

NUMBER: an independent journal of the visual arts

37





Nowomen in the arts
WINTER TWO THOUSAND

On the Cover

Front Photograph of Marjorie Liebman taken in New York, circa 1950. Interview on page 12.

Back Melissa Christiano, *Sleeping Beauty*, 1998, mixed media, review on page 21.

: 3 7 C O N T E N T S

 Editorial #37	by Debora Gordon	05
 Art News	Black Velvet Elvis 2000	06
 Profiles	Patty Bladon Lawrence by Marina Pacini Sherrri Warner Hunter by Mary Lucking Reiley Kathy Albers by Nancy Muse Lisa Horstman by Chris Barrett Elizabeth Stein by Saxon Henry	08
The Golden Thread	An Interview with Marjorie Liebman	12
 Exhibition Reviews	Brown, Cobb, Flowers by Melody Barnett Deusner Lurlynn Franklin by Fred Burton Larry Edwards by Christina Huntington Melissa Christiano by Lara Shelton Richard Knowles by Scott Fulmar Charles Keiger by Omnese Campbell Jim Buonaccorsi by Brian L. Bishop	16
 Information	Exhibitions, Lectures, Opportunities, etc.	22

T H I S I S S U E

is published by NUMBER: Incorporated, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Focus of NUMBER: is on the contemporary visual arts in the tri-state region (TN, AR, MS). Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the publishers. Contents in whole or in part may not be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. All correspondence should be addressed to NUMBER: PO Box 820226, Memphis, TN 38182-0226, (901) 722-5905. Iemail: editor@numberinc.org Subscriptions for individuals are available at \$15.00 (3 issues) and \$20.00 (3 issues) for institutions. Back issues are available in limited quantities for \$4.00 each (please inquire before ordering).

© C O P Y R I G H T 2 0 0 0

NUMBER: INCORPORATED
All published material is protected under this copyright; however, all rights and ownership remain with the contributor.

EDITORIAL # 37

BY DEBORA GORDON

Well it is finally here—The Women's Issue! After years of planning and numerous grant rejections from various foundations and councils, it is finally in your hands. The original proposal called for a much larger issue and a more in-depth oral history of octogenarian Marjorie Liebman. The 28 pages you are holding is a far cry from the forty pages originally proposed. If you are patient you will see the whole vision unfold throughout the year; here is part one, and other articles and profiles will be found in issues down the road. Its impact may be lost on the less visionary, but what can you expect — this issue isn't even paid for yet. Fortunately, Bob Towery of Towery Publishing has donated in-kind services for the output of film and color matchproofs for the Women In The Arts Issue, and several NUMBER: donors from the private sector answered the call and helped the project get this far. Please join me thanking each one: Margie Polk, Barbara Hart Wilson, Flournoy S. Rogers, Patti Lechman, Iris Harkavy, Melissa Christiano, Carol Crown-Ranta and Richard Ranta, Bob Towery, and Alan and Zoe Nadel.

A special issue of NUMBER: doesn't just fall into place, it takes a lot of planning. One person who was an important contributor to this process who deserves recognition is NUMBER: Board member Leslie Luebberts, now recovering from a devastating automobile wreck in January. I'd like to thank Luebberts for her help as well as other staff and contributing writers who worked together on the Women's Project, lending their enthusiasm and expertise: Marina Pacini, Christina Huntington, Dr. Earnestine Jenkins, Linda Raiteri, Linda McDaniel, Betty Williams, Nancy Muse, Mary Lucking Reiley, Allyson Ross, Michael Forsythe, David Thompson, Sheri Fleck Rieth, and Ed Frank.

Giving extra attention to women in the arts is a great

way to begin the millennium. Ten years ago, as I worked on my first issue as acting-editor, I became aware that a greater effort needed to be made to improve gender representation in all venues. NUMBER: Executive Editor Cory Dugan was on sabbatical at the time, and for once, the women were in charge; but that alone did not assure change. During production, board members Terri Jones, Susan Miller, and I jokingly dubbed the 1990 issue "Eleven Men and a Dead Woman," in reference to the gender representation of the review roster. With the current issue, NUMBER: 37, the review section shows the men still leading by a Knowles. (The Richard Knowles mini-retrospective was a last-minute inclusion.)

