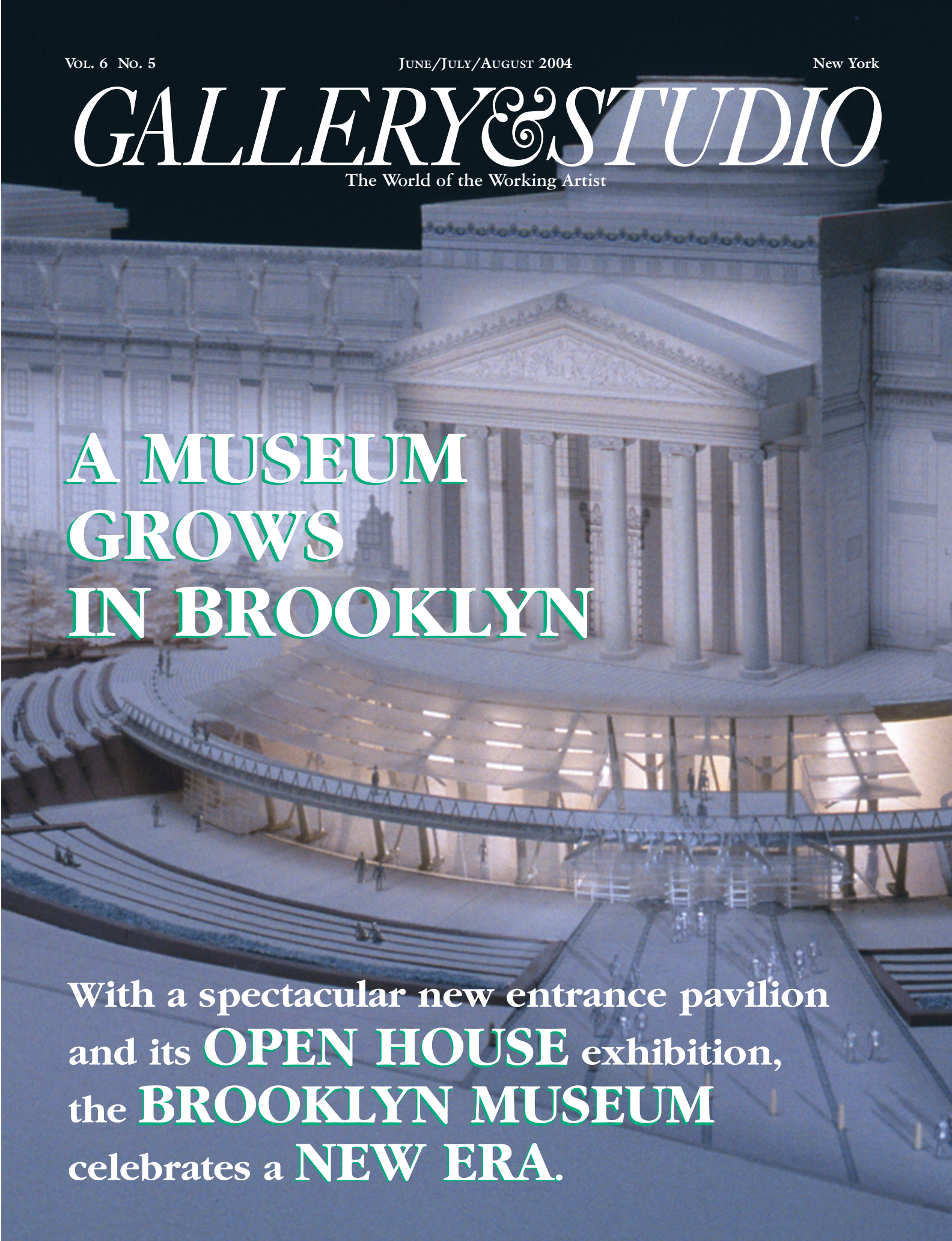
VOL. 6 NO. 5 JUNE/JULY/AUGUST 2004 New York

GALLERY&STUDIO

The World of the Working Artist



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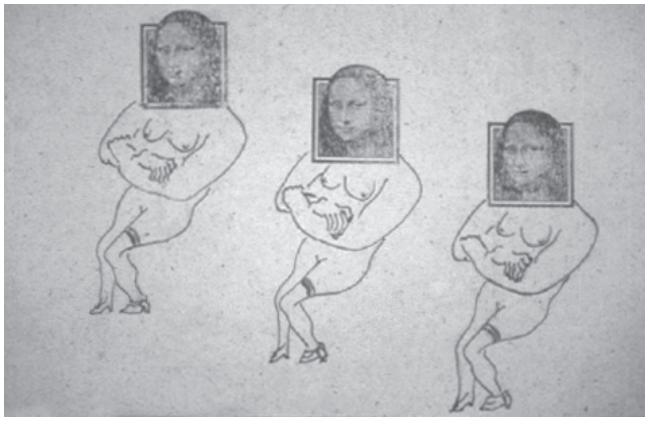

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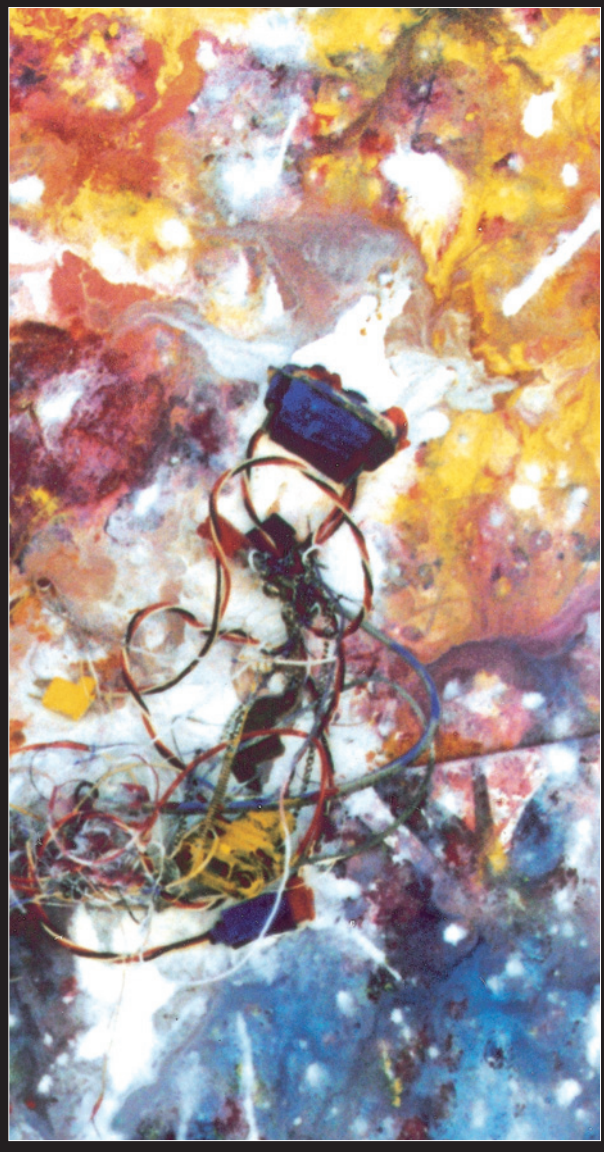
Dedicated to Charles H. Culpepper



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Joe Naujokas

Views of Views-Empire Manhattan

June 8 - July 9, 2004

Catalogue Available

Joe Naujokas, Tribeca Wichita, 2003, oil on linen, 60 x 60

July 13 - September 4, 2004

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John Ferren, Machu, 1959, oil on canvas, 36 x 26 in

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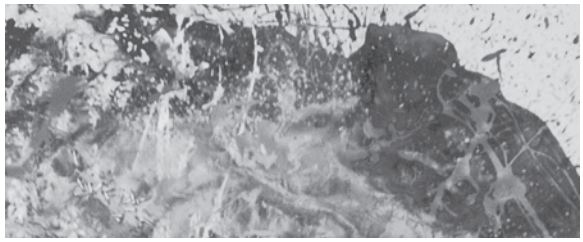

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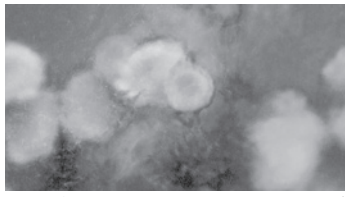
Brooklyn boasts more artists than any other borough of New York City and the second largest art museum in the nation. With its sprawling "Open House" exhibition and a recent face-lift, the ***Brooklyn Museum*** *is ready for its close-up.– See New York Notebook (centerfold).*



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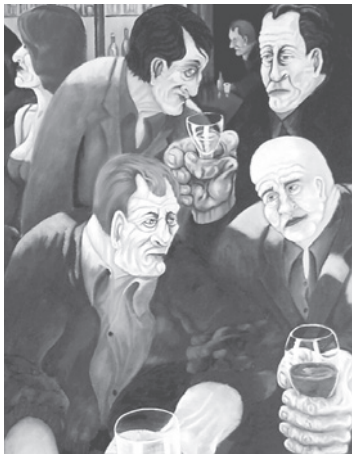

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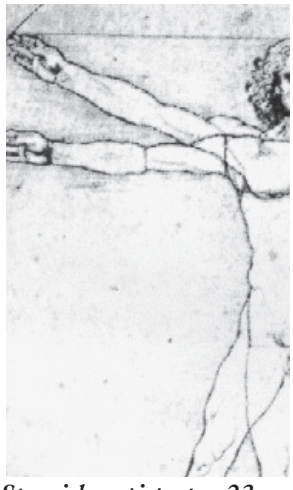

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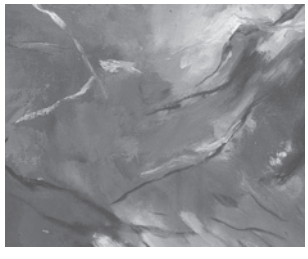

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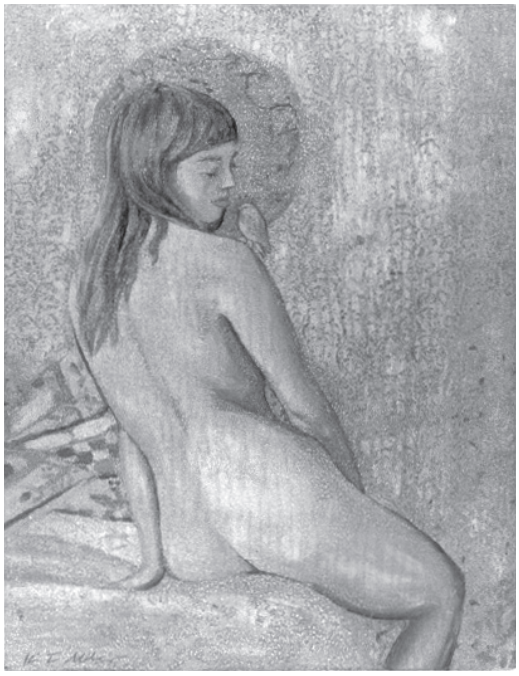
Kelynn Z. Alder's Contribution to the Civilizing Continuum

Beauty and innocence are so rarely equated in contemporary art that encountering the combination can be quite startling. But this is just one of several surprises to be seen in a new solo exhibition by Kelynn Z. Alder at Viridian Artists @ Chelsea, 530 West 25th Street, from June 8 through 26. (There will be a reception on Saturday, June 12, from 4 to 7 PM and the artist will also be available at the gallery for coffee and conversation on Saturday June 19, from 3 to 5 PM.)

A previous exhibition in the same venue in 1991 established Alder— who has also been an illustrator for The New York Times Book Review, The New Yorker, and other publications, as well as an instructor at the School of Visual Arts— as one of our leading exponents of documentary realism. Alder's paintings and monotypes of people on the Coney Island Boardwalk, in Mexican marketplaces, and in other locales combined insightful portraiture with local color in a manner that provoked favorable comparisons to Toulouse Lautrec and Honore Daumier. And one might have expected her to make a productive and profitable career out of continuing in that vein. Certainly she had staked out fertile territory for herself and she was very good at making the most of it.

Then came terrorist attacks of 9/11, followed by the increasingly brutal and disturbing war in Iraq, and everything changed. Like many of us, Kelynn Z. Alder was forced to do some serious soul searching. Up until that time, Alder had been depicting the world as she saw it. Now, as the artist puts it, she felt a need to depict "the way I wish the world was"; to "dig deeper into my own inner world, in an attempt to bring to the surface images that give me some amount of peace," and to make each image "a type of prayer."

Kelynn calls her new exhibition "Transmigration of the Female Figure," a title which has considerable spiritual resonance, since the word "transmigration" refers to the passage of a soul at death into another either human or animal form. This phenomenon, also known as "metempsychosis" is symbolized in Alder's recent monotypes of female nudes communing with small creatures such as birds or turtles. "I wanted to communicate the gentle respect between two of God's divine creatures, the smaller one no less important than the larger one," Alden says of these works, each of which is a series of no more than six pieces. "It's as if they are one, united by a mutual understanding. Birds in particular are very symbolic of spiritual freedom. Although I cannot say that I belong to any ecclesiastical denomination, my hope is that the message will be interpreted more as a humanitarian protest, the other side of man's inhumanity to man and animals. It is a universal prayer that the world will become a more gentle and peaceful place for our children and our animals."



"The Communion I"

One of the most beautiful monotypes in the exhibition depicts a preadolescent girl slumped in a colorful patchwork chair besides a yellow guitar, stroking a small yellow bird perched on her hand. This could have been a perilously ambiguous image, given that the child is nude but for a pink floral ribbon in her blond hair. In the hands of a lesser artist, a subject such as this could have veered close to certain paintings by Balthus or those coy Victorian photographs of little girls by Lewis Caroll that now provoke a slight squeamishness in the eye of the beholder. But there is not a trace of perverse "Pretty Baby" tawdriness in Alder's image. What we see instead is a purity that bespeaks the personification of innocence. Even while availing herself and her subject of all the rosy irradiations of realism, such as we see in the nudes of masters like Renoir and Bonnard, Alder shields this beautiful child from the more salacious aspects of the male gaze, imparting to her the transcendently angelic quality that is the true attribute of childhood.

One might might wonder how it is possible for Alder to accomplish such a feat without verging on the banal, if the answer were not so self-evident in the work itself: by virtue of a thorough grounding in art history which enables her to skirt sentimentality through formal stringency. Witness in this regard another recent monotype of the same child, seen only from the waist up, standing and stroking the little yellow bird against a background of vibrant blue wallpaper flecked with delicate floral designs. While indeed communicating "the gentle respect between two of God's creatures" in the serene set of the child's features, her tender regard for the bird, and the latter's bright and trusting little eye, Alder also employs form and color to enliven the picture in purely visual terms, animating and unifying the composition with bold, virtuoso strokes that eschew fussy descriptive detail yet capture the subject with impressive verisimilitude.

Other monotypes in the exhibition depict more fully grown female nudes yet manage to retain a similar sense of innocence. In one, the figure of a slender young woman is seen from behind, seated on a blue floor beside a little bird perched as though singing to her on top of a gilded cage. Here, the aquamarine wallpaper with bold white floral designs and the flattening of the various elements on the picture plane lend the composition a decorative formality akin to a Matisse odalisque.

Equally lovely in another manner is a monotype of a statuesque standing nude gazing down bemusedly at a turtle trundling toward her on a grassy green expanse. Above them is an area of vibrant blue that could suggest a sky. However, like the green area below, it is laid down in loose gestural strokes through which small abstract designs appear to bleed in the manner of pentimento, lending the composition a quality more symbolic than naturalistic. This effect is further enhanced by a radiant glow around the head of the standing nude which, coupled with her brown bangs, the shawl-like drape of her hair and the modest downward direction of her gaze, suggests the halo of a saint in a Christian icon. Yet, paradoxically, at the same time, the picture has a wild innocence of a sort that we associate with a painter such as Gauguin.

In contrast to the previously described monotypes, which appear more grounded in reality by their domestic interiors, here the outdoor setting suggests the more rarefied atmosphere of a mystical allegory. The heightened color and lyrical thrust of the composition also assume qualities akin to the Symbolist works of Redon and Moreau.

It is these vital connections to the art of the past that give weight and depth to Kelynn Z. Alder's recent monotypes, making them more than visions of wishful thinking, mere visual prayers for a better world. Rather, like all good art, Alder's work is part of a civilizing continuum that serves as a counterweight to our world's random evil.

—Ed McCormack

Joe Naujokas: Juggling Memory and Urban Complexity

I doubt, or at least hope, that I am not the only one who has ever had the experience of reading a novel that takes place in, say, 17th century Poland, and suddenly realizing midway through that I have been mentally setting some of its scenes in an obscure coffee shop cum dim sum parlor that I sometimes frequent in Chinatown.

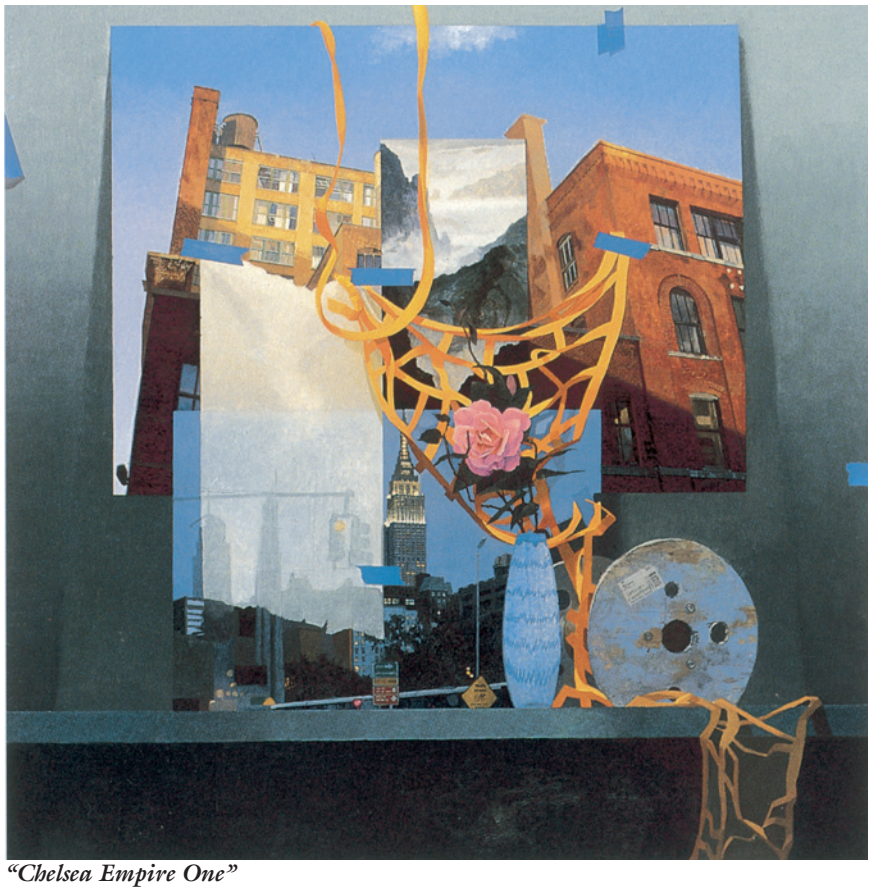
Admittedly, to someone with an especially linear way of looking at things, this might sound a bit bizarre. But I suspect that Joe Naujokas, who seems to understand something about the crazy simultaneity of our mental processes that escapes many other artists, would know what I am talking about.

