indeed, the painter's studio is also one of Sossi's recurring subjects, and he handles it in his own unique manner, including much more detail than Matisse did in his famous work, particularly in both a painting and a large charcoal drawing on the theme. In both, he lovingly includes not only an easel, a day bed, and other furnishings, but a plethora of brushes, paint tubes, and incidental objects, such as a small figurine of a famous cartoon bird that apparently serves as a kind of studio mascot. Yet, even while giving us glimpses into his private life that verge on a kind of visual autobiography, Sossi retains the abstract integrity of his compositions, particularly in the large oil on canvas, where the pulsating colors achieve a chromatic autonomy, despite the specific details.

Sossi's direct approach to drawing from his immediate environment to provide material for his paintings carries over into "View from the Studio Window," which seems an almost cinematic extension of the previously discussed picture. In this exterior view we look through the painter's eyes to a quiet suburban street with clustered houses seen through the twisting limbs of bare trees that writhe expressively. Like van Gogh, a painter one would wager that he greatly admires, Sossi transforms the most commonplace, ostensibly mundane, subjects by virtue of his coloristic audacity. In "View from the Studio Window," the sky is pure, clear yellow, and the small dwellings resemble gingerbread houses, and the bits of lawn that we see are painted in a peculiar green hue like nothing in nature. The manner in which Sossi arranges the composition into bold patterns that hug the picture plane, even where perspective is indicated, creates the tension between the real and the abstract that animates all of his work.

Renato Sossi is an artist with a particularly fresh approach to form and color. By concentrating on everyday scenes and subjects, he is able to exploit his artistic assets to their utmost, creating paintings that are not only aesthetically compelling but also unusually upbeat. His work expresses his joy in living and in working. That this joy becomes contagious for the viewer makes Sossi an especially welcome addition to the New York art scene.

—Robert Vigo

# Cristina Rezende's Tactile and Chromatic Delectation

While the grid is most often used today as a formal structure for abstraction, Cristina Rezende, whose work was recently seen at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, also employs it as a receptacle for pictographic imagery in some of her most compelling paintings.

Rezende, who studied in Italy with the internationally known artist Miguel Fabruccini, is a young artist with a bold grasp of composition and a singular sense of color. Her paintings are also notable for their tactile qualities, for she builds up her surfaces with impastos as thick as cake frostings, into which she often incises a variety of intriguing images, including skeletons that make one think of the Mexican Day of the Dead, circular and rectangular geometric shapes, and even her own hand-prints. The latter are the main motif of the painting she calls "Hands that Demand Peace." In this painting, her palette of white and tan hues is considerably more subdued than the colors in most of her other pictures, yet Rezende's relief-like use of textures lends the work a powerful presence nonetheless.

Another large canvas in her recent show at Montserrat was titled "Pears in Squares" and featured vibrant red, green, and blue hues that created a rich chromatic effect in a composition which contrasted the sensual curves of the fruits with the austere rectangular forms of the grid. Here, too, the illusionistic modeling of areas of light and shadow on the pears worked in concert with the flatter, yet juicily scumbled, paint application on the squares to enhance the contrasts and broaden the range of tactile effects.

That Rezende is a painter who knows how to make the most of ostensibly simply subjects could also be seen in paintings such as "Pears (3 Pieces)," a vertically stacked triptych, and "Vases," where she brings the same sensual beauty to the contours of man-made objects as to those that grow, because she is able to impart an organic flow to everything that her brush touches. Thus, even her least animate forms have a living presence that lends her compositions a striking vitality.

This vitality also extends to her more abstract compositions, such as "Indian Wheel in Movement," and "Indian Ceremonial," where geometric forms are brought to life by delectable textures and vibrant colors—particularly a viscerally glistening red hue that radiates a sense of heat and passion, resonating both optically and emotionally. Here, Rezende's skills as a colorist, as well as her considerable formal gifts, come to the forefront, demonstrating that her paintings can be just as compelling when stripped of their generally intriguing images and symbols.

Rezende's work relies more on intuitive than on conceptual elements to compel our attention. Her paintings are objects of sensual delectation that provide us with a great deal of aesthetic pleasure on their own terms. One need not excavate for deeper meanings than those that meet and delight the eye, even while many meanings invariably suggest themselves, once we are drawn in by the sheer optical and tactile pleasure that her canvases provide. Yet, in an era when so many other artists of her generation tend to prop their work up with elaborate theories and conceptual ploys, it is their immediacy that makes the paintings of Cristina Rezende especially refreshing.

—Wilson Wong

# WSAC's "Reflections" was a Multi-Layered Group Show

Because the camera is a mechanical object, we tend to think of photography as a less personal medium than painting. Yet this view was belied by the recent group show "Reflections," at Broadway Mall Community Center, 96th Street and Broadway, featuring photographer members of the West Side Arts Coalition.

The title of the show could be taken literally, since there were indeed many images of water in the landscapes on view. It could also be taken figuratively, however, since almost all of the images suggested inner reflection as well, revealing how subjective vision can alter subjects that are basically similar. For example, in "Veneziana #1," Agus Sutikno creates an Abstract Expressionist composition with blue and brown patterns on the surface of water, while another color print by the same photographer, "Fishing Boat at Sunset," is as mistily atmospheric as a lyrical Chinese scroll painting.

Leslie Nagy also takes a painterly approach in two photos entitled "Shattered Reflections," numbers one and two, where intricate abstract patterns stream out from a central force in a mysterious composition akin to Jay DeFeo's famous painting "The Rose," as well as in "Red Tide Rising," with its rhythmic flow of ripples and waves.