There must be a conscious effort on all levels for more inclusion of women artists and artists of color in order to provide an accurate reflection of the quality of the contemporary art produced in this region and its makers. If anyone has the slightest doubt of the desperate need, then all one need do is take a good look at the photograph accompanying this editorial. The photograph in question is a group snapshot of the recipients of the Tennessee Arts Commission's 1998 exchange program with Israel.

Ask yourself, what is wrong with this picture? The answer is staring in your face. The group we sent to Israel to represent Tennessee is all white, and with the exception of artist Sylvia Hyman, all male.

Of course there could be myriad reasons for this inequality, including the ratio of men to women in the application process. Israeli officials chose the final seven from a pool of fourteen artists selected by the TAC panel. Whatever the reasons, this is the picture we are sending again and again. This is the history we are recording.

In this issue we have attempted to do two things. We

chose one female artist, Marjorie Liebman, to speak for many, recording the oral history of a rich and interesting life. It was important not to duplicate prior coverage, even though we are fully aware that the omission of so many other important female artists may send the wrong message. We hope that people will understand that this issue is by no means a who's who roster but a sampling of uncharted riches. We have never taken a good look at art professionals, the majority of whom are women, specifically those working behind the scenes at museums and galleries. With this issue we begin to profile individuals who may not be making art themselves, but are without question making an enormous difference in the art community.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to mention NUMBER: 's plans for 2000. Coming up in February and March we have two writing workshops, the first in Memphis led by Buzz Spector (Feb. 11, 12), the second in Jackson, Mississippi, with Eleanor Hartney as facilitator (Mar. 17, 18). The next issue NUMBER: 38, with its concentration on art criticism, will be a product of the Memphis workshop. And later, in time for the true millennium, a special issue on visionary art environments in our region. We are accepting proposals and welcome your input in regard to both endeavors. E-mail address: editor@numberinc.org



TENNESSEE ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN A CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH ISRAEL: LEFT TO RIGHT: RICHARD PAINTER (NASHVILLE), HAIM MAOR (BEERSHEBA, ISRAEL), GREELY MYATT (MEMPHIS), GREG SCHLANGER (CLARKSVILLE), ANDREW SAFTEL (PIKEVILLE), RICHARD JOLLEY (KNOXVILLE), SYLVIA HYMAN (NASHVILLE), BILLY D. HICKS (MEMPHIS). PHOTO BY MIKI TROPER, COURTESY OF GREELY MYATT.



EDITOR Debora Gordon **ASSOCIATE EDITOR** Christina Huntington **EDITORIAL ASSISTANT** Dan Spector **GRAPHIC DESIGN** frankndzn **PRODUCTION MANAGER** Allyson Ross **CONTRIBUTING EDITORS** Chris Barrett, Fred Burton, Susan W. Knowles, John Weeden **DISTRIBUTION** Michael Durham **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** Barbara Andrews, chair; Leslie Luebberts, treasurer; René Paul Barilleaux; Hugh Busby; Debora Gordon; Kay Lindsey; James K. Patterson, MD; Susan Scott; Ellen Simak **COLOR IMAGING AND SEPARATIONS** Towery Publishing.

 **NUMBER: AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF THE VISUAL ARTS IS A 100% RECYCLABLE PRODUCT.**

NUMBER: SPONSORS 2000
THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES THROUGH THEIR GENEROSITY AND COMMITMENT HAVE HELPED PUT THIS ISSUE IN YOUR HANDS. JOIN US IN SAYING THANK YOU.

PATRONS
William Baucom and Susan Spurgeon
Beverly and Sam Ross
Nesin family

DONORS
Menke Foundation
Cisley Jane Elliott
Freida Hamm
Charles R. Jansen
Fredric Koeppel
Zoe and Alan Nadel
Katie McCullar
Mary Mhoon & Perry Walker
Margie Polk
Flournoy S. Rogers
K.C. & Jeff Warren
Barbara Hart Wilson

FRIENDS
René Paul Barilleaux & Timothy Hedgepeth
Chad Driver
Larry & Mattie Edwards
Greenville Arts Council
Ruth Gross
Richard and Carol Knowles
Patti Lechman
Terri Jones & Greely Myatt
Dick & Carol Crown-Ranta
Linda Rendtorff
Murray and Karen Riss
Peter J. Stempel

ARTISTS
Cheryl Bader
Lea Barton
Saul C. Belz

Burton Callicott
Melissa Christiano
Irma Ecksel
Michael Fowler
Lisa M. Francisco
Johan Hagaman
Iris Harkavy
Saxon Henry
Jeri Ledbetter
Sandy Lowrance
Martha Hunt Huie
Annabelle Meacham
Billie Howard Moten
David McCarthy & Marina Pacini
Marian McKinney
Carol M. Olson
Faith Shafran
Amy Kay Sorensen

Jeane Umbreit
Peggy Vance

IN-KIND DONATIONS
Art Museum, The University of Memphis
Art Department, The University of Memphis
Cooper Street Gallery
Towery Publishing



NUMBER: is supported in part by grants from the Greater Memphis Arts Council and the Tennessee Arts Commission.