Naujokas, the recent recipient of the 2004 $10,000 Grant from the Pennsylvania Arts Council, is a unique type of metaphysical realist, in that he paints the reality of the mind rather than merely that of the eye. Most of us carry a plethora of images around with us, fragments of past places and things, that we superimpose on the present in the simultaneous process of seeing and thinking. Dreams and daydreams are layered and overlap in consciousness in a manner that makes what we actually see only part of the story. Surely what happened in the past is every bit as real to us— and at times even more real, when it involves either traumatic events or cherished memories— as what we are experiencing in the present moment.

It is the peculiar poetry of this complex layering of inner and outer realities as it relates particularly to New York City that Joe Naujokas captures so convincingly in his solo exhibition "Views of Views — Empire Manhattan," at Katharina Rich Perlow Gallery, in The Fuller Building, 41 East 57th Street, from June 8 through July 9.

The city at this very moment in its history is an especially rich source of the kind of imagery that Naujokas works with, since it is really a three dimensional multimedia collage anyway, what with flickering digital billboards and video monitors everywhere to be seen; not to mention film crews clogging the streets wherever one goes, usurping reality with fantasy, juggling fact and fiction (just as Naujokas does when we can't immediately tell whether a section of one of his compositions is a painting within the painting or a view through the studio window); and everyone walking around talking into cell phones, so that they are literally in one place and figuratively in another...

It seems all the more remarkable that Joe Naujokas evokes this sense of being in several different mental spaces simultaneously that is now the common lot of urban men and women not through multimedia installations or through any of the new technological means that some artists employ to express the fragmented nature of postmodern reality, but in the time-honored medium of oil paints, either on canvas or on large



"Chelsea Empire One"

panels of baltic birch or oak plywood. These materials, redolent of tradition and history, empower him not merely to approximate or imitate our contemporary condition of sensory overload but to impose upon its chaos the kind of sublime order which we have always demanded of art that aspires to something more eternal.

When Naujokas combines in one painting meticulously detailed images of two cities in which he has lived at different times in his life, then further complicates the composition by superimposing a spill-over of odds and ends from his studio (a tall stool, a flower pot, a small painting within the painting, and other real-looking yet less readily identifiable objects), as he does in the large oil on linen entitled "Wichita Tribeca," the result should be disconcerting, to say the least. Logically, an architectural melange of New York and Kansas with sundry other things thrown in for good measure should be as visually jarring as one of those puzzles that McDonald's puts on its paper place mats, showing a hodgepodge of weirdly juxtaposed cartoon images with the caption "What's Wrong With This Picture?"

Naujokas, however, manages to make even the most unlikely juxtapositions of buildings and objects in his panoramic cityscapes cohere harmoniously by virtue of a style that Nancy Grimes, a critic for Art in America, accurately characterized as a synthesis of realist rendering and cubist structuring. Meticulous technique coupled with formal rigor enables Naujokas to work up sketches he made from the top of the World Trade Center just before 9/11 and incorporate them with other elements in his vertiginous urban vistas; or, in paintings such as "Midtown Construction Paper" and "Chelsea Empire One," to superimpose trompe l'oeil images of cut and taped paper over his stringent architectural geometries and enliven them with flowing, ribbon-like forms that tweak in a more pristine technique the gestural flourishes and fabled "push and pull" of Abstract Expressionism.

Such sly aesthetic gamesmanship bears out what other critics have already noted: that Naujokas shares certain affinities with 19th century still life illusionists like William Harnett and John Peto, who anticipated the slapdash insouciance of collage with their painstaking techniques. Only, Naujokas' work is considerably more ambitious for what it tells us about seeing, remembering, and the nature of consciousness itself.

Joe Naujokas, who has exhibited at Katharina Rich Perlow Gallery for several years and who is represented in numerous important private and public collections, is an immensely gifted painter whose pictures both perplex and delight us with their singular angle of vision and their dazzling complexity. —Ed McCormack

Inner and Outer Horizons in the Art of Marilyn Henrion

Up until now, most of the women artists granted The Brisons Veor Residency, in Cape Cornwall, England, have been painters. Marilyn Henrion, however, is one of our leading fiber artists, represented in major collections here and abroad, and the unique qualities of the works that resulted from her residency there in the summer of 2003 can be seen in her vibrant solo show, "Cornwall: Inside/Outside," at Noho Gallery in Chelsea, 530 West 25th Street, from June 1 through 19.

Known for its abandoned copper and tin mines and its picturesque Neolithic ruins, Cape Cornwall, with its unearthly light and its untamed landscape of craggy cliffs and crashing surf, is reminiscent of the remote area of the Scottish highlands where the mercurial Abstract Expressionist painter Jon Schueler exiled himself in the 1950s.

In this remote, rugged place on the westernmost tip of England, where high winds and hurricane gales frequently batter the shore, Henrion lived and worked in a granite cottage on a cliff overlooking the ocean. Traversing the moors on foot, she took inspiration from Neolithic burial sites, the ruins of the mines, and fields of wildflowers, for two distinctly different yet parallel series of works. Both reveal the complex and innovative sensibility of this artist who participated in the avant garde Happenings of the 1960s, in the wake of the Beat Generation, and went on to become one of the leading lights of the fiber arts movement when it was revitalized by the rise of feminism in the 1970s.

One series, "Cornwall Journals," focuses on the external visual images Henrion encountered as she explored the local landscape, transforming her photographs of it into digital images printed on cloth and hand-stitched. The other is a group of hand pierced and stitched silk constructions, the medium for which Henrion is best known. These are a continuation of the "Innerspace" series begun several years ago, albeit informed by the inner sense of timelessness and solitude she discovered in Cape Cornwall.

One is immediately struck by what a creatively fertile experience the residency was for Henrion, judging from the sheer volume and quality of work she produced. The "Cornwall Journal" series is an especially exciting discovery for viewers unfamiliar with this more imagistic aspect of her oeuvre. The photographic images in each piece of the series are enclosed within a circle set centrally against a colorful silk ground, as in a tondo. The images themselves are spliced and fragmented in a manner recalling those early Cubist studies by Picasso and Braque in which a circular format was employed to set off the shifting planes created with vertical and horizontal lines. In Henrion's pieces,

"Cornwall Journal #21"

however, the images lend the compositions an extra-formal dimension, opening up areas of the picture plane in the manner of so many windows to reveal glimpses of light and implied perspective.

In an almost cinematic yet non-sequential manner, we are afforded glimpses of the landscape and related elements, as though seen through a cubistically fractured kaleidoscope: densely piled stones, presumably from ruins, juxtaposed with areas of grass and sky; close-ups of lengths of rhythmically rippling, light-reflecting waves, suddenly abutted by incongruously positioned land masses or severely cropped boulders; architectural details dispersed as in a jigsaw puzzle and intermingled with fragments of foliage; thick, fibrous coils of rope, suggesting the rugged implements of fishermen, set within a grid of brilliant blue hues.

In "Cornwall Journal," not only does Marilyn Henrion share a privileged sense of the substance, light, and atmosphere of this ancient, distant place; she also employs its local color and natural textures to mirror, on a more intimate scale, the visual and tactile pleasures that she provides the viewer through the use of different patterns and fabrics in her larger, more familiar compositions in pierced and stitched silk.

Henrion has described her "Innerspace" series as "architectural spaces" that "serve as metaphor for one's inner life," and the overwhelming sense that comes across in the works in the series influenced by her stay in Cape Cornwall is of the great inner stillness that can only be discovered in utter solitude.

In contrast to the brilliant colors, baroque floral patterns, and lush silver and gold brocades in Henrion's exhibition "Night Thoughts," in the same venue in November of 2002 (except for one small study in which patterned fabrics are used sparingly) , the new compositions at Noho Gallery are created with relatively subdued, subtly harmonized color areas. Their geometric forms—solar or lunar circles; intersecting or interlocking rectangles, suggesting limitless horizons or infinite depth— convey a sense of inner spaces that have broadened and expanded to match the vastness of the outer landscape.

The stately minimalism of the new work seduces us with its austerity, demonstrating even more than in previous exhibitions the formal strengths that make Marilyn Henrion not only one of our most innovative fiber artists but one of the more compelling artists at work in any medium today.

—Ed McCormack

Art History Meets Fantasy in the Paintings of Ruth Poniarski

Ruth Poniarski has evolved what amounts to a repertory company to enact the fantastic theatrical tableaux that take place inside her head. Certain actors recur in her paintings from exhibition to exhibition, although in different scenes. Most often they are appropriated from art history or ancient mythology. Rodin's Thinker appears in various contexts; Botticelli's Venus as well. Water fowl such as geese play supporting roles, since water is a prominent element in Poniarski's dreamy nocturnal landscapes.

The imagistic incongruity that is also prominent in Ruth Poniarski's paintings is especially pronounced in her new exhibition "The Cloak of Athens, "which opens on July 8 and runs through the 24th, at Jadite Gallery, 413 West 50th Street. Especially witty is "The Eclipse of Atlas," where The Thinker, aka Atlas, inhabits a leaf-strewn autumn wood equipped, like a cozy living room, with a table lamp and an old fashioned TV console. Under a full moon in a starry sky that also includes a large planetary orb, a slightly frumpy woman in a pink bathrobe is making her way between the trees, bringing him a midnight snack in a big red bowl, while a semi-transparent fox walks right through a tree trunk as it slinks through the forest.

Does the title suggest that Atlas' eclipse has to do with a descent into mundane domesticity? Possibly. One of the pleasures in the paintings of Ruth Poniarski is never knowing exactly where she is coming from, so to speak, or where her unfettered narrative imagination will take her next. For the myths that she chooses to interpret are invariably launching pads for flights of fancy that branch out in several directions simultaneously, leaving her pictures open to an endless

"The Eclipse of Atlas"

number of interpretations.

Poniarski's work engages the viewer in a manner that makes it necessary for him or her to be almost as imaginative as the artist herself in order to fathom such visions as: Venus reclining in a bathing suit on the horizon where the water meets a pale purple sky, while a befuddled white goose looks on from the shore; The Thinker pondering a fat white rabbit, while a dead ringer for the Mona Lisa lifts her skirts to dip her toe in a nearby stream; or the title picture, "Cloak of Athens," where the main elements are a huge red rose, a female wader reminiscent of Rembrandt, and a magnificent vista of Athens' white ruins spilling down from distant hills.

Figures from disparate periods of art history obviously live vividly in Ruth Poniarski's memory and she gives them new life by juxtaposing them in new contexts, along with other intriguing anomalies such as a semi transparent leopard that can perch in mid-air or an equally ethereal woman who merges with the night sky and the ocean, as she wrings a stream of water from her hair into a large sea shell.

Ruth Poniarski imbues such unlikely phenomena with a remarkable verisimilitude by virtue of her flawless technique. Her ability to make material and ethereal elements equally palpable in pigment makes her unique synthesis of fantasy and art history as aesthetically pleasing as it is imaginatively engaging.

—J. Sanders Eaton

Discovering "The New Introspection" at New Century Artists

One of the trends that has emerged in the 2004 Whitney Biennial is drawing as a full fledged medium, as opposed to a preliminary step toward painting. Two draftspersons exemplifying this trend were featured in "Express: Five Emerging Artists," seen recently at New Century Artists, Inc, 530 West 25th Street.

Linda Ganus makes large drawings in charcoal on paper and graphite on vellum, mediums which she sometimes combines in layered configurations to create intriguing visual metaphors. In Ganus' "Things Left Unsaid" a long, horizontal, scroll-like charcoal drawing is overlaid with two graphite images on semi-transparent vellum of a woman and a schooner, both suspended from delicate twigs. In her "Die Krähe," tiny sculpted birds perch on bare branches streaming out of a clear glass vase. Entangled among the branches, a delicate drawing of a young man looks as though it has been blown there by the wind, creating a peculiarly poetic effect. Also quite powerful is a very large drawing by Ganus called "The Death of Actaeon," in which the stag-headed hunter of the ancient myth sports a modern business suit and appears entrapped by a maze of sinuous tree-trunks. His corporate garb tips us off that this particular Actaeon may be guilty of more sophisticated crimes than spying on a goddess bathing naked in a stream.

Mark Lerer works in the most elementary and mundane of mediums— pencil on paper— to create drawings that celebrate graphic masters ranging from Rodin to comic book artist Jack Kirby. One can't classify Lerer as an "appropriationist," since he makes no attempt to imitate the styles of the artists he copies. Rather, he creates new compositions based on their works with a scratchy yet skillful earnestness, showing equal regard for high and low artistic sources. In Lerer's drawing "Three Burghers of Calais," Rodin's figures engage us from a new angle, as though we are standing among the trio of rough-hewn men, while in "The Sub-Mariner (Flying Overhead)," a superhero originally drawn by the cartoonist Gene Colan takes on an aspect akin to one of William Blake's visionary figures, as he soars above the tops of tenements. In the latter drawings, as in "The Origin of the Human Torch, after Jack Kirby," Mark Lerer revamps and elevates scorned styles and subjects, demonstrating that almost anything can be grist for his fertile graphic mill.

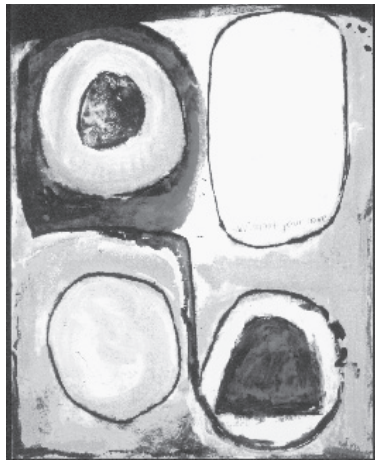
Swiss-born Fritz E. Erismann is a painter with his own peculiar perspective on the art of portraiture. Erismann's faces have a bold, art brut immediacy, with their brilliant colors and distorted features. They possess a crude zaniness akin to Chicago's "Hairy Who" school, yet they also manage to convey a surprisingly subtle range of emotions. In Erismann's oil, "Puzzle," for example, a man whose face appears reconstructed from shattered shards of stained glass ponders something with hand to cheek and large haunted eyes. By contrast, another engaging portrait (punningly titled "Mona Misa") is limned in flat areas of brilliant color contained within graceful lines in a manner reminiscent of Matisse. Rather than imposing a signature style on each of his portrait heads, Fritz Erismann lets each subject dictate his formal means, relying on the strength and conviction of his vision to imbue his paintings with a more authentic consistency.

Fritz E. Erismann

Mark Lerer

George Olexa

Linda Ganus



Linda Dujack

Photographer George Olexa captures the color, speed, and mood of the city in his digital prints of such subjects as walls and doors covered with shredded posters and graffiti; reflected buildings and stretches of sky melting in the facades of glass towers; traffic streaming between concrete canyons, and pedestrians traversing the urban miasma like shadowy phantoms.

Olexa seems to view the entire city as a found collage, constantly in flux, charged with light and movement. His pictures freeze its crazy simultaneity in formal stasis with compositions that impose order on its multileveled chaos. In some pictures, delicate pastel hues create poetic atmospheres, while in others brasher colors conspire with the rugged tactility of steel and concrete surfaces to convey the gritty drama of urban reality in all its tarnished beauty.

Printmaker Linda Dujack is represented here with a group of works in drypoint, collage, chine colle and monoprint which conjure up a lively array of abstract forms and symbols. The intimate scale of Dujack's compositions complements their eloquent linear ecriture, as seen in one especially engaging composition called "So Good," where scrawled forms and phrases converge with a funky elegance simultaneously akin to the miniaturist sensibility of Paul Klee and the graffiti energy of Jean Michel Basquiat— if one can possibly imagine such an unlikely synthesis!

Dujack has a unique ability to convey emotional qualities with simple shapes, as seen in "Together," where a pair of abstract forms as reductive as chess pieces or clothespins suggest all the complexity of a loving relationship. Equally evocative are a group of tiny collages in which Linda Dujack employs rectangular shapes, delicate tonalities, and gauzy textures to explore austere spatial tensions and project an exquisite visual poetry.

Each of the artists in this skillfully curated exhibition seemed to exemplify the subjective, introspective stance that has emerged to become a dominant tendency in much of the best recent art.

—Peter Wiley

Elegy and Celebration: The New Paintings of Dorothy A. Culpepper

Much postmodern abstraction is anti-romantic, in reaction to the emotional/intuitive ethos of Abstraction Expressionism, which still activates oedipal impulses in many painters over a half century after the heyday of that most influential of all American art movements. This is generally as true for postmodern gestural painting as it is for the more geometric tendency laced with irony that was briefly labeled Neo Geo but continues undesignated as such since that term fell under critical fire for its trivializing implications.

Dorothy A. Culpepper, however, is something of an anomaly in the contemporary art world: an abstract painter who works with poured paint and pours her heart and soul into every gesture that she puts on paper or canvas. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, raised in Albuquerque, Culpepper has exhibited widely in New Mexico, as well as in Paris and New York. In the latter city, her exhibitions at Montserrat Gallery, in Soho, have been especially well received. One can safely speculate that their enthusiastic critical reception has to do with the fact that Culpepper's emotive style is a welcome change from so many of the calculated strategies one sees in the Big Apple nowadays. Unlike a lot of other ambitious painters scrambling to get a leg up in the art capital of the world, Culpepper does not hedge her bets; her all-out commitment to following the painterly process wherever it decides to take her makes every painting a risk-filled adventure.