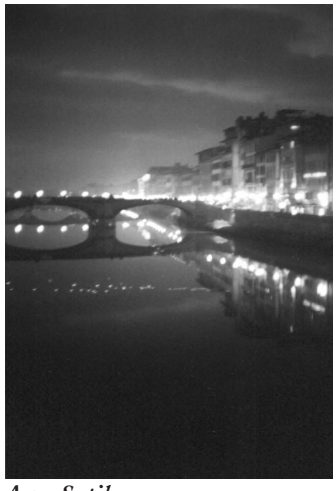
Then there is Jean Prytyskacz, who focuses on reflections in an urban environment, as well as in the country, in pictures such as "Cloud Car," where the clouds of the title appear to be piled up like snow-drifts within the back seat of the parked vehicle— a surreal juxtaposition worthy of Rene Magritte, which is all the more remarkable for having been accomplished with a camera!

By contrast, Jennifer Holst explores austere textures on tree bark with a miniaturist's attention to detail in her exquisite little pictures such as "Staten Island Reflections," where linear formations are prominent and colors so subtly delicate that it was a surprise to learn that they were natural rather than hand-tinted.

The pictures of Robin J. Katz differ from others in this exhibition in that they are sharply focused on crystal clear aspects of reality, as seen in "Fall Reflection," which focuses details of a crisp Fall day, a silvery lake, and a brilliant blaze of trees.

Dramatic light and dark contrasts animate Lori Fischler's color cibachrome prints, such as "In the Beginning 2," where turbulent cloud formations, waning areas of light, and silhouetted trees and land masses suggest a world gradually being consumed by shadows.

Skillful hand-coloring imbues various scenes by David Ruskin with a dreamlike, quality, particularly "Pike County PA," where ethereal pastel hues enhance the pastoral poetry and "Puddles de Tuilleries," with its trees, benches, and puddles receding as in a perspective lesson and its subtle sepia tones. The term "reflections" seems more symbolic than literal in Scott Weingarten's pictures such as "Venetian Window II," where masks and mannequin heads seem to express a range of emotions from melancholia to serenity, as light flows over them, bringing them to life amid other assorted thrift-shop objects that further emphasize their strange expressiveness by appearing so much less animate.



*Agus Sutikno*

Lynn Corporale's compositions are generally more minimal than others in this show, as seen in "Ocean, Sky, Sea," which is as direct a depiction of the meeting of sky and water haiku like as its title, and "Poconos Pond," where graceful weeds on the placid surface of said pond resemble spare swift strokes of sumi ink.

Thoughtfully curated by participating photographer Jean Prytyskacz, "Reflections" was aptly named, being a multi-layered meditation on how our world is transformed by the vision of each individual.

Jeannie McCormack

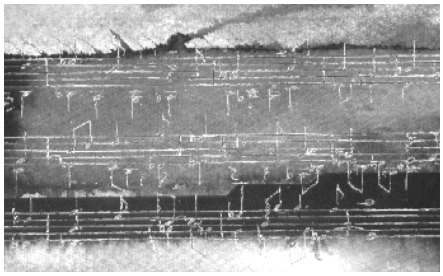
# Janusz Jaworski and Katie Down: A Visual/Musical "Synthesia"

Abstract painting and music are so naturally related that their marriage would seem a match made in heaven. However, "the quest for synthesia," as the writer and critic William Moritz once referred to it, has consistently fallen short. Attempts to combine visual art and music —and there have been many over the past few decades—have generally failed by favoring one medium over the other.

Far more successful than most attempts to achieve synthesia, in terms of preserving the integrity of the two individual art forms while melding them harmoniously was the collaboration between the painter/choreographer Janusz Jaworski and the composer and performer Katie Down in the recent exhibition "Vision Whisper," at Chashama Gallery, 135 West 42nd Street, an oasis of avant garde activity in the midst of the new Disneyfied Times Square. (Jaworski also exhibited some of his visual art at a nearby alternate space called Peep-O-Rama Gallery, at 129 West 42nd Street, its name apparently a remnant of the funky, pre-Disney Times Square, rife with porno parlors.)

Jaworski, who has worked in many media, including painting, photography, prints, collage, and sculpture, has exhibited widely and presented his choreography throughout New York City, the Midwest and Europe. Down who performs on various instruments and vocals with her group Liquid Ensemble has created sound scores for numerous off off Broadway and downtown venues and performed her music around the U.S. and abroad.

After collaborating with Down on a dance project commissioned earlier in 2002 by Kansas State University, Jaworski asked her to collaborate with him on an art and sound project, for which they toured several countries in Eastern Europe, gathering inspiration and material.



*Janusz Jaworski/Katie Down*

" During our travels, I heard and recorded many sounds in all the countries we explored, from folk singing to drying racks to ambient environmental sounds and so on," Katie Down recalls.

"For the paintings in this exhibit that were created after the music," Jaworski adds, "I attempted to make the auditory sense of listening to the music most prevalent. Since many of the sounds in the music came from Katie and my travels this summer, there is an extra layer of those paintings of memory."

While some of the musical pieces were created prior to the paintings, others were created after the paintings. This led to a lively dialogue between painter and composer, during which they traded ideas back and forth, informing and inspiring each other. Thus, Jaworski and Down's pieces achieve something closer to a true synthesia, via the braiding of two distinctly different artistic sensibilities, than in previous experiments by artists attempting to meld the two mediums in a more self-consciously experimental manner.

The manner in which the paintings and musical pieces were combined yet recognized as discrete entities was made manifest in the installation of the exhibition. The paintings were generally intimate in scale and each one was mounted on the wall along with a pair of ear phones which the viewer was invited to put on, so that the music could be heard while viewing the visual composition.

The degree to which the images and sounds mirrored each other and were integrated were equally remarkable, since both Jaworski and Down are fluent in their respective mediums and their sensibilities appear to be acutely attuned to each other. This was true in those cases when the music was created before the painting, as well as when the painting preceded the music—distinctions which were made clear in a printed guide available in the gallery.