TRIENNIAL SOUTHEASTERN EXHIBITION

Mobile, Alabama — The Southeastern Juried Exhibition 1999 at the Mobile Museum of Art continued the museum's commitment to the support of regional career artists. The exhibit (July 23 - September 12) was open to artists living in a twelve-state area. For this fifth triennial the museum awarded \$7,000 in cash, purchase, and/or merit awards.

This year's juror, James Rondeau, associate curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago wrote of being grateful for the opportunity to see work by artists from a part of the country "that is mostly unfamiliar to me. The artists represented here offer vivid proof of the strength, vitality and diversity of the creative community in the Southeast."

Area artists included were: Jan Hankins, Diane Hoffman, Simon Jackson, James Minor, and John Underwood of Memphis; Van Bankston of Carrollton, MS; Barry A. Beach of Johnson City, TN; Jane Braddock of Joelton, TN; Jenny Daniel of Murfreesboro, TN; S.L. Dickey of Columbus, MS; Stephen Marshall Klesius of Rockford, TN; Soon Ee Ngho of Starkville, MS; John Salvest of Jonesboro, AR; and Mari Burns Lee and Lam Tze Sheung of Little Rock. Les Christensen of Jonesboro, AR received one of two Purchase Awards for her *Flight from Servitude*. Gregory W. Shelnett of Oxford, MS and Carrol Harding McTyre of Arlington, TN, won Merit Awards; and Jay Etkin and Colin McLain of Memphis received Honorable Mentions.

THE DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS WALKING TOUR

Memphis — UrbanArt Commission and the Center City Commission have released *The Downtown Memphis Walking Tour: A Guide to Art and Architecture*. The handsome brochure, designed by Matt Young of Chung Design, features two tours with text by Leslie Luebbers and photographs by Chip Pankey. The two walking tours focus on the northern and southern halves of Downtown. These tours highlight notable buildings such as the Lincoln-American Tower and artworks such as Richard Hunt's memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., titled *I've Been to the Mountaintop*.

The Walking Tour brochure was made possible by the



Memphis Center City Commission, the UrbanArt Commission, the Greater Memphis Arts Council, and the Memphis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects through the Tennessee Foundation for Architecture. The Walking Tour brochure is currently available at the Memphis Center City Commission, located at 114 N. Main Street, or by contacting UrbanArt at (901) 578-2787.

URBANART SLIDE REGISTRY

Memphis — UrbanArt plans to mail applications in Spring 2000 for its Artist Database and Slide Registry. The database is an extensive database of artists, regional and national, which can be sorted by location, medium, style, and subject matter. All artists in this database will be notified of design competitions sponsored by the UAC. The Slide Registry contains artists' slides, resumés and supporting materials. Artists in the Slide Registry will be notified of design competitions and will be considered for rotating exhibits and other projects. Contact UrbanArt at (901) 578-2787.

RAILROAD TRESTLE PROJECT

Memphis — Jill Brogdon has been selected to design and execute a gateway project for the Cooper-Young Community Association (CYCA). Brogdon is a metalsmith and owner of Brogdon Design, a local metal design and fabrication studio. Her proposal captures the character of the Cooper-Young area and reflects the architecture found therein. The artwork will be completed by mid-year 2000.

Brogdon has constructed the first, an L-plan bungalow, of twelve indigenous house and commercial building facades from metal, each between six and sixteen feet tall, which will be attached to the faces of the trestle. The little windows will be backlit, giving the trestle a warm, welcoming glow at night. By using the facades of actual houses and buildings from the neighborhood which residents nominated for inclusion, the trestle will capture the diversity of the neighborhood and celebrate its unique appeal.

The Railroad Trestle project was started by the Cooper-Young Community Association as an improvement to the trestle just south of Central on Cooper which has become an eyesore through neglect and discontinued use. The CYCA contacted the UrbanArt Commission (UAC) to help turn the old landmark into a welcoming gateway for the Cooper-Young community by incorporating public art.