Culpepper has stated that she regards paint as "an extension of my feelings or moods" and this dictates that her approach "has to be spontaneous." And indeed her paintings do seem to combust

"Explosive"

and erupt in spontaneous configurations more akin to natural events than to calculated compositions. Confronted by one of her large lyrical works one has the sense of being drawn into an emotional epicenter or sucked into a vortex of feelings with gale force.

The effect has never been more powerful than in Culpepper's newest exhibition, which can be seen at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, from July 12 through 31. Perhaps part of the reason for this is that the title of the show, "Dedicated to Charles H. Culpepper, "in memory of the artist's recently deceased husband, telegraphs that the emotional force field that the viewer is entering in this exhibition is especially strong. Naturally, this knowledge, of itself, helps to evoke an elegiac mood. Yet, at the same time there is also the sense of a life being celebrated as well. Indeed, the sheer effusiveness of Culpepper's style invariably conveys a celebratory feeling, no less here than in earlier exhibitions. Thus, although Culpepper is an intuitive painter who apparently makes no attempt to invest her compositions with conscious philosophical content, a profound paradox nonetheless comes across in these new paintings: One is compelled to contemplate the more transcendent aspects of death as a time of spiritual passage simultaneously with the concept of earthly loss and mourning.

One of the most noticeable differences between Culpepper's newest paintings and her previous ones, particularly those that she showed in her 2002 exhibition in the same Soho venue, is coloristic. While many of the earlier paintings were characterized by darker deeper hues that covered large areas of the composition, in the new works the drips and splashes are more intricately dispersed and diffused over the entire surface. There is also in the new works a great deal of white, networks of white overlapping linear drips, that create a glowing quality like stars twinkling in the cosmos, or white blossoms whirling in the wind—the latter always a signifier of endings and beginnings, mortality and regeneration.

While we in the West think of black as the color of mourning, in China white is the color that symbolizes death, and while this admittedly may be a purely subjective interpretation on this writer's part, it is nonetheless striking how Culpepper's use of white in her newest paintings seems to enhance their elegiac, as well as their celebratory, qualities. These, too, are some of this artist's most gesturally energetic works, as though in the process of creating them, Culpepper was working her way through darkness to light, pushing clouds aside and reaching toward the rebirth of joy and wonder that can come of weathering a long dark night of the soul.

The densely layered, swirling surfaces of these new paintings are further enlivened by nails, lengths of wire, bits of broken glass (which Culpepper has stated may represent "lives, dreams or plans that are broken and maybe restructured later") scattered into the pigment and over the surface of the compositions. These rough physical elements, which appear to have been literally swept in the emotional storm, lend the new paintings a delicious tactility that works in tandem with their chromatic qualities—particularly the interaction of the aforementioned white splashes and drips with vibrant red, yellow, green, and blue hues.

Indeed, texture and color take on a new life in these new paintings, which are so densely layered that the various elements seem to fuse into a single atmospheric entity, rather than remaining discrete and autonomous. Like Jackson Pollock, the predecessor to whom she invariably invites the most obvious comparison by virtue of her freewheeling technique, Culpepper generates tremendous energy with her networks of drips and spatters flung like lariats over the surface of her large compositions. Like him, she allows serendipity to enter into the process in the belief that, as Pollock once put it, "the painting has a life of its own."

As for a lot of modern painters, Pollock seems to have been a liberating force for Culpepper, opening up possibilities, freeing her from traditions and conventions which would hamper free expression. That Culpepper, however, has evolved her own deeply personal and highly original method of investing pigment with emotion by intuitive means is especially apparent in these new works, driven by a cataclysmic event in her personal life and invested with almost mystical atmospheres and auras that are distinctly different from the work of Pollock or any other painter who has come after him.

These qualities are at their apex in the large painting in a vertical format entitled "Explosive," with its looming monolithic oval form composed of splashy layerings of red, blue, yellow, green, and white texturally enhanced by scattering of nails. Whereas some of the other compositions are overall concentrations of color and gesture that cover the entire surface, here lightly spattered areas of white remain around the edges, defining the central form as a separate entity in space.

In other recent paintings, such as "Folded Space" and "Wired," Culpepper employs actual folds in the surface of the painting to create sudden shifts in the direction of the drips as well as textural effects further enhanced by twisted wires that function as a kind of physical "drawing." Equally powerful in another manner is "Broken Window," where nails, shattered glass, and other elements add textural heft and depth to a composition with a somewhat bolder definition of individual forms floating against a densely variegated, richly textured ground of layered green, blue, yellow, and red hues.

While Culpepper has always maintained that her paintings are "portraits of a landscape that is within, a visual monument in space and time," and while traces of an actual landscape were often discernible in her work, her recent paintings appear to delve even deeper into the emotional recesses that have long informed her creative process. No longer do her compositions appear to allude to nature in the abstract, as much as to the mysterious forces of life, death, and emotion itself.

Indeed, this latest exhibition at Montserrat Gallery is a milestone in the career of Dorothy A. Culpepper, for in it she has transformed personal suffering and sorrow into a statement of hope and affirmation. It is a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit as well as to the creative resourcefulness of a painter for whom art is as much a survival tool as an expressive necessity.

—Byron Coleman

Heisler, Pyle, and Noeth at Montserrat Gallery

Although Montserrat Gallery , 584 Broadway, is a Soho venue well known for presenting an international roster of artists from abroad, it also represents a wide range of American artists as well, as seen in three recent exhibitions:

Besides being a painter, Norma B. Heisler is a psychotherapist and a hypnotherapist, which makes sense, since her paintings have an almost hypnotic effect, with their swirling linear forms and mesmerizing colors.

Orbs, wavering lines, vortex-like spirals, and other rhythmic elements that suggest natural shapes and forces provide the visual vocabulary that Heisler employs to build her dynamic abstract paintings. Heisler's paintings are remarkable for the range of effects that she achieves with a relatively limited number of pictorial elements, creating compositions that project enormous energy and movement.

In Heisler's "New Tomorrow," a solar orb, surrounded by cloud-like forms, projects a powerful sense of light and heat by virtue of her use of radiant yellow hues. By contrast, in "Fire, Hail, Snow & Vapor," brilliant orange, red, and blue lines radiate out from the center of the composition to the edges of the canvas, while in "Midnight," deep blue hues and a lunar orb convey the mystery of a nocturnal landscape with a primal power that makes Heisler seem akin to such pioneering American abstractionists as Arthur Dove and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Willis Pyle never ceases to surprise us. Following closely on the heels of his superb recent exhibition featuring paintings of dancers and nudes at Montserrat, the distinguished former Disney animator and illustrator turned painter has taken up pastels for the first time to create a series of portraits he calls "Incas."

These are insightful images of South American Indians in their native dress which transcend stereotypes to reveal the character of each individual sitter with strong strokes of color. In "The Workman," the piece de resistance is the distinctive mustache of an older man with a craggy, earthy demeanor. In "The Harvester," a woman wearing a red skirt is seen leaning over in a manner which conveys a sense of her "oneness" with the land. In "Mother and Child," we see a woman seated on a burro with a child on her back and get a real sense of the hardships that these people must endure to survive.

By contrast, "Man with Llama" is a lighthearted image of human and animal companionship, executed in the breezy style that makes Willis Pyle one of our more consistently uplifting figurative artists.

Michael A. Noeth, a navel officer as well as a painter, was an artist of extraordinary gifts whose career was cut tragically short by the terrorist attack on the Pentagon, where he was assigned on active duty on September 11, 2001.

Noeth painted epic scenes of navy life that are unlike anything else in contemporary art. Ships at sea, often in storms, were among his most dramatic subjects. Other paintings depicted the life of servicemen on board, either working or relaxing in their leisure hours, with an intimacy and an accuracy that could only be achieved by someone who knew that life well and had the talent to convey it in pigment.

But there was another side to the art of Noeth as well: small seascapes painted in a luminous manner reminiscent of the American visionary artist Albert Pinkham Ryder for their haunting luminosity and atmospheric nuances. One depicts water rushing over rocks; another captured a desolate beach with shapely clouds overhead; yet another depicts a fiery sky with the silhouetted shadows of men on a ship viewing it through binoculars in the foreground.

These paintings represent the more poetic, intimate side of the late Michael A. Noeth, and fortunately for all of us, can be seen year-round in Montserrat Gallery's ongoing salon exhibition.

—Marie R. Pagano

The Power of "Tachisme" Lives in the Paintings of the French Artist Daweis

Tachisme, otherwise known as "L'Art Informel," is the French counterpart of American Abstract Expressionism. Its original exponents were the second wave of The School of Paris, among them Mathieu, Fautrier, and Wols (who was actually German but based in Paris). Like their American counterparts, these painters composed spontaneously, seeking to capture the spirit of things rather than actual appearances— although as de Kooning once stated, much abstract painting is derived from landscape nonetheless.

Certainly the ostensibly abstract work of the French painter known as Daweis, who seems a direct descendant of the Tachists, is inspired by landscape. Daweis, who is featured in a solo exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, in Soho, from August 3 through 21, studied both art and architecture in his native Paris. And as another critic for this publication noted in a review of an earlier exhibition in the same New York venue, his architectural training seems to contribute to the structural solidity of his compositions, in which "even the most spontaneous abstract gestures appear supported by an invisible underlying armature."

This is no less true of the paintings in Daweis' present exhibition, with their strong horizontal network of vigorous strokes laid down boldly with a palette knife, which simultaneously convey ethereal qualities of light and a sense of the lay of the land and the movement of the sky and of bodies of water. Indeed, sky land, and water are the only three elements that Daweis requires to capture and hold our attention with a host of subtle painterly effects.

The interaction of these ephemeral and physical elements can suggest an entire cosmos of meanings in his paintings. Light and land seem to symbolize human nature as well as external nature by virtue of the drama that Daweis brings to them through both his use of color and his paint handling. As a colorist he can only be described as a kind of magician for his use of radiantly variegated hues that take on an iridescent quality. Chromatically shimmering skies seem to shed light over the landscape below without actually imitating the colors to be found in nature. Rather, Daweis' colors —reds, blues, yellows, and violets— are intensified versions of natural hues that convey a more immediate sense of light, atmosphere, and climate than could be achieved with more slavishly naturalistic means. Daweis, in other words, does not so much approximate as duplicate the experience of nature through the forceful energy that he brings to the act of painting.

In some of his paintings the more specific elements of nature such as trees, streams, rivers, and mountains can be discerned, while in others a more general sense of sky and land is evoked simply through Daweis' sweeping horizontal strokes of juicy pigment piled on thickly with his knife to achieve tactile qualities as sumptuous as his chromatic ones. Indeed, texture is an important element in his work, lending his pictures a palpable physicality.

This material quality works in concert with the spiritual auras emanating from the paintings of this widely exhibited artist to suggest something timeless and magnificent, causing one to view Daweis' work not so much as representations of nature but as autonomous phenomena in which its spirit is evoked in an even more vital manner.

—Robert Vigo

Barbara Beatrice: Humanism and the Extension of Tradition

As a recent article in the New York Times noted contemporary sculpture "knows no boundaries," with many sculptors exploring unusual and sometimes even bizarre materials and technologies. At the same time, there are others, equally innovative in their own way, who remain faithful to traditional mediums such as stone, wood, and bronze, yet manage to create work that is fresh and engaging.

Among the latter group of sculptors, one of the more productive and singularly gifted is Barbara Beatrice, whose solo exhibition can be seen at The Pen and Brush, 16 East 10th Street (between 5th Avenue and University Place) from June 30 through July 11, with a reception on June 30, from 4 to 7 PM. (There will also be an informal discussion about the artist's work in the gallery on July 1, from 4 to 5 PM. At this event, Beatrice will discuss her techniques for working in stone, wood, and bronze, and will also talk about her experiences repairing a damaged stone sculpture and casting it in bronze.)

A widely exhibited sculptor since graduating with a BES in Fine Arts from Thomas Moore College in 1988, Beatrice also runs a gallery in Crescent Springs, Kentucky, where she curates exhibitions of other local sculptors' work. Although her works range in scale from five-inch miniatures to commissioned pieces in excess of 800 pounds, most of the sculptures in her exhibition at the Pen and Brush are of medium size yet command space like much larger works by virtue of Beatrice's grasp of monumental form.

Human and animal figures are given a palpable physical presence in all three of her mediums, each of which she employs in a manner at once anatomically convincing and expressive. Which is to say, while she eschews exaggeration or outright distortion, neither does she indulge in fussy detailing that might disrupt the formal integrity of her pieces. Figures and facial features are often somewhat simplified in a manner that in no way interferes with their verisimilitude; rather, such formal generalization lends the figures a sleek abstract beauty which adds to rather than detracts from the expressive qualities.

An excellent case in point is Beatrice's "Unconditional Love," a stone sculpture in Michigan alabaster in which the figure of a young woman and the dog she kneels to pet achieve a flowing formal synthesis. Indeed, the two figures are seen as a single organic entity, its formal integrity emphasized and enhanced by the linear movement of the dark veins in the white stone, the prominence of which the sculptor has exploited handsomely.

By contrast, in some of her bronzes, Barbara Beatrice is equally adept at creating tableaux in which the discrete qualities of two or more figures are emphasized to equal formal effect, as seen in some of her pieces depicting children at play, such as "Playful Spirit," and "Circle of Love." Unlike sculptors such as James Kearns, who have used children's games to symbolize sinister or sadistic aspects of humanity, Beatrice casts them in a more benign light. In "Playful Spirit," a boy takes the role of a big brother, gently introducing a younger child to a canine companion, while in "Circle of Love," the circle of the title is a discarded automobile tire, suspended from a rope, that two little girls and a younger boy employ as a swing.

The latter bronze is especially impressive for the manner in which Beatrice creates the impression that the rope is suspended tautly from some invisible support, although it actually juts out from the tire into empty space; for it is on this implied tension that the thrust and movement of the entire piece, with its suggestion of a gently swaying motion, so convincingly rests.

"Circle of Love"

Far from resting on such technical feats and special effects, however, Beatrice's oeuvre is actually built on the aesthetic bedrock that we see in her bronze of a classical female nude torso as timeless as antiquity itself, as well as in another sculpture in alabaster of a mother cradling a child in her arms.

The one constant that unites all of Beatrice's work is her life-affirming humanism, which comes across with equal force in her graceful work in carved walnut "Girl Holding Her Hair'; in the stately seated female figure in cherry wood entitled "Rhodora," and even in her anthropomorphically winning animal figures, such as the smug little bronze frog she calls "Prince Charming." In fact, it is the humanistic quality in Barbara Beatrice sculptures, coupled with her ability to make even her smallest pieces command space in a monumental manner, that makes Barbara Beatrice an artist to be savored. For her innovation lies not so much in breaking down supposed boundaries but in extending tradition in new and meaningful ways.

—J. Sanders Eaton

Roland-McLean: A Daumier of the Down and Out

Even when abstraction was the dominant art movement, the tradition of humanist figuration has always held fast in Britain. Francis Bacon, Lucien Freud, David Hockney, Kitaj and others have stayed with the figure through thick and thin. Not only does Roland-McLean belong to that heady company, but his experience of the seamy side of life is fully equal to that of the notorious Bacon, having been an addict and a self described vagrant before cleaning up his act and resurrecting as successful painter with Pop music stars like Elton John and Eric Clapton among his many collectors.

Roland-McLean's authentic take on London lowlife was evident in his recent exhibition in the Chelsea space of at Agora Gallery, at 530 West 25th Street. His darkly evocative paintings attest to the power that can come to a man who has outrun his demons and survived to profit handsomely from his past mistakes. More of a social realist than any of the previously mentioned English painters, his visions of degraded humanity are akin to some of the strongest works of the German satirist and painter George Grosz. Given the Goyaesque darkness of his vision, coupled with his sharp sense of caricature and willingness to introduce a decidedly untrendy moral dimension into his work, one is tempted to term Roland-McLean a Daumier of the down and out.

"The French House, Soho Pub"

One of his most affecting oils on canvas is "The Informer, Summary Street Justice," for it depicts a man who has apparently betrayed his cronies and become a pariah being savagely beaten by three other men, as a woman clutching a bottle of booze jeers from the sidelines. While a fat full moon beams passively above, the battered wretch cowers on the cobblestones, helplessly watching one of his attackers, a big bullheaded bloke, raise a heavy boot to stomp him again. He is an outcast among outcasts, the lowest of the low, the squirming proof that there is no longer honor among thieves.

In another oil, Roland-McLean depicts a pub in the Soho section of London. In contrast to his more derelict figures, here the drinkers display a kind of bohemian bonhomie. They appear to be engaged in animated artistic and literary conversations, as a pale figure sporting the distinctive pompadour of the aforementioned Francis Bacon enters in the background. Yet the slightly desperate manner in which some clutch their drinks with those big, exaggerated hands that Roland-McLean delineates so expressively suggests that they may be just a few bad breaks removed from the boozy Bowery philosophers in Eugene O 'Neill's great play "The Iceman Cometh."

In other powerful genre paintings depicting grubby figures in a soup kitchen, brawling on a dark street in Liverpool, or crouching solitary on a sidewalk, cradling a bottle and pondering their fate, Roland-McLean gives us some of the most brutally honest pictures of life out on the existential edge created by any artist in recent memory. Obviously, he knows his subjects well enough not to romanticize their self destructive tendencies, having been there himself. He is not easily conned. Yet while his vision is unflinching, it is also compassionate and its grimness is relieved by a wicked and lively wit.

—Byron Coleman

The Hidden Message in Judy Antill's Seascapes

The Australian artist Judy Antill is a painter with a great many strong feelings about the war in Afghanistan, the plight of asylum seekers trying to gain entry to Australia, and other hot-wired topics. However, while her preoccupation with issues of human rights and politics provides inspiration for much of her work, and she has been dedicating each series of paintings that she executes to various human rights causes since 1998, she is by no means a social realist in any conventional sense of that term. For the figurative elements in her work, which are often quite abstract, evolve from what she refers to as "natural mark making during the painting process."

In this regard, Antill's approach to subject matter is akin to that of the British painter Francis Bacon, whose figures are also generated in the act of painting. Antill's style, although hardly as grotesque as Bacon's, is equally energetic, with fluent strokes and creamy impastos that lend her paintings a palpable physicality to complement their bold colors and powerful delineation of form. Both her intuitive way of working and the rugged immediacy of her paint surfaces adds to the emotional resonance of her imagery.

These qualities are very much in evidence in "Requiem for Asylum Seekers Drowned Off Christmas Island, October 2001," one of the paintings in Judy Antill's exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, 568 Broadway, in Soho, from June 22 through July 10. Like other paintings in Antill's new series, this is ostensibly a seascape painted with her usual bold vigor, the cerulean blue waves laid down in broad, flowing, rhythmic strokes, their foamy white tips curling up in frothy impastos.