Executed in ink, watercolor, oil, monoprint, collage and mixed media, Janusz Jaworski's luminous little paintings had a gemlike beauty and an abstract freedom reminiscent of Paul Klee, in that the artist did not adhere to any repetitive visual formula or rigidly imposed stylistic signature. Rather, each painting was approached as an occasion for personal expression and formal discovery.

Likewise, Katie Down, composing freely in the avant garde tradition of John Cage, created her musical pieces from a host of recorded aural samplings: snatches of song, nursery rhymes, spoken word fragments, tinkling bells, chimes, percussive rhythms, and even throat clearings, among other unusual combinations that she combined in surprisingly coherent sound collages.

To attempt to describe accurately in words what Janusz Jaworski and Katie Down accomplished in their separate yet harmoniously melded mediums would be a presumptuous and finally fruitless endeavor. Suffice it to say that their collaboration succeeded splendidly, pointing the way for further explorations of the innate relationship between color and form, rhythm and sound.

—Peter Wiley

# Ursula Kellett: Process Provokes Allusion

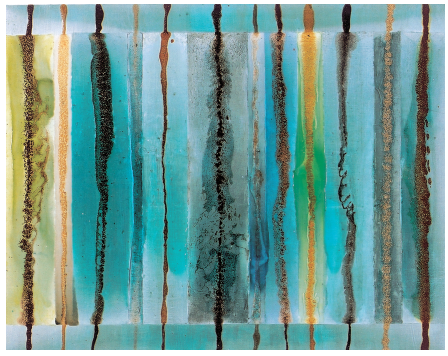
While we normally do not speak of process-oriented abstraction and observed reality in the same breath, the London-based painter Ursula Kellett proves that they are by no means mutually exclusive, in an exhibition at Cast Iron Gallery, 159 Mercer Street, from March 8 through 26.

Kellett, who has exhibited widely throughout England, employs "controlled accident" in her paintings, which combine traditional art materials with ground earth, sand, automobile enamels, and even cosmetic nail varnishes.

"The characteristics and origins of these materials allow their inherent properties to create natural, fluid shapes reminiscent of patterns of nature," she says. "The canvas assists as a magnifying glass; closer inspection reveals a fragile cosmos of interacting currents and tensions, held together as if frozen in time."

The sense of patterns in nature is especially apparent in "Beginnings," created with glass beads, pigments, earth, and varnishes. Employing intricate organic looking shapes in variegated green and rusty brown hues with an oxidized appearance, Kellett skillfully exploits the unpredictable nature of her materials. The random reactions of one pigment with another create effects of movement and flux that bring the entire surface alive. True to her stated intention, the canvas does indeed act as a magnifying glass, giving the sense that one is viewing a teeming chain reaction of biological processes rather than a stagnant pattern of manmade marks. Kellett opts for a remarkable range of compositional diversity, trusting that her process-based approach to abstraction will provide a grander conceptual consistency. And she succeeds admirably in paintings such as "Emergence" and "Rising."

The first painting consists of a single, slashing blue form, possibly created with one stroke of a broad brush, that dissects the canvas vertically. Its edges dissolve raggedly against a granular brown ground. Apparently painting "wet-into-wet," Kellett employs car paint, varnishes, and cinnamon to achieve the visual and tactile effects that make "Emergence" one of her most dynamic compositions. By contrast, "Rising" is a darkly mysterious canvas saturated with blue hues from which a monolithic semicircular form emerges like a shadowy mountain glimpsed through nocturnal mists. Created with pigments and varnishes, it is very different compositionally from the previously discussed painting, yet both are united by the exploratory quality that distinguishes all of Kellett's work. Indeed, her paintings have the quality of being "events," rather than



*"Where do we come from:"*

simply compositions in any conventional sense of the term. At times these events appear to involve figures, as in "Red Threads," where three scarlet shapes, slender and craggy as Giacometti sculptures, command the canvas like sentries. Elsewhere, flowing vertical forms as luminous as those in one of Morris Louis' striped stain paintings suggest an entire procession of colorfully clad personages, while in canvases such as "Arizona" and "Bougainvillea (Tropical noon)," amorphous forms and translucent veils of overlapping color evoke a sense of atmospheric landscape. However, it is the synthesis of process and allusiveness that finally makes the paintings of Ursula Kellett so satisfying, and successful.

—Marie R. Pagano

# State of the Art Pluralism Enlivens Agora Gallery Group Shows

Recent group exhibitions at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway focused on varied themes, from the naturalistic to the visionary, from the painterly to the digital. In "Extraordinary Visions," Bottazzi's oddly organic untitled abstractions in vibrant hues were paired with the more gestural abstractions of Jean Francois Riviere, such as "Orient," in which swirling color areas convey movement and energy.

Mary Wittkower's "Red and Purple Desert," with its earthy hues and softly defined forms, also made a complementary pairing with a lyrical autumnal scene by Sandra De La Cruz.

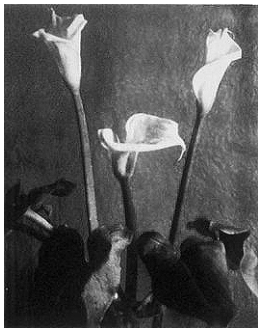
In "Life Interpreted," Rheinhard Schafer showed metaphysical imagery with stylized faces in profile seemingly receding into infinity. Nick Vukmanovich revitalized elements of Fauvism and Expressionism with his painting of an angular head in mixed media. Adrenus Craton's imaginary portrait "Solitaire," limned in moody monochromes, was darkly evocative. Carla Lombardi grafted elements of antiquity to modernism in her stoneware sculpture "Cheerleader with Pom Poms."