RIVERWALK SHADE STRUCTURES

Memphis — The City granted the UrbanArt Commission \$25,000 to promote and facilitate public art projects in Memphis. The Commission also received \$48,000 from Shelby County and \$15,000 from the Memphis Arts Council in continued financial support.

The UrbanArt Commission is also working with the City of Memphis to commission three artist-designed shade structures for the Cobblestone Walkway as part of the Memphis riverfront redevelopment plan. Two artist/architect teams have been selected to design two of three shade structures. The teams are Brantley Ellzey with Leonard Gill, and Reb Haizlip with Carroll Todd.

Brantley Ellzey is a local architect who

has worked on a variety of projects including St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Paducah, KY, and Ballet Memphis in Memphis, TN. Artist, teacher, and writer Leonard Gill is a native Memphian and an instructor at the Memphis College of Art.

Reb Haizlip, president of the Haizlip Firm, is a local architect whose projects include Gibson Guitar, the Children's Museum of Memphis and exhibits in Starry Nights. Carroll Todd is a nationally-known local metal sculptor, currently represented by Schmidt/Bingham Gallery in New York.

John Medwedeff of Medwedeff Forge and Design in Murphysboro, IL, was selected to design the third shade structure for the Cobblestone Walkway, part of the five-mile Riverwalk along downtown Memphis. As part of the Riverwalk, the Cobblestone Walkway will provide a vital connection between Jefferson Davis Park and Tom Lee Park, improve access to the historic Cobblestone Landing and serve as an overlook to observe the Landing and activity along the riverfront. Visitors will be able to move comfortably along the top of the Landing and descend to the Landing itself by means of several sets of stairs and a handicap-accessible pedestrian ramp. The shade structures and benches will provide shelter and seating as people stroll along the Cobblestone Walkway.

The artists continue to work on their designs, despite the fact that the project is held up by litigation with the city and on hold at present.

ART IN MISSISSIPPI 1720-1980

Jackson — With this volume Patti Carr Black, former director of the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson, has produced a much-needed work that brings together previous research with a vast amount of new information.

Copublished by the Mississippi Historical Society, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and the University Press of Mississippi, this elegant and comprehensive volume is the first of the Society's Heritage of Mississippi Series. Black has brought to the task a perspective on Mississippi art that was informed by a lifetime's dedication to art, years of curating museum exhibitions of Mississippi artists, and, specifically for this volume, three years of intensive research in museums and private collections around the country. In *Art in Mississippi* she focuses on several hundred significant artists and showcases in full color the work of more than two hundred.

Nationally-acclaimed native Mississippians are here—George Ohr, Walter Anderson, Marie Hull, Theora Hamblett, William Dunlap, Sam Gilliam, William Hollingsworth, Jr., Karl Wolfe, Mildred Nungester Wolfe, John McCrady, Ed McGowin, James Seawright, and many others. Prominent artists who lived or worked in the state for a significant period of time are included as well—John James Audubon, Louis Comfort Tiffany, George Caleb Bingham, William Aiken Walker, and more. There are many surprises here, for Black has gathered so much remarkable art that readers will be staggered by the richness of the visual art tradition in Mississippi.

Black explores how art reflects the land and how modes of living and values dictated by Mississippi's changing topography create a variety of art forms. She demonstrates the influence of Mississippi's diverse cultures on the art and shows how it has responded in many forms—painting, architecture, sculpture, fine crafts—to the changing aesthetics of national art movements. She observes that much art

was created to fill immediate needs of the times—reverent depictions of the Civil War, highly-wrought expressions of the intensely devout, and works of social realism that grappled with a changing society.

Patti Carr Black has written and edited many books, including Agnes Grinstead Anderson's *Approaching the Magic Hour: Memories of Walter Anderson, Made by Hand: Mississippi Folk Art, and Sea, Earth, Sky: The Art of Walter Anderson*. Students of Mississippi's phenomenal culture and history will be captivated by this splendid volume.

JOHN SALVEST: TIME ON HIS HANDS

Phoenix, AZ — Phoenix Art Museum invited art critic Kim Levin, president of the International Association of Art Critics and regular contributor to *The Village Voice*, to curate the inaugural exhibition in the new Marshall Gallery of Contemporary Art. Levin chose John Salvest of Jonesboro, Arkansas. "John Salvest: Time on His Hands" was on view in the new gallery October 12, 1999 through January 23, 2000.