The picture initially strikes the viewer as a majestic tribute to the sea's natural beauty. Then one looks more closely and notices the prone figurative forms emerging from—or perhaps one should say merging with—the rugged rock-croppings piled up in the foreground. Given Antill's expressionistic paint handling, which renders her forms simultaneously palpable and abstract, these figurative elements could either be the actual bodies of doomed asylum seekers who have washed up dead on the shore where they hoped to make a new life— or their spirits, now one with the land and haunting it by their presence. Either way, "Requiem for the Asylum Seekers" is a powerful statement, as are other major paintings by Antill, such as "Slap in the Face – Salty Sting of Disappointment," "Lest We Forget," and "Ethnic Memories I."

In each of these paintings the artist seduces the viewer with what appears to be a pleasant, picturesque seascape that suddenly turns into a powerful cry of social outrage, as the crashing surf morphs into eerie ghostly voices. Indeed, it is the special gift of Judy Antill to make even the most harrowing subjects so aesthetically appealing that we are compelled to view them unflinchingly, perhaps for the very first time, unable to turn away from her urgent human message.

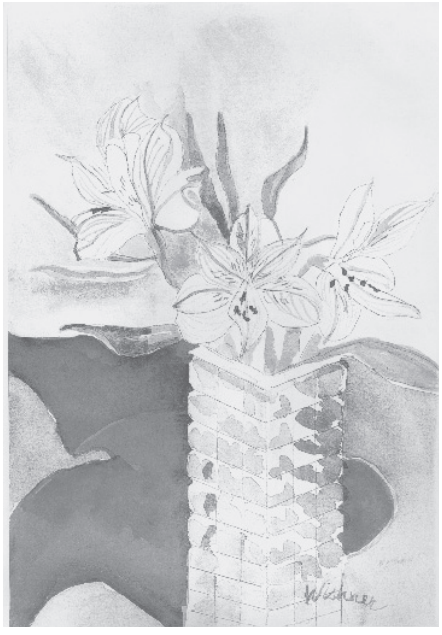
"Ethnic Memories - 1"

—Wilson Wong

Symbiosis in the Watercolors and Photographs of Ina Wishner

Like many other painters, the watercolorist Ina Wishner has long used photographs for reference. She estimates that she has been taking pictures to work from for over twenty years. Only recently, however, has Wishner begun to exhibit her photographs as works of art in their own right. The two mediums complement each other handsomely in Wishner's exhibition of paintings and photographs, "aide de memoir," at the Pen & Brush, 16 East 10th Street, from June 30 through July 11.

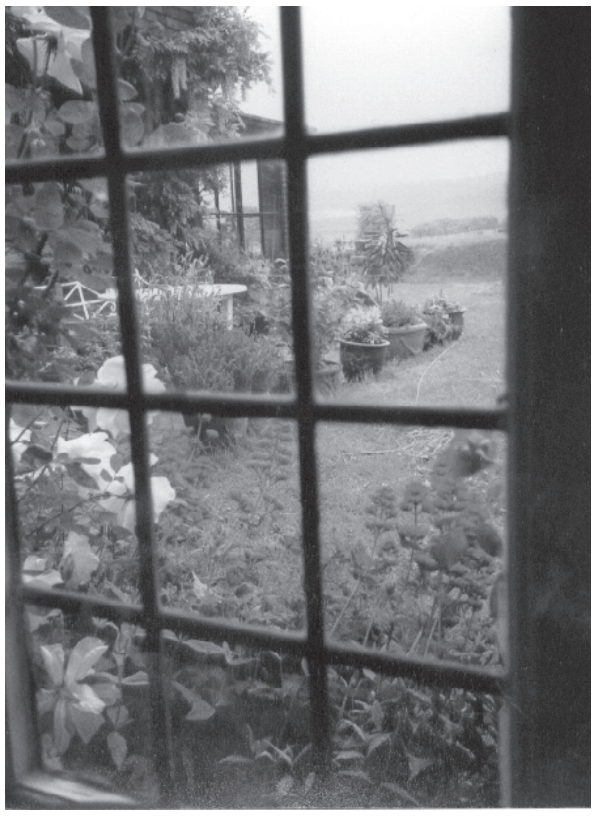
Although the show's title refers to the former role of photography as an aid to memory in Wishner's work, the photographs in this show are by no means subservient to the paintings. They have their own considerable virtues, not the least of which is the sense of chiaroscuro that we see in a black and white print such as "Dappled Sunlight."



Watercolor by Ina Wishner

In this image of potted plants on a stone patio, Wishner makes use of the patterns created by light and shadow in a manner that can only be termed painterly. In contrast to the cozy domestic intimacy of photographs such as "Dappled Sunlight" and "Pavilion," another black and white print that exploits the stripes of sunlight streaming through slats in a patio roof to abstract effect, Wishner's images of more wide open vistas opt for the picturesque. Particularly dramatic in this regard are two companion color prints called "Storm Clouds Over England," numbers I and ll, in which darkly roiling, gilt-tinged cumuli loom above a silhouetted horizon of brush and windblown trees.

Similarly, dramatic light and dark contrasts can be seen in some of Wishner's more panoramic watercolors, such as one in which a luminous sky, shot through with strokes of pink and vibrant yellow, hangs over a flat landscape and small houses laid down with one continuous blue wash. Here, as in other views of purple or blue mountains, dotted with pine trees, rising over verdant fields, Wishner reveals a mastery of watercolor that makes one think of artists as disparate as Georgia O'Keeffe and Emil Nolde, who had little in common in other mediums but employed aquarelle with a similar boldness.



Photograph by Ina Wishner

Like those past masters, Wishner exploits the translucent freshness peculiar to the medium to fill her paintings with color and light, as seen to particular advantage in her floral compositions, where brilliant washes of color, augmented by graceful linear elements, bring shapely petals and sinuous stems to sparkling life. These paintings find their photographic counterparts in color prints such as "Barn House—From the Dining Room," in which a profusion of red, purple, and yellow flowers dazzle the eye in a garden seen through a window.

Indeed, both of Ina Wishner's art forms spring from the same exquisite aesthetic impulse, and succeed in a manner that makes one pleased that she has decided to give her photographs equal billing with her paintings.

—Maureen Flynn

Several Ways of Looking at Color in WSAC Group Show

One might expect an exhibition called "All About Color" to be a gaudy explosion of chromatic fire works. Artist and curator Emily Rich, however, chose to feature a spectrum of more subtle pleasures in this recent show by members of the West Side Arts Coalition, at Broadway Mall Community Center, on the center island at 96th Street and Broadway.

The abstract acrylic paintings of Mercedes Leyba, for example, were notable for their offbeat compositions and a range of hues that were simultaneously vibrant and soft, suggesting a truly original talent whose further development will be interesting to watch. Elton Tucker, on the other hand, employs glitter and dayglo colors with relative abandon; yet his mixed media abstractions, often incorporating bits of mirror, are so over the top that his colors tend to neutralize each other in an oddly harmonious manner that is complemented by his dynamic way with geometric forms.

No one could call K.A. Gibbons a timid colorist either. Indeed, Gibbons is something of a latter day Fauve, yet she combines colors so skillfully that they create a mellow atmospheric effect, as seen in one especially pleasing picture of upper west side brownstones huddled like old friends.

While Mikki Powell juxtaposes flat areas of subdued color with a subtlety reminiscent of Giorgio Morandi in her painting of simplified pitchers overlapping in a kind of tonal do re mi. Emily Rich herself goes toward milky monochromes and pale yet luminous blues and greens in her oils and acrylics, which move easily between figure, landscape, and abstraction by virtue of her vigorous paint application and gestural panache.

Elvira Dimitrij puts clear hard-edge color areas together in her own unique manner in a series of small canvases in which simplified figures engaged in sporting activities move amid geometric forms in a graceful formal dance. Helen Dodge, on the other hand, employs textured strokes of muted hues in compositions that feature the stylized forms of people and palm trees to create scenes with an odd, Edenic beauty all their own.

Betty Thornton' s paintings combine primitive charm with a sophisticated sense of design, particularly in her composition of two sisters joining hands under a full moon and in her fanciful picture of a woman seated in a huge bouquet of flowers.

Working in the unusual medium of oil on sheet rock, M. Deanna Choice creates compositions in which bold, large floral forms emerge from monochromatic fields of soft color, defined primarily by texture.

Barbara E. Litke also employs floral forms, albeit subjected to a variety of formal permutations in pale luminous hues, to create compositions that are essentially abstract. By contrast, the watercolors of Setta Solakian depict a floral subject and street scenes in Paris with wet-into-wet washes, evoking a sense of particular places, yet retaining an atmospheric freshness. Then there is Carolyn S. Kaplan, whose painting of a landscape at sunset was a tour de force, with its purple sky, blue water and violet land masses revealing a chromatic intrepidness akin to that of Milton Avery.

—Marie R. Pagano

"Down Under and Beyond" Focuses on Australia and New Zealand

Much has changed since Robert Hughes wrote his seminal text "The Art of Australia" in 1965, and the same can be said for the broadening of aesthetic frontiers in New Zealand as well, judging from the recent exhibition "Out from Down Under and Beyond," at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway, in Soho.

One of the most exciting discoveries is George V. Wagner, who paints the figure, still life, and other subjects in vibrant acrylics, drawing upon tribal culture and his unique personal synthesis of Australian tribal and imaginative Aztec inspiration. From these diverse sources, Wagner has forged a brilliantly colorful homegrown Expressionism unlike anything else in contemporary art.

Although born in the U.S., Dee Adams now lives in Sydney where she creates hard-edged, minimalist abstractions, their strong formal qualities reflecting her background in graphic design. Adams' paintings combine geometric austerity with highly expressive color combinations to arrive at a sublime synthesis.

The presence of a vital, youthful New Wave in Australia is evident in the paintings of the artist called Starr, whose trendy post-Pop sensibility comes across in her lively acrylic paintings of hip young people, as well as her atmospheric nocturnal urban vistas. Stylish and flashy, yet informed by real talent, Starr's paintings bode well for the future of Australian art as a mainstream enterprise.

Jenny Davis' lyrical paintings, with their muted yet glowing colors and elegant, evocative abstract forms floating in space are at once powerful and subtle. Jane McKay takes the Australian landscape as a starting point for luminous explorations of form and color. Dragica Milunovic, born in Yugoslavia and lived in France prior to immigrating to Australia, also enriches the country's cultural melting pot with her vibrant oils, in which red and yellow hues project a sense of light and heat with succulent impastos.

The spirit and energy of the the local landscape inspires Kathryn Brimblecombe-Fox whose semi-abstract approach reveals the sophistication one would expect from a painter who has also worked in a curatorial capacity at the National Gallery of Australia.

Indicative of a new youthful energy in Australian art, the compositions of Paul Parker, a self-taught painter, translate landscape elements and tribal markings into a private vocabulary of forms and symbols.The strong Australian figurative tradition is extended in the paintings of Chris Chetwynd, who places the classical male figure in pristine surreal settings and whose work was selected for exhibition in the 2002 Gay Games. Radu Satcau, on the other hand, evokes the female nude in mixed media paintings with shimmering colors and textures that make his paint surfaces as sensuous as his figures are sensual. Living in rural New Zealand, Koly Petrovic looks to the Pre-Raphaelites for inspiration, yet arrives at a distinctly original style in which figurative subjects drawn from history and imagination are infused with a peculiar spiritual power belonging to her alone.

Like the other painters in this sensitively curated group show, Petrovic acquaints us with the vitality that exists far afield of what we normally consider the "center" of the art world. Indeed, we need exhibitions such as this one to remind us that we risk cultural provincialism when we choose to ignore the ever expanding perimeters of that world.

—Lawrence Downes

Sandra Gottlieb's Photography Bridges the Abstract and the Real

"Seagrass"

Painting and photography have a long and interesting history. With its advent over a century and a half ago, the latter was perceived by some as a medium that might replace the former. That did not happen, but what photography did do for awhile was usurp some of painting's more documentary functions. This prompted some painters to seek more abstract avenues of expression. They went where they thought photography could not follow. Yet as early as 1907, Alfred Stieglitz was already beginning to emphasize abstract as well sociological ideas in photographs such as "The Steerage," and by 1951 the aesthetic sophistication of the newer art form was so firmly established that The Museum of Modern Art mounted a landmark exhibition entitled "Abstraction in Photography."

The contemporary photographer Sandra Gottlieb draws heavily upon this avant garde photographic tradition in her exhibition "Beyond Horizons," which can be seen from June 1 through July 31, at World Fine Art Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, with a reception on June 11, from 6 to 8 PM.

"My pictures are a thin slice of space and time explored through scale, color, and simplicity of image, translating the world into a purely pictorial language of color, shape, and overall compositions," Gottlieb states. "My interpretation leans toward the modernist movement using flat bands of color to create two-dimensional, near abstract images. The photographer's point of view can sharpen and even alter the perception of an image that is fleeting and transitory. Starting from what is complex, it is possible to reach what is simple and timeless."

Entering a gallery filled with Sandra Gottlieb's large color prints, one is put more in mind of painters such as Mark Rothko and Jon Schueler than of any other photographer. Like Rothko, she employs flat bands of color on the picture plane in her photographs of watery horizons meeting variegated areas of sky. And like Schueler, she exploits the abstract possibilities of light and color as they manifest at different hours of the day and night. While Gottlieb isolates these elements in nature rather than concocting them on canvas, the effect is every bit as painterly.

The horizon line is the most stable element in Gottlieb's compositions. The place where water or land mass meets sky is the metaphysical divide as well as the formal anchor of her pictures. Indeed, the factual component innate to photography adds an extra dimension to her formal stance. Minimal as her compositions may be, they originate in reality. There is a sense of the world looming within and beyond the forms that she selects to show us, and this lends her pictures the suggestion of a magnificence far beyond what the eye sees. The artist is free to focus on the unobstructed frontal view, denying perspective and pulling the subject forward, onto the literal two dimensional picture plane that photography shares with painting. Yet even as Gottlieb eschews spatial illusiveness, the shadow of allusion haunts her compositions, imbuing them with a poetry distinctly different from the subjective poetry of painting. For while Gottlieb's deliberately reductive angle of vision compels us to read her compositions abstractly, we are simultaneously aware of their reality. This duality imbues her pictures with tantalizing perceptual tensions. And to further complicate the matter, the element of "time," so integral to photography, is superimposed on space in her pictures (as she mentions in her artist's statement). We know that we are viewing a particular moment, already vanished, never to come again, which has been frozen and rendered immutable. Thus the mystery of time is married to the mystery of space, and the meaning deepens like the shadows in the clouds suspended so pregnantly over her watery expanses.

In one of Gottlieb's prints, broad bands of color in the sky above a low horizon-line graduate from fiery orange, to deep purple, to luminous blue. In another, a higher blue horizon gives way to vibrant pink and gray-violet hues possessed of a peculiarly somber majesty. In yet other recent photographs, Sandra Gottlieb focuses on the subtle streaks of color, tonal shifts, and cumulus shapes to be discerned in infinite stretches of sky, framing their magnificence with breathtaking adroitness. Her unerring eye for form and color enables her to achieve her stated goal of "push [ing] the limits of the tension between the real and the abstract to create a balance between sculptural form and natural sensuality."

Indeed, Sandra Gottlieb's unique contribution may very well be the stunning synthesis that she achieves between the naturalistic and experimental traditions of modern photography through her singularly austere yet passionate vision. —Lawrence Downes

OPEN HOUSE

A MUSEUM GROWS IN BROOKLYN

Encountering several of Nina Levy's eerily lifelike polyresin, oil, and hydrocal heads dangling from fishing line in a room filled with Rodins is one of those moments of curatorial chutzpah that makes The Brooklyn Museum's sprawling exhibition "Open House", subtitled "Working in Brooklyn," such a delight. That Levy's heads are actually portraits of well known Brooklyn art personalities makes the effect all the more disconcerting, like running into these people exactly where one might expect to find them—only, without the rest of their bodies!

Just as audacious in another way is the presentation in the same room of Patricia Cronin's bronze "Memorial to a Marriage." Depicting two women embracing on a bed, it is a slightly smaller replica of the life-size monument at the burial plot that Cronin and her partner, the painter Deborah Kass, purchased together in Woodlawn Cemetery. What's startling about this sculpture in context is not its subject matter, of course, but the fact that it is classical in a manner that appears to predate Rodin's bronzes. While Rodin was rejected by the academy, Cronin's piece would fit right in with the aesthetic of the 19th century French salon— which makes it a quintessentially postmodern work of art.

Another example of the show's innovative approach is the placement of an installation by African-American artist Sol'Sax, incorporating wood, clay, and beads, in the museum's African art galleries, where it is possible to ponder issues of inspiration and influence. Just as brilliant was putting Rob Fischer's coffin-size container of ashes among the urns, sarcophaguses, and other funerary objects in the museum's Ancient Egyptian Galleries.

In the interest of representing the sheer abundance and diversity of the "Open House" exhibition, we have chosen, in most cases, to reproduce works by different artists than those reviewed in the text.

The decision by Charlotta Kotik, the museum's curator of contemporary art, and Tumelo Mosaka, its assistant curator in the same department, to integrate certain works by contemporary Brooklyn artists with the permanent collection, rather than confining everything in the show to the areas of the building reserved for special exhibitions, was auspiciously in keeping with what appears to be the beginning of a new epoch in the museum's history.

"Open House" celebrates the dramatic transformation of the Brooklyn Museum's front entrance and the completion of a new 80,000-square-foot public plaza designed to make the building more appealing and accessible. To the museum's imposing Beaux Arts stone facade, erected in 1897, the architect James Stewart Polshek, of the New York City firm Polshek Partnership, has added a sweeping glass pavilion with a stepped design that glows at night.

The architect envisioned this structure as "a metaphor for the original steps," which were double the height of those outside the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and were removed in 1939 after being deemed too daunting for many people to climb. Although the mixture of Beaux Arts and modern could seem irreconcilable in theory, in fact the spare elegance of the new addition coheres with the massiveness of the original structure because, as Polshek puts it, "the hardware and connections and the glass were worked out to be rather jewel-like—a necklace that has been hung on this great building."