In a concurrent show of digital art, "Mind, Machine, and the Light Fantastic," Stephen J. Ballance captured the grace of floral forms with sensual exactitude. Sasha Merman depicted a surreal vista with a Dali-esque mounted figure, albeit with a decidedly contemporary New Image quality. Cecil B. Devroe's geometric grids of luminous color possessed of an aesthetic conviction that transcended the ironies of Neo Geo to demonstrate that such formal purism can still be compelling. John-Marc Grob explored a form of techno-pointillism in which the disruption of the surface via digital manipulation (resembling both brushstrokes and "pixilation") brought out the abstract qualities in landscape.

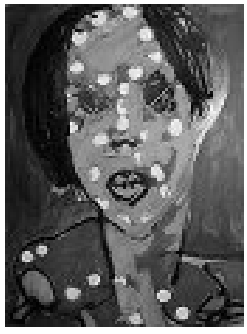
Kelly Billette's abstract composition combined whimsical forms and clear color areas to dynamic rhythmic effect. Krista Oravec's ghostly imagery was eerily effective in its poetic evocation of pale, spectral figures. Michael McGlothlen's luminous forms, flowing within an intricate border, created the sense of an inner cosmos. Flour combined cartoon-like imagery with abstraction in a strangely evocative composition, suggesting a surreal high-tech fairyland.

All of these artists proved, in their differing ways, that digital imagery can be as personal and flexible as images created with more traditional means.

—Gloria Feinberg



*Stephen Ballance*



*Nick Vukmanovich*

*Kelly Billette*

*Adrenus Craton*

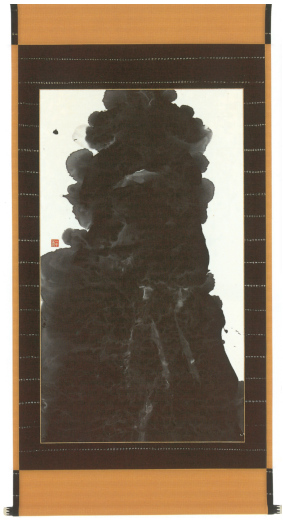
# Ikkoh Inoue's Primal Inspiration

Asian calligraphy can be daunting for westerners intimidated by their ignorance of its language and its aesthetic traditions. Yet, not even an uninformed viewer will be put off by the contemporary calligraphy of Ikkoh Inoue, on view at Cast Iron Gallery, 159 Mercer Street, from March 29 through April 16. For Inoue's work transcends the language barrier by virtue of its universal grace and beauty, even while it springs from the most ancient of sources.

Born in 1947 in Fukuoka, Japan, Inoue has been using Koukotsu-bun and Kin-bun, primitive forms of Chinese characters, in his work for over a decade and a half.
Yet, part of what makes his work accessible to the uninitiated is that he is by no means a traditional calligrapher. In Japan, traditional calligraphers tend to imitate their teachers and are rewarded with prizes in exhibitions for adhering to the dictates of the hierarchy. Inoue, however, employs ancient characters as a springboard to free expression, producing calligraphic interpretations possessed of great vigor and energy.

Because ancient Chinese characters predate ink calligraphy on paper, having originally been carved on bone, tortoise shell, or pottery pieces with metal tools , they tend to be stiffer and more angular than characters executed with a brush. Inoue, however, takes off from their archaic forms with exhilarating freedom, creating cursively flowing images with the spontaneous appeal of abstract painting. Indeed, his work transcends the boundaries between character and picture, writing and painting. This is particularly dramatic in "Daisekirin," where he combines three characters: "dai" (big), "seki" (stone), and "rin" (forest), to convey the sense of a particular site in China where tall rocks stand like trees in a forest, creating a bold black form that appears to flow skyward. This powerful image of a "big stone forest" is part of a series called "China and Yunnan Imaginary Album," for which Inoue made several trips to China, experiencing various sites physically and later interpreting them freely with combinations of characters pictorially metamorphosed by his expressive brush strokes.

In one work, Inoue morphs the forms of ancient characters into a wave-like composition suggesting the closely massed rooftops of a small village with bold black strokes of an ink-loaded brush. In another, especially graceful composition, sweeping horizontal strokes, each intersected by a smaller vertical stroke, seem to evoke tiny human figures balancing on the decks of simple boats. Other compositions of cursive massed strokes conjure up human crowds in a manner akin to the abstract mescaline drawings of the visionary French poet/painter Henri Michaux, albeit informed by Inoue's superior command of the brush, as well as the innate resonance of the ancient characters that inspire him.



*"Daisekirin" Sumi ink on paper, mounted on scroll*

Riffing off his ancient sources with contemporary immediacy, Ikkoh Inoue employs the broad vocabulary of expressive strokes, splashes, and drips that the Abstract Expressionists appropriated from Zen ink painting, to revitalize the link between language and picture, transporting us back to that magical moment when image and word first merged and the modern world was born.

—Lawrence Downes

# "White Night": Prison Artists from Korea

*Cheol-an Jeong*

To be a good artist requires developing one's character as much as it involves learning to use one's materials, according to a remarkable Korean medical doctor and amateur artist named named Sheen-young Kang, who innovated a unique program in her country's prison system.

The recent exhibition "White Night," at Gallery 32, 32 West 32nd Street, featured pencil drawings by Dr. Kang and seven of her prison charges. (Proceeds for the show go into a fund to benefit the prisoners.)

The show's title derives from the fact that the lights in the cells of prisoners in Japan are kept on 24 hours a day, which Dr. Kang convinced the prison artists could be a blessing rather than a curse, in terms of providing more hours in the day to practice their art, to study, and to grow.