In the exhibition, Salvest exhibited recent sculptures and a wall installation made from mundane, everyday objects. Employing repetition, Salvest arranged common objects into rows or columns, ultimately giving them new meaning as visual poetry. Over the past decade, his materials have included road maps, insects, newspapers, cigarettes, and business cards.

In *Newspaper Columns* (1997), yearly editions of different newspapers were stacked chronologically to form tall, architectural columns that emphasized the importance of newspapers in our daily lives. The wall installation, *Meditation 7.21* (1997), is composed of 9,000 business cards, arranged to spell out a quotation from the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180): "Soon you will have forgotten the world and the world will have forgotten you."

Levin was introduced to Salvest's work when she curated the 1998 MAX exhibition at the University of Memphis Art Museum.

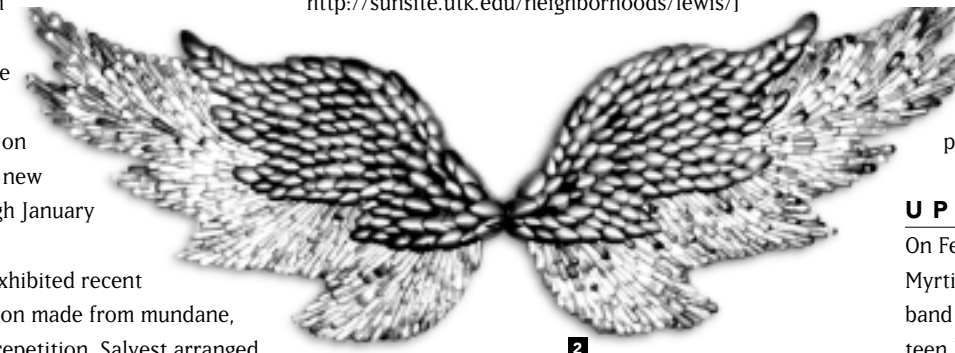
DIVINE HUMILITY

Memphis — Jesus is alive in Mexico. That's not a tabloid headline; it's a fact of everyday reality visible in churches, cemeteries, homes, shops, and Robert Lewis's new photographic series. While completing a long-term study of the changing consumer environment in Mexico, Lewis, professor of art at The University of Memphis, escaped from a bustling street market into a quiet church, and while resting he witnessed a man in intimate conversation with a battered figure of Christ. He realized that for the man this figure was far more than a church-worn representation of a divinity; it was a caring, compassionate, and helpful mentor and friend.

Lewis began to photograph Jesus figures in churches throughout Mexico, and along the way, he started to visit cemeteries where people maintain family graves and crypts. Unlike European and North American cemeteries where angels and effigies are immobilized in marble as if for eternity, the Jesus icons are often made of cement or similarly frangible material. Exposure to elements and seasons leaves its pitiless trace on the statues, and homely patches and touch-ups provide their own marks of time. Painted, decorated for holidays, surrounded by memora-

bilia of the dear departed, as well as bits of the contemporary consumer culture, these images are active participants in the lives and afterlives of Mexicans.

The Art Museum's exhibition of "Divine Humility" inaugurated a national tour co-organized with the Ewing Gallery at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Other venues in the region include: Old Dominion University Gallery, Norfolk, Virginia (4/1-16/00); Baldwin Photographic Gallery, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee (9/1/01-10/15/01); and Lamar Dodd Museum, LaGrange College, LaGrange, Georgia (11/10/00-12/29/00). The illustrated color catalogue includes an essay by Salvatore Scalora, director of the William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut, and contributing editor of *Home Altars of Mexico: Photographs by Dana Salvo* (University of New Mexico Press, 1997). [Online exhibit-<http://sunsite.utk.edu/neighborhoods/lewis/>]



WONDERS TO BEHOLD

Memphis — Working with the obscurity of her home in Centre, Alabama, Myrtice West painted the entire book of Revelations in thirteen large, vivid paintings. With no art training and extremely limited means, she let the voice of God direct her hand for seven years as she depicted the bizarre, frightening, and hopeful images of St. John's apocalyptic vision.

She is not obscure any more.

Now 66 years old and a great-grandmother, West is a star in the field of "outsider" art, one of the hottest genres in art today. Collectors and galleries clamor for her visionary paintings. Folk-art experts consider her a leading name, ranking her alongside artists Howard Finster and Grandma Moses. And with the publication of a new book, *Wonders to Behold: The Visionary Art of Myrtice West* (Mustang Publishing), West's place in art history is secure.