The Brooklyn Museum has long been in need of such refurbishment. Though undeniably majestic, it's old edifice was not at all inviting. Its gray greatness loomed monolithically as one of cartoonist Saul Steinberg's grandiose architectural caricatures over Eastern Parkway, baronial and aloof. One could almost hear some croaky voice, like that of the talk-

ing trees in "Lord of the Rings," emanating from it, intoning, "Staaaay awaaaay!"

To those intrepid souls who did not heed that warning and dared to proceed, its bleak, sunless ground floor presented yet another barrier that almost made one want to turn right around and get on the subway back to Manhattan. Thus while the Brooklyn Museum is the second largest art museum in the entire country, exceeded in size and the scope of its collection only by the Metropolitan, it has been grossly underappreciated. Indeed, it took a Philistine mayor threatening to shut the place down, over a silly flap involving Catholicism and elephant dung awhile back, to get some of us up in arms about what a valuable cultural asset it is.

Now, standing in the airy, light-filled grand lobby, the difference is like night and day, as they say. In a rare instance of municipal cooperation—screw you, Rudy!—even the entrance to the Eastern Parkway subway stop has been turned around to face the museum, so that it now functions as efficiently as a chute, depositing one right in the middle of that spacious new plaza, where cherry trees have been planted and two fountains with "dancing waters" have been created by WET Design, the same firm responsible for the glitzy fountains at the Bellagio Hotel, in Las Vegas, and the Los Angeles Music Center.

A few days after the official opening, local high school kids in hip hop gear were already beginning to congregate in the plaza. Although it may take more aggressive strategies to actually lure them into the exhibitions, they were already making themselves at home in a way that makes it possible to envision the plaza becoming an active public space, a place for community gatherings and performances.

One can only hope this is what Arnold L. Lehman the Director of the Brooklyn Museum has in mind when he speaks of "connecting the borough's exceptionally diverse communities to our equally diverse collections," and predicts that the new front entrance and public plaza will "make that connection a physical reality."

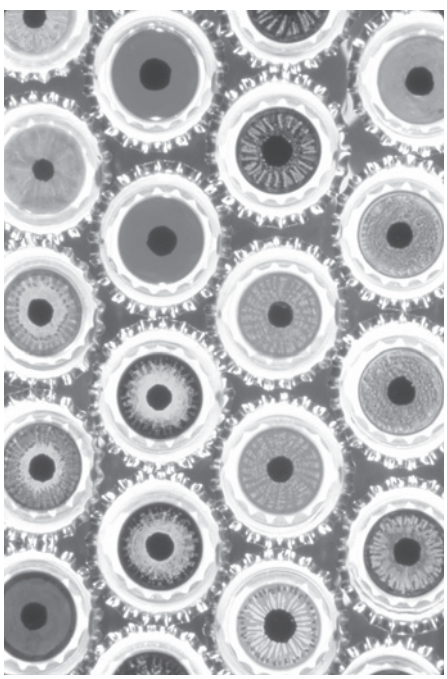
While the success of that grassroots effort remains to be seen, the diversity and inclusiveness of the "Open House" exhibition seems a good start.

The show enlarges upon a tradition begun in the 1930s, when the museum instituted an exhibition space called the Gallery for Living Artists especially to showcase and support the work of artists such as David Smith, Adolph Gottlieb, William Zorach, and others then living and working in Brooklyn. Due in part to a sluggish postwar economy, however, a thriving local art scene did not develop until the 1970s, when a new generation of artists was drawn to the borough by its cheap loft spaces. Then, in the early 80s, others were drawn by seminal grassroots exhibitions in the Gowanus Canal Art Yard, in Carroll Gardens, and the Brooklyn Army Terminal, in Sunset Park, which led to other shows in alternative spaces and artist-run venues.

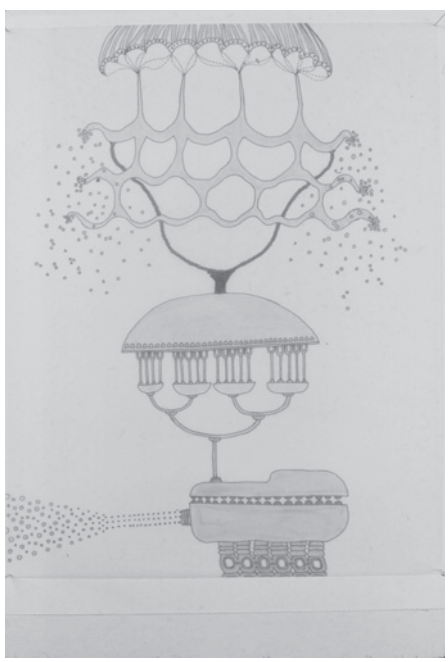
In 1985, the Brooklyn Museum responded to the growing art community by inaugurating a series of periodic exhibitions called "Working in Brooklyn," all curated by Charlotta Kotik, of which "Open House" is the most comprehensive to date. After viewing thousands of slides and making hundreds of studio visits, Kotik and co-curator Mosaka narrowed their selections down to 300 works by 200 artists who exemplify the ethnic diversity that still makes the city's most populous borough the kind of melting pot that Manhattan used to be. Indeed, the cultural riches represented here—including not only a fair number of artists actually born and raised in Brooklyn and a majority who have migrated here from all around the country and world—are enough to make the rest of us nostalgic for a kind of populism which has all but vanished on this side of the river.

For while the generally high level of sophistication in this show indicates a good deal of art world ambition, the refreshing sense it creates is less of an official art world event than of a vital, if ragtag, community of local artists being roundly embraced by the borough's most prestigious cultural institution. And, interestingly enough, the art world "names" in this show—Doug and Mike Starn, Vito Acconci, Louise Bourgeois, Amy Sillman, Amy Cutler, and Fred Tomaselli among them—benefit as much by their inclusion as the lesser known artists do from being seen with them. Which is to say: the overall vigor of this community is such that these more prominent figures can't help but gain a kind of "street credibility" by adding the panache of "Brooklyn artist" to their already well defined artistic identities.

Whether or not we've taken the trouble to get on the subway and go visit them ourselves, we've all heard of the world class galleries that have sprung up in Williamsburg and DUMBO over the last decade or so, as well as the bustling artist enclaves in less trendy areas like Red Hook, Park Slope, Bushwick, and Bed-Stuy. It is often stated that Brooklyn now boasts the largest population of working artists in the city, which alone makes "Open House" a crash course well worth taking.



Eungho Park, "Eyes, 2003"
Painted bottle caps, Dimensions variable



Linda Ganjian, "Litter Bug, 2002"
Ink and marker on vellum, 12" x 9"

Terry Adkins, "Muffled Drums, 2002"
Mixed Media, 220" x 54" x 27"

Alessandra Exposito, "The Roost", 2000
Acrylic, Latex, 67" x 67" inches

Luis Gispert, "Untitled (car toes)," 2001
Fujiflex print. Ed. of 5 + 2 AP
40"x 60" inches LG-1019

As is to be expected with any survey so demographically-oriented and democratic, quality varies greatly, ranging from Jim Torok's self-effacing cartoon drawings chronicling the artist's apparently uneventful life with cloying disingenuousness, to Leonardo Drew's towering installation of cast-off objects cast in paper. White as dinosaur bones, entombed in large wood and glass vitrines stacked one atop the other, Drew's crumpled, ghostly tricycles, radiators, chairs, dressers, and other domestic artifacts are not only haunting, but reveal an epic conceptual vision akin to that of Joseph Beuys.

Andy Yoder also thinks big, but his gargantuan pair of black brogans, made with licorice, Styrofoam, and silicone, while amusing enough, come across as a dated post-Pop conceit. Discerning foot fetishists will probably be more turned on by Luis Gispert's large color photograph of jeweled toes with long, claw-like blue nails dangling out the rear window of a shiny red sports car.

Often wistful explorations of national origins by artists who have migrated to Brooklyn from faraway places take many forms in this show. Born in London of Caribbean background, Satch Hoyt employs double edged irony to comment piquantly on racial identity in his Neo-Dadaist assemblage with audio components, "The Ice Pick." A velvet-lined attaché suitcase with earphones attached, containing a crystal

James Esber, "MermaidAvenue," 2003
Acrylic on styrene, 74" x 54"

Afro-pic with a clenched fist handle, Hoyt's piece makes a wry statement on anger and pride. The failed promise of democracy for people of color also comes across in "Forty Acres and a Mule," a work by the Haitian-born artist Jean Patrick Icart-Pierre with painted and silkscreen images juxtaposed cinematically in an irregular grid.

The borough's sizable African community is represented in the work of Thabiso Phokompe, an artist born in Johannesburg, whose assemblages of string, bottle caps, safety pins, and burlap transform such common detritus into funky fetish objects, evoking indigenous religious ceremonies. The extension of tradition through personal vision is also evident in the work of the Beijing-born Yun-Fei Ji, whose sinuously linear paintings in ink and mineral pigment resemble classical Chinese landscapes but reveal Boschian figurative elements with powerful political and sadomasochistic implications. Born in Shanghai, Wenda Gu deliberately weds Eastern and Western imagery in the hope of promoting multicultural understanding, represented here by a huge, lantern-like structure incorporating human hair culled from various nationalities. In an installation entitled "A Stranger is in Our Paradise," Rina Banerjee, born in Calcutta, combines family portraits, feathers, umbrellas, and a zany array of other colorful and fanciful found objects to comment wittily on what it means to find oneself caught between two cultures. Allessandra Exposito also explores ethnic identity in her vibrant figurative paintings, often inserting self portraits into allegories on Hispanic themes.

Another emerging tendency is a kind of obsessive, diaristic documentation, as seen in Dawn Clements' large, detailed delineation in Sumi ink on paper of every object in the

Jovi Schnell, "Pounce in Babel, 2001"
Acrylic on canvas, 61" x 42"

kitchen of her tenement apartment; Danica Phelps' installation of drawings, diagrams and notes entitled "Integrating Sex into Everyday Life"; and Byron Kim's lyrical "Sunday Paintings," in which he records his weekly impressions of the sky on small panels painted in delicate blue hues, adding faintly penciled self-critiques such as, "This painting is terrible. I am looking at the sky too much, and not enough at the painting. Some of the color is good, but the brush was too big and coarse. Too much tumult..."

The present climate of political crisis is reflected in Melanie Baker's mammoth charcoal and collage portraits of grim men in black suits, their faces comprised of newspaper pages; Glenn Ligon's Warhol-esque silkscreen and flashe portrait of Malcolm X grotesquely defaced by crudely applied clown make-up, suggesting the desecration of an African American icon by an unsympathetic mass media; Emily Jacir's grim photographs documenting tensions at checkpoints in the Middle East; and Jane Fine's highly animated paintings of modern warfare, in which cartoon explosions send up Abstract Expressionism. Koji Shimizu's soft sculptures in kandy kolored satins also put a new spin on war, making a veritable arsenal of lethal weaponry as cuddly as a pile of stuffed animals.

The peculiar permutations of postmodern abstraction are also well represented: Nancy Drew reinvents paintings by Willem de Kooning in glitzier versions with acrylic, flocking and glitter. Steven Charles pours paint to create densely layered compositions in which elements of chance are integrated to remarkably coherent effect. James Esber overlaps images painted on layers of plastic to create flowing biomorphic compositions

Jean Shin, "Chance City, 2001", Scratch and win lottery cards 5' x 8' x 10' , 50" x 96" x 120"

Anthony Goicolea, "Feastlings, 2000", Color C-print, 40" x 75"

that are simultaneously allusive and elusive. James Hyde employs found materials such as nylon beach chair webbing to tweak the austere aesthetic of minimalist shaped canvas from a neo Neo Geo perspective, proving that there may be some juice left in that discredited '80's mini-movement. Stephen Sollins also employs unusual materials, particularly embroidered fabrics, removing certain of their elements to pare them down into compositions at once sober and sensual. Arlington Weithers' acrylics, inspired by his memories of growing up in Guyana, evoke a palpable sense of place, of earthy essences transmuted through texture and color.

Other artists deconstruct the conventions of landscape through more particular yet still intensely personal means, as seen in Charles Yuen's oil on paper of a stylized yellow terrain; Susan Rabinowitz's semi-abstract panoramic vistas; Brady Dollarhide's mysterious juxtapositions of silhouetted land masses and fluorescent skies; and John Berens' atmospheric,Turner-esque travel paintings.

Then there is a real discovery named Jill Shoffiett whose watercolors inspired by memories of her Mississippi childhood prove that style can be as much a function of an artist's limitations as his or her skills. Although Shoffiett holds the B.F.A' s and M.F.A' s that seem to be prerequisites for young artists today, her scratchy ink line and muddy washes lend her pictures of grim rural areas dotted with ramshackle houses, trailers, and scrawny trees the straightforward emotional power that we normally only see in unschooled or "outsider" art. Her work is refreshing precisely because it seems to spring directly from her love/hate relationship with her home state rather than from any self conscious attempt to forge a trendy style or assume a stance in relation to other art.

Another artist who actually is self taught but is too innately sophisticated to qualify for outsider status is Christopher Knowles, who works with oil marker on canvas, creating compositions in which figures are flattened on the picture plane as though run over by a steamroller. Knowles's painting of a group of Catholic cardinals convening in their clerical plumage provides him with an opportunity to merge areas of brilliant red in a manner that suggests an interesting stylistic hybrid of Milton Avery and Jacob Lawrence. (That Knowles' paintings are framed with simple black masking tape seems indicative of the casual come-as-you-are community spirit of "Open House.")

Of the several Brooklyn-born artists in this show, Marie Roberts is the only one whose work features nostalgic references specific to the borough. Roberts's pictures of fire eaters and other performers painted in bright acrylics on big canvas tarpaulins are directly inspired by the banners for Coney Island sideshows. Others work with a broad range mediums and subjects: Marc Lepson's conceptual installations comment on political and human rights issues with photos and texts. Ricci Albenda builds sculptural forms directly into the gallery walls, as seen in "Carmen, Boiling," which bulges from a corner of the museum like a white bubble. Chitra Ganesh creates book works in which computer generated images blend personal and historical narratives. Daniel Mirer's photographs of empty, stark office tower corridors and waiting rooms convey the peculiarly sterile angst of modern life. Kambui Olujimi and Delphine Fawundu-Buford both focus on issues of African American identity, Olujimi with large-digital collages making pointed connections between seemingly disparate subjects like lynching and basketball, Fawundu-Buford with photographs celebrating the special beauty of black women.

Ironically, the most publicized work in connection with the recent changes at The Brooklyn Museum is by a Manhattan artist, Alexis Rockman. Perhaps even more ironically, in view of the generally upbeat mood of the museum as it embarks on its highly touted new epoch, Rockman's commissioned mural "Manifest Destiny," depicts Brooklyn 3,000 years in the future as a watery landfill, devastated by global warming, infested with snakes and floating oil cans. While Rockman cites the Hudson River School as inspiration for this ecological cautionary tale, it actually looks more like an overblown version of the garishly-lit natural history illustrations in encyclopedias and double-page spreads in National Geographic. "Manifest Destiny" seems a preachy, fussy anachronism compared to much of the work in Open House."

We especially liked Jovi Schnell's vibrantly zany updates of Peter Saul/Hairy Who figuration; Sebastiaan Bremer's synthesis of photography and drawing in large C-prints overlaid with intricate ink doodling; Bryan Crockett's marble sculptures of wrinkly pink creatures symbolizing human vices; Ken Butler's eclectic junkshop installation "Tilted Picnic"; Angela Wyman's paintings of glamorous women morphing and melting in the manner of the old comic book character "Plastic Man"; two ghastly/beautiful little heads by Louise Bourgeois covered with patches of tapestry; David Baskin's castings of his grandfather's clothing in pink rubber; Lorenzo Pace's elaborate installation tracing an African-American family tree; Nicole Awai's mixed media works on paper, combining expressively mutated figurative forms and fragments of text; Dread Scott's photographic portraits of prison inmates with audio interviews; Anthony Goicolea's large C-print of rowdy little preppies pigging out in an elegant dining room; and "Chance City," an architectural monument to failed hopes, created with $17,119 worth of discarded lottery tickets by Jean Shin.

"Open House" lives up to its title by being perhaps the most inclusive local survey staged by any major museum in recent years. If the exhibition can be faulted on any level, it would probably be for its unevenness. But that can be attributed to its pervasive good will. Obviously, the curators intended to give us a sense of the sheer abundance and energy of Brooklyn's art scene, and if that meant being a little too inclusive in some cases, so be it. Better to err on the side of excess than to edit the eclecticness that makes Brooklyn art so vital and makes this bursting-at-the-seams show so much fun.

* * *

Open House is at the Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, (718) 501-6134, through August 15, 2004.

Intrepid Inner Travelers Featured in WSAC Photo Show

The term "Journey" could be applied in both a literal and metaphoric sense to the photography exhibition of that title curated by Agus Sutikno for the West Side Arts Coalition, seen recently at Broadway Mall Community Center, on the center island at 96th Street and Broadway.

Among the more literal journeys was that taken by Shawn Efran to Afghanistan, where he photographed fierce looking men toting rifles and frantic looking children playing in the rubble of war. Everyone has extraordinary eyes in Efran's stark black and white prints, which merge documentary and art photography by trapping "the human soul in its cage of mortal flesh."

Gloria Waslyn's color photographs of her two pet parrots, Baby and Merlin, have an opposite effect. Waslyn photographs her birds in public, at gatherings for peace or to save the rainforest, and the joy that the playful, colorful avians generate among themselves and the humans they encounter is the real subject of her pictures.

Robert Helman's picture of the WTC Twin Towers emerging from mists is a lyrical image that takes on an almost unbearable resonance in retrospect, knowing what we know now of the fate of those buildings and their inhabitants. Helman's picture of a bridge with mountains behind it is less jolting but also made memorably poetic by the photographer's painterly approach to pale yet luminous blue hues.

The imagistic juxtapositions of the urban scene are the subject of Scott Weingarten's color prints. Focusing on a man in a subway station watching a train covered with graffiti pull in like a high velocity abstract painting, or a fashionably dressed young woman overshadowed by a huge blowup of a model's face, Weingarten unveils fascinating layers of reality and illusion.

Richard Shore is a photographer with a kaleidoscopic vision, as seen in his dazzling color print of a bustling street doubled by its reflection in a department store window. Equally evocative, if simpler, is Shore's image of silhouetted figures passing a contrastingly colorful florist's window.

Jean Prytyskacz conveys a sense of intimacy, even when she photographs architectural subjects such as the facade of a cathedral or skyscrapers seen through the grid of a windowpane. Here, however, Prytyskacz's most evocative image was a color print of an old pair of shoes amid a thick profusion of fallen leaves.