Thirty years ago, as a medical student, Dr. Kang received a letter from a prisoner who was sentenced to death. At that time, being young and preoccupied with her studies, she never responded. But the incident nagged at her conscience for many years, as she practiced medicine, married, and raised her children. In 1992, after she moved with her family to Toronto, Canada, retired from practicing medicine and exhibited some of her pictures of Siberian tigers in an exhibition organized by the Canadian Wildlife and Animal Art Group, she was contacted by another prisoner. This time she responded immediately offering support and money orders by mail. Yet, she had the feeling that more could be done to help others behind bars. This idea remained in her mind when she returned to Korea in 1999 to volunteer her services to a charity hospital, and a year later she approached prison authorities with a proposal: She would like to help prisoners to begin drawing and would be willing to do so at her own expense, supplying all art books and materials out of her own pocket.

She told these hardened criminals, serving long terms and even life sentences, for serious crimes, including armed robbery and murder, that she wanted them to think of her as "a strict, stern mother." She would demand that they read widely from some 300 books that she had donated to the prison, not only in order to master techniques, but to build a moral foundation for their art by studying philosophy. Those who applied themselves diligently to her curriculum she had worked out for them, would be regarded as her adopted sons. Dr. Kang can tell touching stories about hardened criminals who wept real tears simply because, for the first time in their lives, someone had reached out to them and nurtured a talent that they did not know they had. But the proof of her success is in the drawings themselves, which express a wide range of emotions with striking sensitivity. Symbols of time are a recurring motif: Sun-hyo Kim draws a hand holding a wristwatch; Cheol-an Jeong's self-portrait shows a clock-face projected into the center of his own face; Ji-taeg Kim contributes a surreal composition juxtaposing an eye staring from the center of a wristwatch with a question mark and his prison jacket with its prominent identification number. Then there is Donghoon Ham, who symbolizes contrasts between freedom and imprisonment with a drawing of light pouring through bars on one wristwatch while a second watch, coiled like a snake within a jar, is engulfed by shadows.

A self portrait by Joo-seok Rhee shows the prisoner's face half erased on a drawing within the drawing. Wan-sub Jeong draws still lifes that seem to celebrate brushes and other art materials as tools of salvation. Young-ho Rhee's still life of a bottle of wine, a goblet, a bunch of grapes, and a loaf of bread seems a poignant fantasy of the abundance that lies just beyond prison walls. The generally high level of the work in this exhibition attests to the success of Dr. Kang's laudable enterprise.

—J. Sanders Eaton

# WAAC'S Visual Vaudeville

*Peggy Sprung*

Instead of contriving the pretense of a unifying theme, why not conceive of a group show as visual vaudeville? That seems be the question that artist Jennifer Holst asked herself when she curated the highly entertaining recent exhibition "Variety" for the West Side Arts Coalition exhibition, at Broadway Mall Community Center, 96th Street and Broadway.

Peggy Sprung's elegant little collages combined classical figures, Chinese characters, fragments of printed or written language, artfully torn patterned papers, and a variety of other elements within basically abstract formats to great poetic effect.

Sculptor Carmiah Frank has her own way with collage, which she demonstrated with a group of multimedia pieces in which color photographs, deconstructed playing cards, and other bits and pieces are juxtaposed in labyrinthian compositions possessed of a unique kinetic energy.

Another kind of magic characterized "Autumnal Phenomena #1," a large watercolor by Karl J. Volk of a plant form with anthropomorphic features flowing up out of the earth amid a riot of colorful flora, suggesting some sort of Earth Spirit.

By contrast, the floral still lifes of Miriam Wills combine neo-cubist structuring with vibrant color reminiscent of the Synchronists, often incorporating collage images that blend seamlessly with her painted ones.

In Barbara E. Litke's work in gouache and collage,"Family Album," one of the most intriguing details in the intricate composition is an empty frame within the frame, suggesting the loss of loved ones or of unknown ancestors.

A delightful playfulness was seen in a group of small oils by Vija Doks, depicting whimsical ideas such as a mouse version of a van Gogh portrait and rows of dancing birds in pointed party hats. The payoff here was that Doks' bold painterly finesse made these works as serious as they were fanciful.

Another strong figurative artist, Eleanor Gilpatrick, showed "Metro Music I," an acrylic painting of a woman playing a guitar in what appeared to be a subway station, notable for its vigorous brushwork and Gilpatrick's ability to establish a mood sans fussy detail.

Painterly ability of a particularly direct kind characterized an installation of very small works by Jutta Filippelli, whose almost diffidently unpretentious direct approach pays unexpected dividends. In her floral compositions, as well as landscapes, such as "View of Corsica," an enchanting view of a village nestled among mountains, Filippelli relies on keen observation and never makes subject matter secondary to style.


*William Hunt*

William Hunt belong is a powerful draftsman who employs drawing as a finished medium on a par with painting, and his pieces on the theme of 9/11 reflect how this horrific event has been branded on the mass consciousness.

Hideko Rostad's small watercolors of tabletop still lifes featuring flowers and fruit can also seem unassuming until one focuses on their formal qualities. Particularly effective is how Rostad uses the striped designs on tablecloths to anchor her compositions and lend them an emblematic abstract appeal.

Then there is Nora Ruth Roberts, whose photographs are peculiarly poetic, atmospheric, and abstract by virtue of her use of double exposure and softly focused effects. Especially lovely in this regard is Robert's image of the pink parasol of a fast food wagon emerging from white mists.

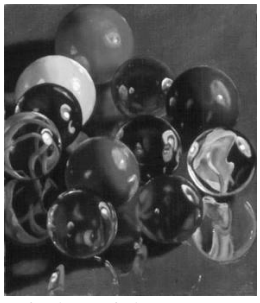
—J. Sanders Eaton

# Four Soho Group Shows Reflect an Eclectic Era

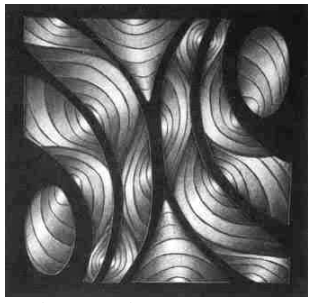
A broad range of postmodern tendencies were on view in three recent surveys at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway, where the curatorial credo generally appears to embrace the contemporary spirit of pluralism.