Emily Rich, a painter as well as a photographer, manipulates images through double exposure to achieve a dynamic rhythmic dance of form and color akin to the expressionistic brushwork in her canvases. Rich's pictures of overlapping buildings, sculptures, and other urban imagery are especially animated in this regard.

Deena Weintraub's black and white prints are painterly in their own manner. Foregoing color to focus on texture, Weintraub makes simple subjects such as a weathered wood door or lacy dresses hanging on a rack a sensuous tactile experience.

Then there is Lori Fischler, whose work seems to exemplify the famous phrase "through a lens, darkly." Fischler's dramatic color prints explore the realm of dreams through her use of light and shadow—what painters call chiaroscuro—to reveal the mystery in commonplace things, such as trees and foliage. Like all of the photographers in this splendid group exhibition, Fischler takes us on a personal journey by virtue of her unique perspective on reality. —Maureen Flynn

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See page 32

Dawn Devereux Charts the Journey of the Self and Soul

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Symbolism ran counter to Impressionism. It was a romantic movement in literature, as well as in art, placing subjective emotions above direct observation from nature and also making mythic or symbolic subject matter more central than formal concerns. As such, it fell out of favor when modernism gained historical momentum, and was more or less scorned, or at least ignored, until the rise of postmodernism in the 1970s revived an interest in subjective vision that manifested in a variety of figurative art styles.

Few contemporary artists, however, have breathed new life into Symbolism as convincingly as the Australian painter Dawn Devereux, whose exhibition of acrylic paintings on canvas was seen recently at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, in Soho.

"Visions drawn from the mountainous terrain that is the emotional landscape of the self," is how Devereux describes her paintings, in which a lone, lithe female nude is usually seen in an atmospheric realm resembling the terrain to which we are transported in dreams. One can draw all manner of conclusions from Devereux's compositions, in which various objects and natural elements serve as symbolic props. The solitary figure, at once sensual and ethereal as it reclines languorously or soars through space, could suggest the journey of the self through life or of the soul through the afterlife or any number of our possibilities, given the potency and complexity of the symbolism in Devereux's paintings.

In "The Pillar," for example, the pale nude figure reclines at the top of a tall structure set within a misty nightscape that could be seen on the most obvious level as phallic. Yet it should also be remembered that in the art of the Greeks and the Romans statues of the gods often surmounted tall pillars to indicate that they dwelt in the sky. Consider, too, that in Christianity the pillar was also a symbol of spiritual strength and steadfastness, and the multifaceted nature of the symbolism in Devereux's work becomes even clearer.

In another canvas by Devereux called "The Door," the figure soars in midair toward a large portal that appears in the nocturnal landscape directly above mounds of earth divided by a narrow winding stream. The door, of course is the opposite of the phallic pillar, a feminine symbol. It is also a holy symbol in another manner different from the pillar, as seen in the architectural ornata of cathedrals, where portals are treated as if they were altarpieces. Here, too, the symbolism of the stream as the path of life, as well as a source of poetic inspiration, as in the Castalian stream, or the stream that The Queen of Sheba walked through rather than tread on the wood that bridged it. Again, Devereaux's composition is richly allusive, as well as magically atmospheric, with its predominance of deep blue hues and evocation of lightbeams, mists, and other atmospheric effects.

In this and other evocative paintings such as "The Eruption," "The Watershed," and "The Wave," Dawn Devereux apparently does not contrive her symbols in any calculated manner, but rather allows them to arise intuitively through a process that she declines to analyze, saying, "I do not care to define my work; to try and explain consciously that which is an unconscious expression seems inane."

Her point is well taken, since her symbols speak eloquently for themselves.

—Maurice Taplinger

Judith A. Brust: Making the Mythic Palpable

Judith A. Brust, a frequent exhibitor through the northeast for two decades, is an artist informed by an acute awareness of art history, citing a diverse range of other artists, from Mark Rothko to Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois, as inspirations.

Burst's monumental monoprints, however, have their own inimitable qualities, employing a host of symbols and allusions drawn from the writings of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, as well as from the artist's own ideas about the "Life Cycle," a recurring theme in her work.

Rather than dealing mainly in generalities, as many artists who endeavor to express large themes have a tendency to do, Brust manifests philosophical themes through material means as readily as through more ethereal imagery. Which is to say: not only does she convey lyrical notions of universality with spherical shapes filled with luminous color, she also invests the visible subject of the known world and its most mundane objects with a metaphysical dimension. How Brust accomplishes this was seen in her recent exhibition at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway, in Soho, where her varied approaches were much in evidence.

Some of Brust's most striking metamorphoses can be seen in her "Chair Series," in which a familiar household object is subjected to a variety of deconstructions which seem to call into question the existence of physical matter itself. Indeed, the very ordinariness of a chair as a vessel for the physical body makes it a common reference point in philosophical discourse, as in "We think we see this chair, but is it really there?"

Brust's very large monoprints seem to pose such questions in visual terms by subjecting the basic shape of a chair to a variety of permutations that reverse and, in some cases, erase figure-to-ground relationships. She accomplishes this by virtue of her exquisite spatial sense as well as through her use of rich, earthy pigmentations that lend her compositions a remarkable organic unity.

As tactile as they are visually appealing, Brust's prints also accomplish the peculiar aesthetic alchemy of making ethereal qualities of light take palpable form, as seen most dramatically in the series she calls "Life Cycle," where individual prints are variously subtitled "Mind's Eye," "Beginnings," and "Dance." In each of these prints a circular shape, afloat in a black void, glows luminously. Each central orb is enlivened by subtly modulated chromatic schemes that evoke a sense of light and life, of infinite and eternal mysteries. Needless to say, planetary associations naturally come into play.

Equally compelling in another manner are the compositions that Brust refers to under the series title "Poetic Space," where forms are more varied and gesturally dispersed. In these works, the layered shapes, ranging from the familiar orbs to more linear and angular elements are set afloat within and against richly variegated color fields. Here, brilliant reds and vibrant yellows burn through earth colors and other deep, dark hues, evoking not so much a sense of nature as the hidden energies and forces that activate our world.

"Life Cycle, Dance #1"

At a time when many artists are content to dwell in superficial aspects of reality Judith A. Brust is compelled to probe more deeply. Thus her work rewards us in unanticipated ways.

—Marie R. Pagano

Francisco Javier Fernandez Mazo, Maestro of Dreams

The Spanish artist Francisco Javier Fernandez Mazo, whose oils on canvas were seen recently at Agora Gallery, 530 West 25th Street, in Chelsea, is possessed of a singularly imaginative vision. How much his love of light has to do with the time he spent as a miner, working in the deep, dark bowels of the earth, can only be speculated upon. It does seem worth mentioning, though, given the dramatic contrasts in his paintings, as well as the sense one gets that he is an artist who is constantly mining his subconscious for personal imagery with universal ramifications.

What strikes one most immediately about Mazo's paintings is how seamlessly he integrates seemingly disparate images to create his special brand of visual poetry. Childhood memory would appear to be a major source of inspiration for Mazo, judging from such titles as "Lonely Child's Forest" and "Old News, Old Lad, Childish Dreams."

In both of these oils, as their poetic titles indicate, a sense of melancholy pervades the atmosphere, lending the pictures a powerful emotional resonance. "Old News, Old Lad, Childish Dreams" is especially affecting in this regard, juxtaposing a makeshift sailboat and the dreamy face of a young boy within a composition enlivened by a flurry of bravura brush strokes, suggesting the movement of water and clouds, as well as the more metaphorical passage of time. At once wistful and slightly rueful, this canvas conveys how the child can indeed be "father to the man." Taking the idea slightly further, it also seems to express by its very existence how the child can also be the precursor and muse to the powerful adult artist, guiding his hand toward transformative truths.

By contrast, in "Lonely Child's Forest," we see nature transmogrified by a moment of heartbreaking beauty preserved as in a time capsule. With its scrawny pine trees silhouetted skeletally against a turbulent twilight sky, at once cloud-shrouded and oddly luminous, this painting is truly visionary for Mazo's ability to impose an emotional atmosphere on a natural scene.

Indeed, every subject to which Mazo applies his brush is intensified in a similar manner, lending an exquisite poignancy to even a relatively simple watercolor of two bare-limbed trees swaying in a stormy field, making them take on an anthropomorphic quality that seems to symbolize a couple's romantic struggle. Similarly, the figures in Mazo's paintings appear to be beset by visions of their own. The boy crouching at the shore in "Whitman's Used Blue Shoes," who gazes at an old fashioned sailing ship tossed on waves as luminously varied as a rainbow, may appear to be viewing an actual scene. Yet somehow we know he is inhabiting a daydream.

"Lonely Childs Forest"

Nor does Francisco Javier Fernandez Mazo appear to skimp on his own fondest fantasies when he presents us with another buoyant oil of an old fashioned biplane fluttering by amid windblown blossoms and titles this dreamy vision, "An Artist's Gipsy Moth."

Indeed, the rarefied realm between our inner and outer realities is the territory that this gifted Spanish painter has staked out for himself and he mines it profitably, enriching us all in the process.

—Barbara K. Bernstein

Gort and Alvin Pimsler: Two Approaches to the Figure

Two figurative artists with vastly differing styles were seen in recent months in solo exhibitions at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway. However, the draftsman Alvin Pimsler and the painter known as Gort share in common an impressive command of human anatomy and an ability to employ it effectively for their individual expressive purposes.

Gort, who was born on the Greek Island of Corfu, was influenced at an early age by his father, a painter who restored Byzantine icons and Italian style frescoes in churches and historic palaces. He began painting and selling his own icons at age thirteen, and over the years has continued to refine techniques adopted from the Byzantine era. However, he applies these techniques to a contemporary style also influenced by Surrealism, creating paintings featuring incongruous situations and intriguing figurative juxtapositions.

Beautiful nudes reminiscent of Botticelli are merged with modern elements in various unexpected settings in Gort's compositions. Figures from Classical antiquity and religious art are often combined with Pop references and personalities such as Groucho Marx, resulting in characteristically witty imagery. Elements of Dali and Magritte also appear to be appropriated by this versatile painter and made to meld with his highly original approach.

Having begun with egg tempera, Gort has taken up oils as his paintings have grown larger and his palette has grown bolder. His newest paintings are thus possessed of greater visual impact, yet traces of Byzantine beauty remain. The combination of old and new, of sacred and profane elements, lend the paintings of Gort great depth and complexity.

Alvin Pimsler, a former president of the Society of Illustrators, bridges the gap between fine and commercial art. Internationally known both for his fashion drawings for Saks Fifth Avenue and The New York Times, Pimsler reinvigorates the graphic tradition of Egon Schiele and Toulouse Lautrec.

In an earlier exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, Pimsler (whose work can be viewed in the gallery salon exhibition year round) showed a series of mixed media drawings on paper of which the subject was beautiful women in various stages of dress and undress. His rhythmic line evoked womanly sensuality with sinuous flair. In his recent exhibition in the same venue, Pimsler showed a group of portraits on canvas demonstrating that drawing is the foundation on which all of his work rests, regardless of medium.

Leaving large areas of the primed canvas bare, Pimsler creates a sense of spontaneity and freshness that can only be compared to certain aspects of Asian painting. Indeed, his habit of signing his works with initials enclosed in a red rectangle resembling a seal of "chop" appears to be an acknowledgment that, like Lautrec and others, he has learned much from Eastern spatial strategies. However, Pimsler's approach to portraiture is quintessentially western and contemporary. He captures the character of his sitters in bold strokes, delineating their features with a flowing oil pastel line augmented by oil washes, the sense of spontaneity enhanced by occasional drips that lend his compositions an almost Abstract Expressionist velocity.

Pimsler appears to select models with a natural theatrical flair that he accentuates with his elegant draftsmanship. His sitters look as though they are used to striking poses and projecting attitudes, and Pimsler appears to delight in capturing them through his mastery of line, color, and gesture.

—Byron Coleman

20 Painters from Spain at Jadite Galleries

That contemporary Spanish painters continue to draw inspiration from the proud heritage that extends from Velazquez and Goya through Miro and Picasso to more recent masters like Antoni Tapies was made clear in an exhibition of paintings by the Painters and Sculptors Association of Leon, Spain, seen recently at Jadite Galleries, 413 West 50th Street.

Featured were twenty widely exhibited artists from the city of Leon who have made it their humanitarian mission to promote tourism to La Catedral De León, a magnificent cathedral in the home town, as well as to advance international awareness of contemporary Spanish art.

Both the representational and abstract works shared a commitment to the ongoing role of painting as a viable endeavor, distinct from other more technological and conceptual art forms which have come into play in recent decades.

Among the more abstract painters on view were J.A. Santocildes, A.G. Luchy, Nuria Capdevila, and Marisa Ruiz Zorrilla. Santocildes showed a painting in which two boldly thrusting vertical forms supported the composition like twin pillars, set against a rich, earthy ground. The synthesis of physical presence coupled with spiritual suggestiveness lends great urgency and power to Santocildes's work.

Luchy was represented by an overall composition created with tactile strokes of pigment that accumulated and gathered force to activate the surface in a manner akin to the American painter Milton Resnick. Luchy, however, has a distinctly different approach to color, here most notably in the harmonies she achieves between a subtle range of red and blue hues.

Capdevila also has a unique grasp of color, employing subdued brown and blue hues predominantly in mixed media works further enlivened by an intriguing vocabulary of personal symbols that appear to allude to hidden, esoteric meanings. At the same time, Capdevila compels us with the formal purity of her compositions, their exquisite spatial tensions that she sets up on the shallow terrain of the picture plane.

Zorilla juxtaposes neo-cubistic architectural allusions with rhythmic linear elements to activate her canvases, creating the sense of natural forces swirling around a city as though to demonstrate their mysterious autonomy from the paltry fortifications of mankind. Zorrilla's piquant color harmonies and gestural energy enhance the lyrical thrust of her composition.

The organic synthesis of representational elements within ostensibly abstract contexts can also be seen in the work of painters such as Luisa Aragon and the artist known by the surname of Santos.

Aragon showed a composition in which an expressionist landscape was evoked primarily with vigorous strokes of blue, with pieces of roughly torn cardboard added to suggest the ridged rooftops of small, clustered dwellings. These collage elements also functioning autonomously as tactile additions to the abstract thrust of Aragon's painting. Santos revealed an especially vivacious approach in a marinescape characterized by gestural swiftness and sumptuous paint handling. With bravura brushwork and chromatic subtlety, Santos filled his composition with a breezy sense of movement and atmosphere, in keeping with buoyant subject of a small boat traversing a picturesque waterway.

Antoni S. Uceda applies thick impastos, building up the surfaces of his paintings to almost relief-like textures, as seen in his depiction of a cathedral, its gothic steeples soaring into a sky created with strong, overlapping strokes. Like a contemporary Spanish cousin of Chaim Soutine, Uceda practically sculpts with pigment, capturing his subject with fierce, expressionist intensity.

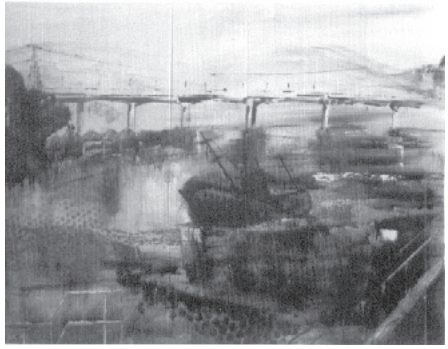
Elda R-Aranguena also shows considerable energy, albeit in a more restrained manner, in her painting of a street scene with small figures and tall buildings, evoked in smoky, atmospheric strokes. Mila Rabanal, on the other hand, employs a precise neo-pointillist technique in her painting of a railroad station with passengers bustling along the platform, preparing to board a waiting train. Then there is Pablo Alonso, who shows admirable fluidity and compositional force in his painting of an exterior scene in somber, dark tonalities. Richard P. Franco employs an architectural subject to create a composition notable for its bold, block forms and a transcendent sense of light, particularly in the contrasts between a glowing yellow facade and a deep blue sky.

The painter known as Arauzo orchestrates a variety of gray monochromes, accented here and there with vibrant red, in his complex vista of a village set within a landscape. Ana Martinez shows a uniquely whimsical sense of the surreal in her fanciful painting of an umbrella filled with flowers sailing across a grassy field. Angeles Delgado takes a more direct approach to floral still life in her painting of a bouquet of yellow flowers in a white vase next to a stack of books.

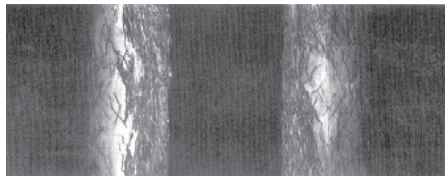
Impressive in their own manner were: Felipe Valladares' painting of snowcapped mountains looming above a reflective lake; Monje's bold composition focusing on the angular parapets and walkways of a cathedral; Margarita Caballo's juicily painted image of a rustic house, its rough steps delineated with vigorous strokes; a landscape by Jose A. Gomez in which craggy mountains were evoked as in a Chinese landscape, albeit with a weighty depth more characteristic of Spanish painting; a portrait of the famous "Three Tenors" by Luzmela, its realism offset by the artist's distancing device of painting furled edges, to give the illusion of the image being on a poster peeling away from a wall; and an undersea scene by I.O. Isabela, in which colorful schools of fish and flora create a vibrantly animated composition.

All of the painters in "Asociacion De Pintores Y Escultores Ciudad De Leon," as they are known in Spain, demonstrate that their country's proud painterly tradition is alive and well in the postmodern era.

—Lawrence Downes



Santos



J. A. Santocildes

Luisa Aragón

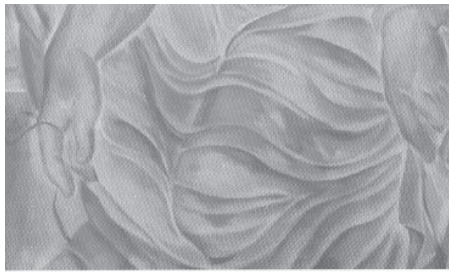
Marisa Ruiz Zorilla

Neus Francesch Evokes a Radiant Romantic Realm

Neoclassical inspiration has taken a variety of intriguing forms in the postmodern era, as various artists have striven to create new ways of looking at the figure. Neus Francesch, a painter from Barcelona, Spain, showed considerable originality in this regard, in her recent exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, in Soho.

Unlike a good many figurative artists in recent years, who tend to concentrate on form, often to the detriment of color, Francesch is a consummate colorist. Her paintings are chromatically dynamic, owing to her use of luminous hues in a variegated technique that lends her canvases a subtly glowing quality, as though they are lit from within. Indeed, her canvases come alive most strikingly when the gallery lights are slightly dimmed, creating a pulsating effect, as closely valued areas of blue, green, pink, ocher and red appear to flow over her figures.

The effect is especially lovely in the large work entitled "Triptico," in which four severely simplified classical figures are ranged over the three panels. Here, the radiant hues flow with the graceful rhythms of the figures, inhabiting the draperies of their garments, illuminating their very gestures as they interact symbolically within the beautifully orchestrated composition. The figure on the left directs the viewer to the two central figures, a pair of lovers whose hands



"Desembargo De Dali En N.Y." (detail)

touch as they meet in the middle panel, while another figure in the final panel looks on, holding a mask. Both flanking figures appear to be witnesses to the central pair, about whom all the composition's drama revolves. There is the sense of a mysterious allegory unfolding in a timeless realm where each movement and gesture is fraught with elusive meaning.

That Neus Francesch works in the time-honored medium of oil on canvas connects her work to the classical tradition, even as she employs color in a manner more akin to the tonal subtleties of the Synchromists or their French counterparts in the movement called Orphism, founded by Robert Delaunay. Obviously, like Delaunay, Neus Francesch sees color in relation to movement, as a vehicle for creating rhythmical thrust in the composition, as well as chromatic energy. In Francesch's paintings, however, color also transcends its purely formal function to envelop the figures in romantic auras.

In this regard Francesch is somewhat akin to the Italian postmodernist Sandro Chia, albeit with a less ironic approach to the narrative elements in her work. There is also a somewhat surreal component in a painting such as her oil on canvas "Figuras Del Retablo De Cadaques," in which robed figures with the quality of phantoms traverse a street in a small village where houses recede in vanishing perspective. For while the more common anomalies that we associate with garden variety surrealism are absent, the composition has a decidedly dreamlike quality.

Other paintings by Neus Francesch depict male or female nudes in a manner that is simultaneously sensual and subdued by formal restraint. In each of her paintings, while her palette is by no means conventional or naturalistic, Neus Francesch's radiant rainbow hues enliven the human anatomy in a manner that evokes a far more vibrant sense of the life force. It is just this ability to combine the ethereal with a physically palpable presence that makes the paintings of Neus Francesch so remarkably resonant.

s—Peter Wiley

Carmen Labbé: Ancient Inspiration and Enduring Light

Among the earliest formalists were those artisans of ancient cultures—particularly the Egyptians, the Celts, and the Mayans—who created stylized symbols with a variety of forms, both cursive and geometric. Although such symbols were generally intended as manifestations of communal belief systems rather than expressions of individual creativity, they often provide a rich source of inspiration for contemporary artists.

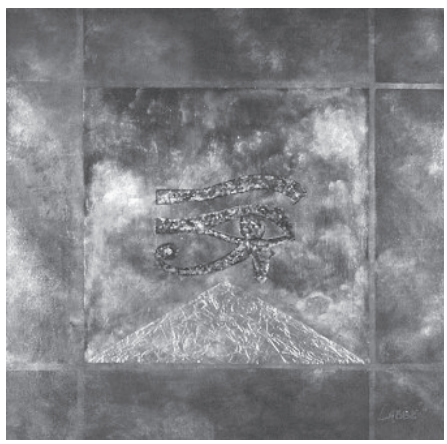
Traces of many ancient cultures appear in the paintings of Carmen Labbé, seen recently at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway. However, they are thoroughly transformed by the modern sensibility of this artist with a background in fashion design, theater, and literature, who has traveled extensively and assimilated a wide range of influences. Presently residing in Providence, Rhode Island, Labbé combines her interest in various cultures with an interest in the optical effects of light.

"I have always been fascinated by the transformation that occurs on a person, place or object by the mere effect of light," Labbé has been quoted as stating. This fascination has led her to experiment with a variety of reflective materials which invest the surfaces of her mixed media paintings with luminous effects that enhance their spiritual suggestiveness.

The device is especially effective in a painting such as "Shaman Healer," where the addition of gold metallic pigment makes the figure enveloped in a shimmering blue field appear to emanate beams of light. Even while the gold elements create the formal effect of a religious icon, the overall spirit of the image is more fluid in its thrust than representations of saints and other figures in Western religious icons tend to be. For Labbé invests her painting with a sense of primitive urgency more in keeping with the nature of shamanic mysticism— its shape shifting aspects, its belief in creatures and myths that morph to take various forms.

Ancient Egyptian motifs also provide rich sources of inspiration in paintings such as "Akhenaten: Law of One" in which the stylized symbol of an eye floats above a pyramidal form within a broad blue border. Here, Labbé employs reflective materials and a severe geometric format vocabulary to invest her composition with an impressive formal presence. By contrast, in "Keepers of the Elements," she utilizes four stylized figures apparently derived from African tribal sculpture to create a powerful frontal composition.

Another painting by Labbé, "Mandala Swirl," again verges on minimalism with its sharply geometric forms and subtly shimmering chromatic qualities. It should be



"Akhenaten: Law of One"

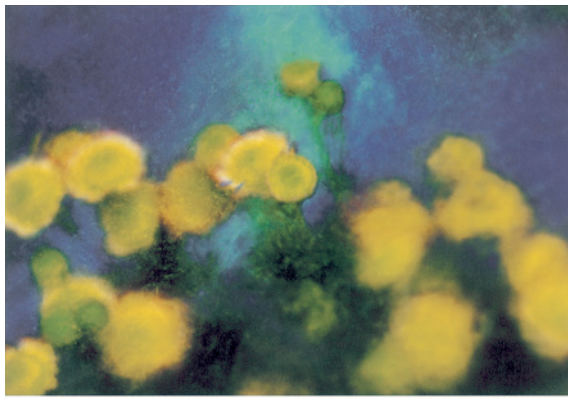
noted that Labbé is an exceptionally astute colorist, as seen in her subtle use of saturated blue hues in paintings such as "Bleu Nuit" and "Window of a Shaman," as well as in the more sharply differentiated color areas and bold forms in the fiery red and blue range in her acrylic painting "Polarity."

In all of these works, different as they may be in their formal and chromatic components, the unifying element is the emphasis on light that invests the paintings of Carmen Labbé with their luminous persuasiveness.

—Byron Coleman

Kim, Poong-Young: The Force that Fuses the Flower

From its infancy, the art of photography has proven every bit as expressive as painting in interpreting the moods of nature. One thinks most immediately of the landscapes of Edward Steichen and John G. Bullock. However, floral still life also has a long and distinguished tradition in photography. As early as 1906, photographers such as Edwin Hale Lincoln and Bertha E. Jaques were producing floral compositions of great beauty. Indeed, it is to their tradition that the work of the contemporary Korean photographic artist Kim, Poong-Young (she prefers to have her surname, followed by a comma, precede her given name in the Korean manner) would appear to belong.



Photograph by Kim, Poong-Young

Kim's exhibition, "Flowers, Illusive Beauty Beyond Memory," can be seen at Gallery 32, 32 West 32nd Street, from June 1 through 15.

Unlike Lincoln and Jaques, however, both of whom approached floral composition at least partially with the attitude of botanists, Kim is much more concerned with achieving spectacular visual qualities than with capturing the individual features of various species as a form of floral portraiture. Of course, another major difference between Kim and her illustrious predecessors is that she can avail herself of the technical advances of color photography. And she does so with an inventiveness that makes her pictures all the more painterly, employing color to impart dynamic qualities to her pictures that transcend mere descriptiveness and can, at times, verge on the visionary.

Kim's eye for chromatic nuances makes some of her compositions akin to the Symbolist floral paintings of Odilon Redon. Her use of color is just that exquisite in one particularly beautiful print of white flowers with red tips on slender green stems set against a fluid background of variegated blue and pink hues. Here, the delicate petals have a wind-blown appearance and the entire composition has a wavering effect which removes it from the realm of naturalistic transcription, producing an almost expressionistic energy and sense of movement. How this is achieved is a mystery better left to the photographer's discretion to reveal or not to reveal; suffice it to say that for the viewer it is simply an exhilarating image possessed of great beauty and mystery.

In other compositions, Kim employs extreme close-up, cropping, and blurred effects to emphasize the abstract qualities of her floral subjects, as seen in one particularly sumptuous print of yellow flowers set against a brilliant blue ground. Here, she achieves a tactile effect that recalls the brush work of Monet, albeit illusionistically rather than through actual texture.

This ability to evoke palpable physical immediacy, coupled with her fondness for intense color, furthers the painterly effect in Kim's pictures, enabling her to capture not only the visual appearance of her subjects but that hidden essence which Dylan Thomas once referred to poetically as "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower."

—Maureen Flynn

Mary Cox: Illuminating The Greek Landscape

If, as the critic and art historian Xavier Girard has noted, the entire Mediterranean region is in many ways an "imaginary land," no artist in recent years has "imagined" Mediterranean qualities more atmospherically— particularly as they apply to Greece—than Mary Cox, whose paintings can be seen at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, from June 1 through 19. (There will be a reception for the artist on Thursday, June 3, from 6 to 8 PM.)

"Jetty"

Cox's acrylic paintings capture those particulars that make the Greek landscape perhaps the most magnificent embodiment of Mediterranean beauty: its clear, cloudless skies and sparkling blue waters, as well as its magnificent ruins. Ruins figure prominently in some of Cox's most striking paintings. Set against vibrant blue skies, the white columns imbue her compositions with stately formal and spatial qualities to rival any abstraction. Yet they also convey all the mystery of Antiquity, filling her canvases with the sense of stillness and silence that is the other face of this vital, fertile, animated land.

In some paintings, verdant foliage, olive trees, distant mountains, and stretches of shimmering sea can be glimpsed beyond the stately columns and scattered stones. In other, more spare compositions, the white columns and azure sky alone compel the eye, creating dramatic contrasts between the solid and the ethereal.

Mary Cox finds beauty in the least expected aspects of the Greek landscape, as well as in its more picturesque ones. She paints the view from pristine patios, looking out over apartment buildings and rooftops, giving one a sense of how modern people inhabit this realm of ancient wonders. She juxtaposes water and mountains, seen through the window of a touring automobile, with a view of a receding highway reflected in the rearview mirror. Thus, we see past and present, eternal and man-made elements, simultaneously, and are made aware, above all, of how Greece's natural glories endure, retaining their allure in the face of modernity and change.

Some of Cox's most powerful paintings are her simplest ones, such as "Three Islands," where the mounds of land rise from the brilliant blue water like the backs of whales; or "Jetty," in which the craggy stone structure of the title extends from the shoreline like teeth in a prehistoric jawbone. With her accomplished realist technique, Cox lends each element of every picture its proper weight and texture; all are made to balance harmoniously by virtue of her subtle, unobtrusive brushwork.

Mary Cox loses herself in the landscape, surrendering to it completely, dedicating her every painterly gesture to the faithful transcription of its specific characteristics.Yet the strength of her commitment colors everything that she paints, making it distinctly her own.

—Maureen Flynn

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Barbara Beatrice

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The AWS at the Salmagundi Club: Watercolor's Best and Brightest

Founded in 1866, the American Watercolor Society perpetuates a distinguished tradition that encompass a wide range of styles— from the realism of John Singer Sargent and Winslow Homer to the homegrown Impressionism of Maurice Prendergast, to the modernist innovations of John Marin and Charles Demuth, to the visionary nature paintings of Charles Burchfield, to Dong Kingman's unique contemporary synthesis of East and West.

Descendants of all of these tendencies and several more recent ones were represented in the recent 137th International Exhibition of the AWS, at the Galleries of the Salmagundi Club, 47 Fifth Avenue. This abundant worldwide survey is a must-see for anyone interested in diverse approaches to this difficult yet rewarding medium.

Dean L. Mitchell

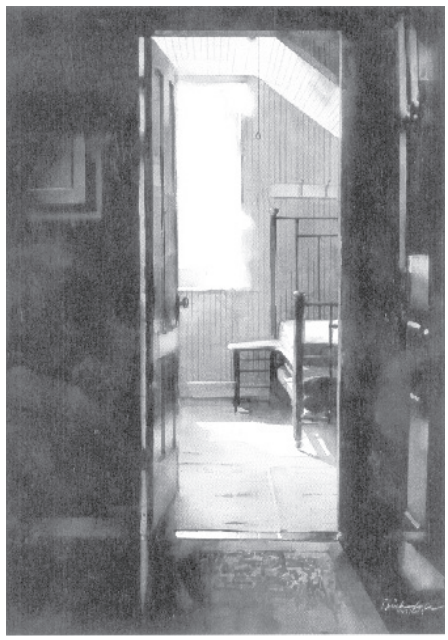
One of the qualities that one looks for in good watercolor painting is the sense of freshness and spontaneity evident in some of the prize-winning works such as Dan Burt's sparkling marine subject "Big Sister," as well as in street scenes by Eric Wiegardt and Wai-Hin Law. All three of these artists make use of the white of the paper and employ translucent washes in the traditional manner to imbue their pictures with a sense of light and life.

The definitions of what is permissible in watercolor painting have become more liberal in recent years, however, and more opaque techniques incorporating acrylic and other water-based mediums were also on view. Anne Bagby, for example, builds up a considerable amount of texture in "Asian Pears," an ornate still life composition incorporating a miniature Buddha and other objects of orientalia. Betsy Dillard Stroud also employed opaque pigments effectively to create a dramatic sense of chiaroscuro in her figure painting "Reverie in Black." Equally dramatic in its own manner was the intriguingly titled "Vanilla Winter Whiskey," a semi-abstract composition by George James, in which the silhouetted figures of birds and people were juxtaposed on the picture.

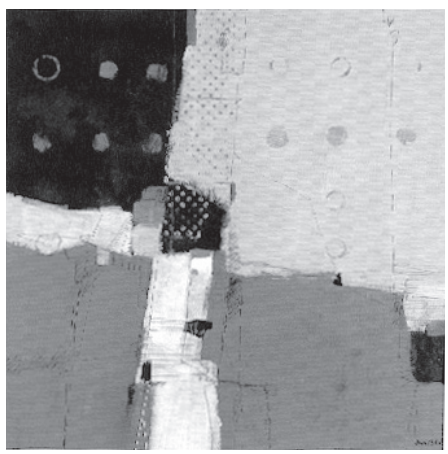
The unforgiving nature of watercolor, in which it is almost impossible to correct mistakes without sacrificing the vitality that makes the medium unique, makes the combination of detail and freshness in a painting such as Scott Zupanc's "Tethered," depicting weeds and lily pads in reflective water, all the more remarkable. Equally meticulous yet unlabored is "Cold Empty Bed," a light-filled interior by Dick Cole. Other painters convey immediacy via a looser technique, as seen in a splashy picture of two blues musicians by Alvaro Castagnet, as well as in Connie Dillman's painting of a young woman and a black cat relaxing on boldly patterned cushions under a crucifix.

Linda Baker's "Woven Patterns" was a tour de force of "abstract realism," in which a plethora of clothespins and wicker were depicted for their formal effect in a whirlwind composition, while Dorothy Dallas' "Red Series # 2" and "Southwest Moon" by Carole D. Barnes both proved that watercolor can be an exciting vehicle for nonobjective expression.

Because it can be such a distinctive medium when it is used in a traditional manner and because some of its most famous exponents have left such an indelible impression in our memory, we tend to stereotype aquarelle. In doing so, however, we can overlook its various possibilities. Indeed, one of the things that this year's show made especially clear is that there need be no more rules to govern the use of watercolor than of any other medium. We can have the detailed photo realism of Patricia Herlihy's "Double T Diner," as well as the lyrical abstraction of John Mc Iver's "Stele X"; the expressive figuration of Robert Barnum's "Sick Child" (with its echoes of Thomas Hart Benton's regionalism), as well as a spare, buoyant floral composition called "Friend's Lilies" by William Ternes or Janet Walsh's magical nocturnal view into a studio window, "Closed for the Night," with its symphonic use of light and shadow. The medium can be used to reinvigorate the mythic illustrational tradition of N.C. Wyeth in a watercolor such as Dean L. Mitchell's picture of a pensive knight in armor, "Prepare for Battle," or employed with the drippy, expressionistic boldness that we see in a cityscape by Carole McDermott or an equally vigorous abstract composition of circular forms and linear elements by Donna Watson.



Dick Cole



Donna Watson

The great value of an exhibition such as the American Watercolor Society's 137th International Exhibition is the opportunity that it provides to view so many diverse approaches to the medium under one roof to be reminded, not only of its unique qualities, but of the breadth and scope of the creative imagination.

—J. Sanders Eaton

The Art of Latin America at Agora Gallery

Not many years ago, in her book "Dimensions of the Americas," art historian Shifra Goldman bemoaned the absence of a coherent, critically framed history of Latin American, Brazilian and Caribbean art." While we are still awaiting such a history, exhibitions such as "Masters of the Imagination: The Latin American Fine Art Exhibition," seen recently at Agora Gallery, 415 West Broadway, in Soho, help to fill the gap.

Vaeta Zitman, a gifted artist trained in Caracas, projects earthy sensuality in the forms of the full-figured women who populate her compositions as symbols of "plenty." Unlike Botero, however, Zitman does not parody corpulence; rather, her figures are Big and Beautiful, proudly displaying their size and strength as positive role models for young women in our anorexic age.

Fredelle Romano, another impressive painter who has exhibited throughout Mexico, employs subdued, sometimes somber hues, layering and scraping the surfaces of her abstract paintings to create tactile effects of exquisite subtlety. Romano's paintings are remarkable for her ability to evoke a strong sense of natural forces and essences through bold gestural elements that lend her mixed media works sensuality and presence.

Also from Mexico, Cyntia Caballero, shows anatomically accomplished paintings of angelic gender blending beings and other fascinating anomalies. The neo-surreal paintings of Brazil's Lucemar deSouza imbue streets and landscapes with mystical significance. Luciana Futuro creates richly patterned figurative works that assimilate indigenous influences to forge a new, distinctly Brazilian iconography.

Carivano, who lives in the Venezuelan Andes, employs a distinctive stippling technique to create abstract compositions that compel our attention with their visual fireworks. Caribbean plant life provides inspiration for Peyo, whose organic abstractions are notable for their sensual forms and vibrant colors. Brazilian painter Fer Veriga also employs the female figure, nude or clothed, as an emblematic entity in her oil and mixed media paintings, with their vibrant colors and vigorous brush strokes. Like her spiritual mentor Orozco, Elsa Zarduz is a Mexican muralist who studied art in the U.S.; Zarduz, however, often adds mystery to her figures by obscuring their faces in various ways.