One show, "Degrees of Abstraction" included the austere biomorphic compositions of Joseph Innocenti, which combine a formal sensibility akin to Arshile Gorky with a highly original color sense; Julien Oteyza's neo-futurist whirls of luminous color, which appear to give substance to light; the intricate overall abstractions of Michelle Renee Lilley, with their sumptuous pastel hues; Shirley Branchini's ruggedly textured wall reliefs, which merge the visual and the tactile as a single sensual entity; and the maze-like compositions of Anna Rose, with their vibrant, pulsing colors and ambiguous sense of space.

Another exhibition, entitled "Eyeful Visions" juxtaposed the evocative sculptures of Chuck Von Schmidt, suggesting mutated organic objects; Nadia Klein's primitively forceful Expressionist figure paintings; Emile Manefeldt's poetic images of wistful female heads; the wonderfully weird narrative pictures of Dennis Pyrch; and Raul Santiago Sebazco's powerful painting of a male nude, with vigorous strokes reminiscent of the early Larry Rivers.

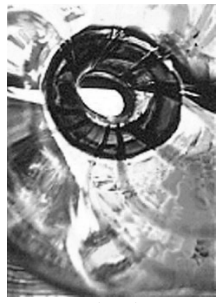


*Mindy Knight*



*Roberta Nelson*

*Raul Santiago Sebazco*



*Anna Thurber*

Anna Thurber and Mindy Knight were paired auspiciously in "Material Concepts." Although Thurber's paintings are abstractions built with circular forms and Knight's depict marbles and other reflective surfaces in a meticulous photorealist mode, the contrasts put forth by both artists were oddly complementary.

The exhibition entitled "Other Dimensions" featured four painters with vastly differing styles. Matthew Holden Bates employs radically cropped compositions to imbue still life subjects with the formal thrust of abstraction; Nathan Stevens captures the dynamism of the urban scene in expressive forms and hot colors; Thomas Fedro creates compositions with the rubbery forms of a Plastic Man cartoon strip, in which musical elements such as saxophones, piano keyboards, and other jazzy elements take on dynamically wiggling rhythms; and Roberta Nelson's mysterious abstract paintings, which focus on undulating linear forms in subtle hues that appear lit from within.

All of these artists, considered together, exemplify the diversity of styles that characterizes an era when no single movement is dominant. Although this makes it difficult to fit artists into neat categories, it also results in an especially permissive aesthetic climate that is healthy for art in general.

—Dorothy K. Riordan

# The Contrasting Worlds of Pimsler, MacDonald and Brooks

Three artists with distinctly different approaches to subject matter were featured in recent exhibitions at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway. All, however, sustained our interest through their ability to create singularly compelling images.

Currently a professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology and former president of the Society of Illustrators, Alvin J. Pimsler is known internationally for his fashion illustrations, which have appeared in The New York Times, Esquire, and numerous other publications. However, his work is also very much at home in an art gallery, since it comes out of the lineage of Egon Schiele, Toulouse-Lautrec, and other artists for whom line reigns supreme.

Beautiful women in various stages of undress and dishabille are Pimsler's forte. Working from life in line and watercolor wash, he creates drawings that combine elegance with probing psychological insight, unashamed eroticism with emotional depth and passion.

What invariably comes across is Pimsler's love and sympathy for the women he draws. He obviously respects them and celebrates their individuality by virtue of his brilliant draftsmanship. While their bodies are bare and always attractive, it is finally their humanity that seduces us.

Heather MacDonald, a painter and printmaker born in Edinburgh, Scotland, transports us to a rarefied private realm in her intimate, vibrantly colored pictures, where peacocks, storks, and other exotic birds preen in fanciful settings. In one composition, a peacock is seen under a crescent moon in a terrain where trees are emblazoned with hearts. In another mysterious nocturnal scene, a stork inhabits a baroque pink structure bracketed between shapely cactus plants.

MacDonald's whimsical little pictures present us with an alternate universe of imaginative possibilities tantamount to visual poetry. Her avian figures and the environments that they inhabit have a fairy tale quality, yet their childlike simplicity can be deceptive, for on prolonged viewing her work reveals a private language of forms and symbols as varied and charged with meaning as the world evoked in the early Surrealist paintings of Miro. MacDonald's deceptively naive paintings narrate a numinous land of dreams, filled with witty imagistic juxtapositions and happy surprises. Sincerity sustains her visions, yet real pictorial savvy makes her compositions compelling for their formal qualities as well as for her wonderfully upbeat sensibility.

Born in Brooklyn, a resident of New York City since 1967, Richard E. Brooks was a director of photography for feature films before turning to painting, and his pictures benefit from this experience in their drama and narrative power.

Proving that the term "sophisticated primitive" is not an oxymoron, Brooks paints scenes filled with nostalgic affection for bygone times, yet his work is strikingly contemporary in its double-edged irony.

Sometimes Brooks comes on like a standup comedian, as seen in "Ace in the Hole," where a nude woman stands watching two men playing cards (you supply the punch-line!). Other pictures, such as "The Observer," in which a peeping Tom spies on a woman through a palm tree, project a sense of noirish drama. Romance also rears its jaded head in "Once Upon a Time," where a cigar-chomping cynic behind the counter of a Coney Island shooting gallery casts a fishy, sidelong glance at two young lovers smooching nearby. In other pictures, such as Millennium, where a pensive man sits at a table in a pool room with a poster of Little Orphan Annie and Daddy Warbucks gracing one wall and "The Throw," where two men play catch across city rooftops, Brooks evokes a private world of wiseguys and weirdos with winning wit and pictorial grace. —Maurice Taplinger

# Regina Stewart: The Sweep of History

It always bodes well when an exceptional exhibition such as the twenty-five year retrospective of works by Regina Stewart, at Broome Street Gallery, 498 Broome Street, which ran from January 7 through 19, appears so early in the New Year. In this case, since Stewart does not exhibit her work as frequently as one might expect of an artist of her caliber, and because she is highly visible as the former president and present executive director of New York Artists Equity Association, the show was not only auspicious but also came as something of a revelation.