Surrealism is combined with abstraction in the work of Pedro Wrede, born in Rio de Janeiro, whose paintings of room interiors reveal an array of intriguing symbols. Inspired by modern poetry, Laura Castanedo creates a visual language of her own with evocative abstract forms in mixed media paintings with weathered surfaces that suggest the passage of time. Memory and geometry transmuted through a lyrical abstract sensibility inform the paintings of Maria Teresa F. Gaos, an artist born in Spain who has lived in Mexico City for several decades. Brilliant colors and gestural dynamism animate the oils and acrylics of Zelanis, whose intense palette has been influenced by the German Expressionists. Then there is Katherine de Camargo, who lived in New York for five years, before returning to Brazil, where she creates imaginary landscapes and cityscapes integrating photo-imagery with vibrant passages of painting.

Indeed, what this exhibition demonstrated above all is that it is impossible to stereotype Latin American painting; for its diversity and vitality defy easy definition.

—Peter Wiley

The Complex Abstract "Narratives" of Carrie Smalley

Abstract painting is at a crucial juncture at the present time. As the foundation of modern art, it must create a new space for itself in order to remain relevant for the postmodern era. One artist who exemplifies the new attitude in abstraction that will assure its continued vitality is Carrie Smalley, whose exhibition of paintings was seen recently at Montserrat Gallery, 584 Broadway, in Soho. Smalley refers to her work as "visual storytelling... developed through moments and fragments of gesture."

To suggest the notion of a narrative, even in the most nonlinear terms, would have been verboten among an earlier generation of abstract painters—particularly among the Abstract Expressionists, to whom Smalley would appear a legitimate heir. The inclusion of literary allusions, however, is one of the radical new departures that the work of advanced postmodern abstract painters has introduced, along with the deconstruction of the two-dimensional picture plane, and Smalley takes such strategies a step further when she asserts that creating her paintings is "like writing a book; I am painting one chapter after another until I feel I can rest."

Indeed, Smalley's practice of working on panels of a uniform size—in her latest series they were in a vertical format of four by nine feet—suggests a sequence of pages, albeit on a monumental scale. On encountering the paintings in Smalley's recent exhibition at Montserrat Gallery, the viewer was struck immediately by their stately scale and presence, as well as by their sense of visual continuity. All of the paintings, however, while numbered, were untitled, and one suspects that Smalley refrained from naming them in order to allow their underlying narrative to emerge of its own accord, without any suggestive prompting that might interfere with their sheer visual impact and immediacy.

The wisdom of this strategy was borne out by the manner in which one became caught up on a visceral, rather than a merely intellectual, level with the gestural and chromatic drama: the "push and pull" (to employ Hans Hofmann's famous term, of which Smalley indicates her awareness by paraphrasing it poetically in her artist statement) that animates her compositions.

Tellingly, Smalley also speaks of "leading the viewer to personal reflection" and enabling him or her to "find your own reflection of feeling and memory," and her paintings convey this idea both figuratively and literally, their extremely vertical formats suggesting full-length mirrors.Yet it is an adamantly abstract vision of the artist's, as well as the viewer's, inner selves that is reflected in Smalley's energetic compositions, with their richly layered juxtapositions of geometric forms overlaid by vigorous gestural elements, including energetic splashes and drips that add to the overall rhythmic velocity.

Eschewing brushes except to mix colors, Smalley applies paint with palette knives, window squeegees, and rollers, creating richly variegated surfaces that lend her paintings a sumptuous tactility. Mixing oils, acrylics, and house paints with powdered pigments, oil sticks, and other materials that strike her fancy, she combines sensual textures with vibrant colors to imbue her compositions with a dazzling sense of depth and complexity.

Indeed, it is her ability to successfully juggle so many diverse elements and finally resolve them harmoniously by virtue of her impressive painterly panache that makes Carrie Smalley a quintessential postmodern abstractionist. She appears intent on making an ambitious contribution to the art of her time and her talent is such that it seems likely she will, particularly if she continues on her present trajectory.

—Ed McCormack

The Painterly Dance of Korean Artist Eun Soon Lim

For the widely exhibited Korean artist Eun Soon Lim, whose solo show will be seen from July 15 through August 14 at Gallery @ 49, 322 West 49th Street, painting and dance are inextricably linked. Lim has always been fascinated with both modern dance and traditional Korean dance. (Artist reception on July 15, from 6 to 8 p.m.) Although she paints many other subjects as well, dance has always been one of her favorites. Her paintings of dancers are especially rhythmical, capturing the twirling movements of human bodies with brush strokes that are themselves a form of terpsichore frozen in motion.

Painting by Eun Soon Lim

Indeed, Kwang-Myung Kim, a professor of aesthetics at Soongil University, in Seoul, Korea, made an especially astute observation about the relationship between Lim's work and traditional Korean dance in a catalog essay for an exhibition last year in the same New York City venue. Kim stated that in Korean dance "the performers appear to move and at the same time to stand still." One can add that Lim has achieved a remarkable synthesis of movement and stasis in her paintings through her combination of gestural vivacity and solid composition. Her vibrant colors add the chromatic approximation of emotion which further animates her work.

The purely formal qualities that lend Lim's canvases much of their thrust can be attributed to the fact that she has gone through abstract as well as figurative phases. For example, in a 2001 exhibition at The Korean National University of Art, which included well known American artists like Alfred Leslie and Graham Nickson along with equally distinguished Korean artists, Lim showed a 1997 mixed media painting called "Fantasy." While completely nonobjective that painting shared qualities in common with the figurative oils in her recent show at Gallery @ 49.

One vigorously executed oil was a view of mountains that could be compared, in terms of its subject matter, to traditional Asian landscapes. Lim, however, infused this painting with a thoroughly contemporary energy by virtue of her bold brushwork and use of brilliant blue, green, and fiery orange and ocher hues. The painting had a raw power more comparable to Western expressionism than to the poetic delicacy of Eastern painting. At the same time, Lim's paint handling—particularly her use of swiftly flowing outlines to define the mountain peaks—revealed her Korean roots through a calligraphic fluidity that few Western artists can match. Thus even Lim's mountains appeared to dance by virtue of her graceful brushwork.

Lim achieves an even more thorough synthesis of the abstract and the representational in other recent paintings, particularly one in which the bulky forms and overlapping lines of the masts of ships in drydock provide her ample opportunity for free-wheeling formal expression. Here, her gestural dynamism is especially evident, resulting in a composition enlivened by strokes and even drips that assimilate the spontaneous techniques of Abstract Expression, while preserving the essential spirit of the subject. Here, as in another fine painting of boats lined up on a pier, a kind of aesthetic sleight of hand enables her to indulge in gestural pyrotechnics akin to "action painting" yet to simultaneously convey authentic atmosphere and a convincing, very specific, sense of place.

Almost violently slashing strokes reminiscent of Chaim Soutine are employed by Lim to evoke the feathery forms and energy of a pair of game cocks in another painting where a combination of dark and fiery hues convey a flurry of movement. Lim invests this simple subject with considerable interest due to the picture's autonomous painterly appeal. And these purely physical qualities of color, tactile pigmentation, and gestural excitement remain in place and provide primary interest when Lim takes on a more characteristic subject, as seen in her painting of a pas de deux between male and female Korean dancers.

As they clasp hands in semi-profile, the female dancer thrusts one leg high in the air behind her while balancing gingerly on the other foot, creating a sweeping composition that fills the canvas with a dynamic sense of movement. The white costumes of the two dancers, subtly shaded with various gradations of purplish hues, add to the bold formal thrust of the picture, giving the sense that the two dancers are captured in a few swift strokes, even while closer examination of the painting yields a considerable amount of detail.

Here, too, the luminous quality of the background hues—yellows, blues, and browns applied boldly in softly brushed areas that float like clouds—enhances the romantic subject and attests to the innate grace and beauty that characterizes all of Eun Soon Lim's paintings, making her an especially exhilarating and rewarding artist.

—Peter Wiley

Prize-Winning Works from CLWAC at Broome Street Gallery

Founded in 1896 and named for a scholar and philanthropist who was the only woman among the founding members of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club recently held its 2004 Members Exhibition at the Broome Street Gallery, 498 Broome Street.

While the opinions of the jurors in any show such as this are always arguable, the prizes this year seemed especially well awarded, with each artist displaying the prerequisite mastery of her medium. Pastelists made a particularly fine showing, with first prize going to Jacquelyn Kammerer Cattaneo for her atmospheric woodlands scene "Winter Aspens," and Florence Biondi taking second place for her composition "Concert in Prospect Park." Kammerer's picture was a tour de force of chiaroscuro, evoking precise qualities of light and shadow on trees and patches of snow, while Biondi's composition captured the intense concentration of young symphony musicians in performance.

Winners in the graphics category were especially diverse. First place went to Cary Thorp Brown for "Summer Memory," a subtly modulated monoprint in which recollection was obviously abetted by fantasy, resulting in a glowing bucolic vision of an enchanted inner realm.

By contrast, Karen Whitman's "Midtown Mambo," the linoleum cut that won second place, conveyed the visual cacophony of urban rhythms with its expressive distortions and atmospheric details, such as the confluence of clouds and smoke floating above rooftops, water tanks, and billboards.

Priscilla Heep

Sculpture was another category in which diverse styles took top prizes. Jinx Lindenauer took the Horse's Head Award for "Golden Head," an exquisitely minimalist form in polished bronze, while second prize for sculpture went to Priscilla Heep for "Hurry Up Lady," a semi-abstract figure combining humor with formal elegance.

Karen Whitman

Painters invariably make a strong showing in CLWAC exhibitions and this year the prizes seemed well deserved. The Horse's Head award for best painting went to Gabriela Dellosso for her self portrait in oil, limned in a style of picturesque realism akin to that of Malcolm Liepke, with the artist decked out in a feathered hat and fluffy boa peering out at the viewer like the heroine in a Victorian drama. Dramatic in another manner was "A.K.A. Samson," the oil by Gaile Snow Gibbs that won the award for portraiture, which depicted a middle aged man with flowing locks, his ruddy complexion and intense expression conjured with bravura brushstrokes.

First prize for oil/acrylic went to Carolyn Hess Low for her vigorous landscape in oil, a romantic tour de force called "Through the Trees." Kathy Krantz Fieramosca was awarded second prize in the same category for "Bird's Nest," a trompe l'oeil still life in oil in which the various elements of the composition—a plaster relief of a stylized bird, a fragment of egg shell, a cluster of twigs and berries, and a yellow flower—are rendered with pristine verisimilitude.

Then there was Dorothy Dallas, who won the first place award for watercolor with a luminous abstract landscape, its flowing forms and vibrant hues taking off from mesas and mountain ranges with a layered translucency exemplifying the aquarelle medium at its best.

Also including fine work by Jeanette Martone, Maida Rosenheck, Gloria Spevacek, Amy Bright Unfried, Jean T. Kroeber, Elvira Dimitrij, and others too numerous to mention here, the CLWAC's 2004 Members Exhibition once again revealed the overall excellence that makes this organization one of our most consistently rewarding artist's organizations.

—J. Sanders Eaton

Florence Biondi

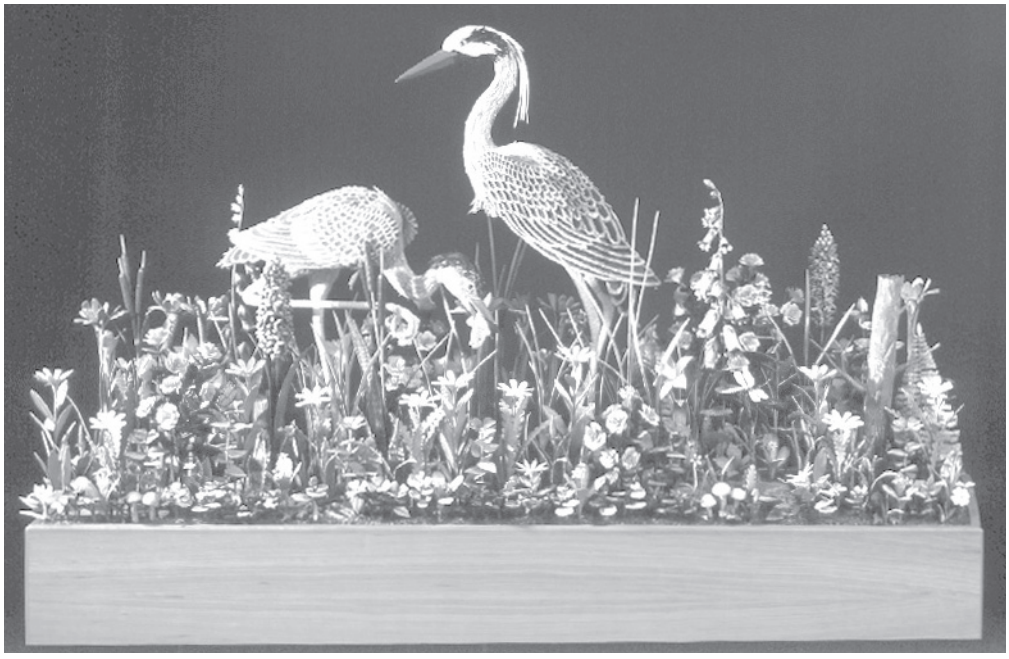
Jacquelyn Kammerer Cattaneo

"Bird Man" James Grashow's Imaginative Flights

James Grashow has to be some kind of loony genius. What else could you call someone who creates intricately detailed, anatomically accurate sculptures of various avian species with ordinary corrugated cardboard and those wiry little twist ties that we use to secure our garbage bags?

When a visitor to the Allan Stone Gallery, 113 East 90th Street, suggested as much to Grashow during his recent solo exhibition "Cardbirds," the artist did something Groucho Marxian with his salt and pepper eyebrows and said, " If I lost the loony part, would I also lose the genius part?"

In fact, in Grashow's case, the two are inseparable. What makes his pieces so spectacular is that they are so zanily obsessive, suggesting that it is the wildly impractical nature of artmaking that makes it so essential to our very survival —particularly at a time in history when so many of us seem to have abandoned our sense of wonder.



"Herons in a Stream"

Surely the group of school children who were being led into the gallery by their teachers were thoroughly in tune with Grashow's unique vision of the animal kingdom as they gawked with delight at his cardboard creations. Grashow seemed just as delighted, and rushed over to greet them, as though recognizing his ideal audience—the people who, if we could only open our own eyes as wide, could teach the rest of us how to view the world afresh!

Birds are the perfect subject for Grashow, being the least earthbound of creatures yet simultaneously possessed of an innate gawkiness that lends them affectingly comic qualities. He captures this combination of the ethereal and the amusing especially well in the large sculpture called "Corrugated Crane." Although most of Grashow's sculptures are painted, in this piece the tan cardboard and twist ties are left in their natural state, revealing the naked nuts and bolts of his technique. However, every one of the slong necked, long legged creature's feathers is meticulously delineated, as are the weeds, cattails, and flowers of its natural habitat. And as the crane preens, spreading its formidable wings, one can easily imagine that it is about to take flight around the gallery.

By contrast, "Painted Corrugated Cock" represents a strutting rooster with brilliant plumage, and "Herons in a Stream" is as fully realized as a nature museum diorama. The latter piece depicts two birds knee-deep in lush Technicolor flora, replete with dragonflies and salamanders. While one bird stands guard, the other plucks a fish from a stream with its long, dagger-like beak.

Along with bird subjects, the show at Allan Stone also included surreal cardboard sculptures in which city buildings sprout from floral bouquets, as well as some of the equally fanciful woodcuts for which this artist is also well known. All demonstrated the technical inventiveness and visionary humor that have won James Grashow exhibitions at the Aldrich, MOMA, the Whitney, and numerous other major museums. —Ed McCormack

Oh, Hyun-Young: A Sophisticated Artist Channels Childhood's Innocence

The Korean artist Oh, Hyun-Young works in lithography, watercolor, and monoprint, producing painterly prints with the haunting quality of superimposed memories. A few years ago, she was known for a kind of nostalgic realism, as seen in a 1997 watercolor called "Dr. Oh's Afternoon," which depicted her physician father wearing his white coat and doting over plants in a garden, the gentle demeanor of the healer obvious even when he was taking a break from his medical duties.

In Oh's more recent lithographs, however, tender nostalgia is replaced by mysterious juxtapositions of imagery that evoke an even more complex response in the viewer, as seen in her solo show at Gallery 32, 32 West 32nd Street, from June 17 through 30, with a reception for the artist on June 18, from 6 to 8 PM.

Now, Oh has cast aside the considerable aesthetic sophistication and anatomical mastery evident in her earlier work to channel the sensations of childhood with refreshing directness. Particularly affecting is one image, drawn in a deliberately crude, childish style of kids lying in beds while nurses walk among them. Whether this is an actual memory of a hospital stay in the artist's childhood or a scene from imagination is irrelevant; the stark lyricism of the picture lends it a poignant immediacy, capturing the sense of vulnerability and trust that all children feel in such situations.

In another especially colorful lithograph, Oh captures a more joyful sense of childhood memory in a faux naif style somewhat akin to the Art Brut of Jean Dubuffet, with fanciful figures, houses, flowers, and lollipop trees delineated in a manner at once primitive and elegant. Indeed, the sheer graphic freedom of Oh's newest lithographic excursions enables her to switch her point of view within a single work from the innocent vision of a child to that of a mature artist. And while Oh's ability to appropriate the freedom that we generally see only in the drawings of very young children is a remarkable feat that few other artists can match, it is their combination of eclectic elements that makes her prints so visually rich.

In one print, a young woman wearing a white nightgown and wings such as those one might don to impersonate an angel in a school play stands on a folding chair, encircled by strange shadowy shapes. In another, an infant is juxtaposed with an unidentifiable object covered with circular shapes and large, staring eyes. In yet another, the identical profiles of two children, one silhouetted and filled with tree-limbs, are seen under an image of birds and leaves.

Lithograph by Oh, Hyun-Young

Although one cannot decipher the meanings of Oh, Hyun-Young's new pictures as readily as her earlier ones, they possess a visionary intensity that makes them more profoundly affecting in a manner reminiscent of Borges' line: "Perhaps a bird was singing and for it I felt a tiny affection, the same size as a bird."

—J. Sanders Eaton

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