Working, for the most part, with ink embedded in acrylic on canvas and incorporating a wide variety of photographic imagery, Stewart creates compositions as remarkable for their formal power as for their imagistic complexity and narrative evocativeness.

In some of her larger works inspired by social change over the past two and a half decades — particularly the center and right panels of the large triptych "April 1968" (the left panel is in the permanent collection of the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art)— Stewart innovates a new species of history painting. Recognizing that history is now recorded instantaneously and projected into our consciousness through the mass media, she juxtaposes indelible images such as that of the simple mule-cart carrying the great man's coffin in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s solemnly dignified funeral procession, with scenes of protest, rioting, and urban unrest provoked by his assassination, in epic canvases that mirror the memorable moments of our time.

While capturing the crazy simultaneity of what Robert Brustein called "news theater"—the ever accelerating sequences of public events that bombard us continually, until we are all but benumbed by fragmented images and sound-bites —Stewart contains the chaos by virtue of her ability to meld disparate photographic elements with her brush. She transforms chaos into lyricism with fluent, painterly passages informed by the gestural velocity of Abstract Expressionism, conveying a sense of cinematic sweep and immediacy, even while imbuing her canvases with heroic and narrative qualities that relate them to the great art of the much less recent past.

Stewart moves easily from tumultuous history paintings to dreamy idylls in a decidedly more meditative mode, as seen in "Untitled Journey," "Waiting for Peace," and "The Search," where small human figures are dwarfed by their pastoral surroundings in a manner akin to ancient Chinese paintings. However, she transforms the landscape in a much more visionary manner, suspending her images within luminous layers of translucent color, creating a sense of spatial ambiguity as a conduit of implied time, as well as of surface tension, that is thoroughly contemporary.

*"Untitled Journey"*

Since 1993, when she completed her term as president of New York Artists Equity Association and accepted an appointment to the organization's office of executive director, Regina Stewart has curated several important exhibitions at Broome Street Gallery, among them the NYAEA Past Presidents Show, which included work by Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Jacob Lawrence, and Louise Nevelson. At last, Stewart has treated us to a major exhibition by yet another past president, herself, and in every respect, it measures up favorably to those of her illustrious predecessors.

—Ed McCormack

# At Broadway Mall, Art Adds Spice to West Side Life

The recent multimedia group exhibition "Spice of Life," curated by Jennifer Holst for the West Side Arts Coalition, at Broadway Mall Community Center, 96th Street and Broadway, featured new work by several familiar artists, as well as one or two newcomers.

Dellamarie Parrilli showed a large canvas awash in vibrant blue hues from which a luminous, roughly rectangular pink form emerged at the center of the composition. Combining elements of Abstract Expressionism and Color Field painting in an eclectic postmodern manner, Parrilli is a painter whose freewheeling, light-filled compositions convey a spontaneous sense of spirituality.

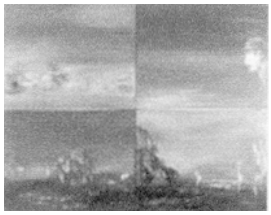
Miguel Ángel Mora's adventurous approach to materials was represented by two predominantly black and white paintings entitled "Clarifying Day" and "Into the Night," combining geometric and gestural elements with glass lead and aluminum dust. In both, glass panels at the center of boldly gridded compositions suggested windows to another dimension, even while functioning as dynamic formal elements.

Cati Blanche took a more literal approach, combining abstract and New Image elements in her painting "Man Looking at the Window." Here, four joined panels awash in a haze of overall yellow hues featured a phantom-like, loosely painted head in the upper right area of the composition.

Elton Tucker, on the other hand, projects a mood of merriment in collage paintings where bits of colored plexiglass converge with confetti-like strokes of color in intricate and lively compositions. The title "A Cool Night in Harlem" adds to the jazzy resonance.

Mikki Powell celebrated African-American people and culture in a more figurative manner in two acrylic paintings on canvas, entitled "Knows All, Sees All" and "Lively Lady Loving Life." Both were insightful portraits of women, composed with the bold clarity.

The photographer Nora R. Roberts is also concerned with character, judging from the color prints she showed of street musicians and other urban hustlers and buskers. In the tradition of Sylvia Plachy, Roberts has a sharp eye for capturing the warp and woof and city life.



*Cati Blanche*

Susan Rosenfeld employs oil pastels in a juicy painterly manner in her vigorous floral compositions. The petals and leaves of her subjects are laid down in graceful strokes and areas of brilliant color focusing boldly on their abstract qualities.

*Mikki Powell*

Joey Infante's paintings in acrylics and oils take on a variety of subjects in a direct faux-primitive figurative style, enlivened by an intrepid color sense. Although Infante is particularly impressive in carnival scenes that give vent to his penchant for lively incident and compositional intricacy, he brings equal style and verve to landscape subjects.

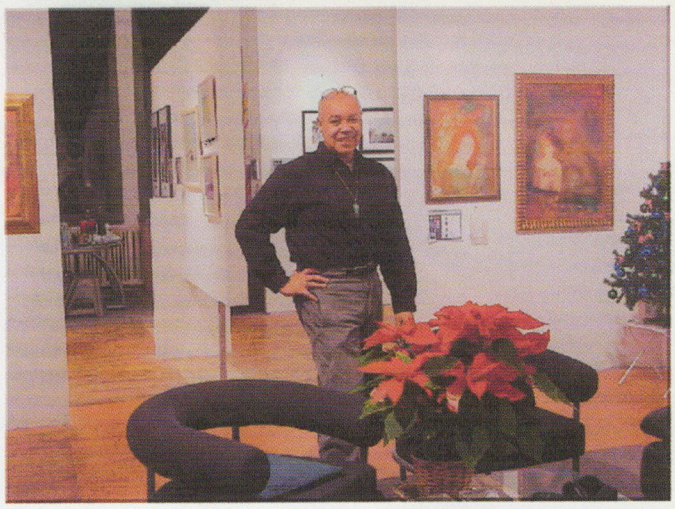
In her watercolors, Renée George O'Sullivan employs the medium in a manner at once fluid and detailed. Exemplary in this regard is "Teatime," O'Sullivan's evocative aquarelle of two people commiserating amid elaborate foliage on a patio.

Beth Kurtz probably exhibits as frequently as any painter in the city, yet she continues to surprise and engage one with her Magic Realist precision and the rarefied mood she imparts to every subject. Here, Kurtz was represented by an exquisite group of small oils on panel in which simple organic objects such as red onions or sea shells were depicted with a peculiar, almost portrait-like individuality and intensity. —Maureen Flynn

## World Fine Art, Inc.

511 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 646-336-1677
Fax: 646-336-8644
Email: info@worldfineart.com
Website: http://www.worldfineart.com


# Hospitality and Technology Converge at World Fine Art Gallery



**O'Delle Abney** - *Gallery Director*

Chelsea gallerist O'Delle Abney, director of World Fine Art, Inc., owes much of his success to his genial personality, his thorough knowledge of contemporary art, and his ability to help collectors select works well within their budget, yet likely to appreciate in value.

Along with these personal attributes, however, Abney has another important advantage: his willingness to apply state of the art technology to the marketing of fine art.

"In order for art dealers to succeed in the new millennium, we must concentrate on increasing the magnitude and dimensions of service to the art patron," he asserts.

"We must offer the finest quality art at realistic prices. This can be achieved by taking advantage of the new technology to expose the wealth of talent available on a nationwide level."

Besides introducing regional and international talents in monthly solo exhibitions, Abney provides a year-round salon of up to ten gallery artists, each with his or her own showcase-wall, as well as thousands of computer images of available art works. The latter can be perused at one's leisure in an elegant setting where coffee and soft drinks are offered gratis and gracious hospitality is taken for granted. Prospective buyers are also provided with computer printouts of works they are considering, to take back to their homes or offices, in order to aid them in making a final decision.

And because the gallery takes a considerably lower commission than that which is standard, it is possible for Abney to offer a wide variety of high quality art works, including paintings, sculpture, and mixed media, at affordable prices.

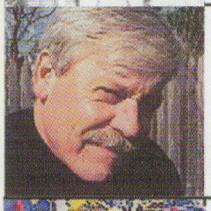
All of these factors contribute to making World Fine Art Gallery one of the more forward-looking venues in the highly competitive New York City art market and a magnet for savvy collectors, architects, interior designers, and museum curators.

*Ed McCormack/Gallery&Studio*

## PERMANENT GALLERY ARTISTS

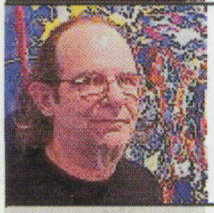
**Paresh Hazra**
*- India*

Figurative Paintings
www.worldfineart.com/Hazra



**Jeff Raymond**
*- New York*

Folk Art Sculptures
www.worldfineart.com/Raymond

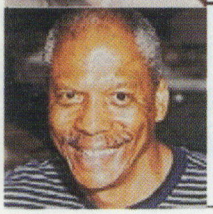


**Paul Edward Leeming**
*- Delaware*

Abstract Paintings
www.worldfineart.com/Leeming

**George Tkabladze**
*- Republic of Georgia*

Marble Sculptures
www.worldfineart.com/Tkabladze



**James Eugene Albert**
*- California*

Abstract Digital Prints
www.worldfineart.com/Albert

**Yvette Sikorsky**
*- New York*

Abstract Paintings
www.worldfineart.com/Sikorsky

**Bonnie Evans**
*- Connecticut*

Animal Paintings
www.worldfineart.com/Evans

**Sandra Gottlieb**
*- New York*

Photographer
www.worldfineart.com/Gottlieb

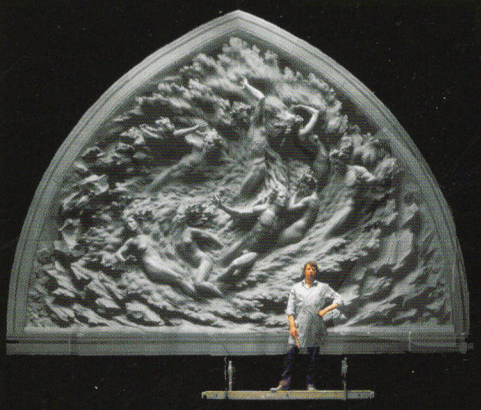
**Festina Amaturo**
*- New Jersey*

Ink on Canvas
www.worldfineart.com/Amaturo

# FREDERICK HART

(1943 - 1999)

March
2003



*The Creation Sculptures from the Washington National Cathedral Collection*

## CFM Gallery

*112 Greene Street, SoHo, New York City 10012*
*(212) 966-3864 Fax (212) 226-1041*
*Monday thru Saturday 11am to 6pm Sunday Noon to 6pm*
*cfmg@mindspring.com www.cfmgallery.com*

*Salvador DALI* *Leonor FINI* *Michael PARKES* *Anne BACHELIER*