Devoted solely to West and her monumental "Revelations Series," *Wonders to Behold* features a collection of essays by some of folk art's most prominent names. Scholars such as Norman Girardot, Roger Manley, and Charles Reagan Wilson, artists Howard Finster and Norbert Kox, museum curators Lee Kogand and Rebeca Hoffberger—each lived with one of West's Revelations paintings and wrote an essay about it. Carol Crown, an art history professor at The University of Memphis, served as the book's general editor, compiling the essays and drafting her own piece on Christian millennialism as it relates to West's art. The result is a book that will appeal to a variety of readers, from folk-art collectors, to fundamentalist Christians, to anyone interested in the art, culture, and religion of the South.

West has dabbled in art all her life, but her most ambitious efforts began when she was in her mid-fifties. Anxious about her daughter's troubled marriage to an abusive man, she sought solace in the Bible, particularly St. John's book of Revelation. She recounts, "All at once, it was if I could see what John was seeing... So I got an old couch covering, went to the barn and got an old window screen, fixed my

couch covering on it, and I worked on that painting about six to eight months." West was pleased with her work, so she continued to paint the chapters of Revelations and hang the finished paintings throughout her house.

She never intended to sell the paintings or exhibit them in museums, but the folk art world found her. In 1993, she sold the Revelations paintings and began a new series based on the book of Ezekiel. In 1997, she tackled the book of Daniel and in 1999, the book of Zechariah. Her renown has grown with her artistic output.

Sumptuously illustrated and lucidly written, *Wonders to Behold* captures the genius of West and the passion of her faith. Her visionary paintings reveal a tension between her need to document John's intriguing visions and her artistic desire to transcend mere illustration. Leslie Luebbers, director of the Art Museum of The University of Memphis, wrote, "Beyond the various fascinating perspectives presented by the authors on West's masterly artistic achievement, the book provides proof that self-taught art is a rich field for investigation and interpretation."

UPDATE

On February 8, 2000, a fire destroyed the home/studio of Myrtice West. The seventy-six-year-old artist and her husband escaped without injury. They were able to save thirteen large paintings, but everything else — including family photographs and memorabilia, art supplies — was destroyed. The couple who had little insurance or savings is living in a trailer temporarily. A fund for donations has been established at Union State Bank, Centre, Alabama. Mustang Publishing is donating \$10 each from the book sales of *Wonders to Behold*. To place an order call (901) 684-1200 or 1-800-250-8713-ed.



- 1 ROBERT E. LEWIS, COPYRIGHT 1999, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.
- 2 LES CHRISTENSEN, *FLIGHT FROM SERVITUDE*, SPOONS AND WOOD. COURTESY OF MOBILE MUSEUM OF ART.
- 3 PHOTOGRAPH OF MYRTICE WEST BY ROLLIN RIGGS, COPYRIGHT 1993. COURTESY OF MUSTANG PUBLISHING.

BLACK VELVET ELVIS 2000

NUMBER: presented **Black Velvet Elvis 2000** on January 8 at Cooper Street Gallery in Midtown Memphis. Highlights of the event included an appearance by the King himself or at least a poor, but unforgettable, imitation.

Dr. Robert Cooper (Oxford, MS) believes in the HEALING POWER OF ELVIS. He advises us to "Put down all those drugs and herbs. Don't need no supplements. Just listen to Elvis everyday — keeps the doctor away." Cooper has learned that less is more from his years of being a self-described "bad" Elvis impersonator. He prefers the aging "drugged and wired-out" Elvis to the youthful rock star.

As we celebrated the King's 65th birthday in the year 2000, Elvis came out of hiding. Why now? Dr. Cooper explains "He came out of hiding to collect his Social Security and Medicare benefits."

I remarked rather excitedly to one of the participants that our Elvis Impersonator was a *real* doctor from Oxford, Mississippi. The unnamed artist retorted, "Oh that's nice, he can write his own prescriptions."

Our heartfelt thanks to: Art Center Supply Stores, Blues City Café, Cooper Street Gallery, Lisa Francisco, Bryan Blankenship, Gayle Dobbins, Douglas Gordon, Nancy Johnson, Linda McDaniel, and Hugh Busby for the clever design work. And most importantly, our host and Black Velvet Curator Jay Etkin, who did a fabulous job.

The Big Door Prize (Stephen Flinn Young's mixed-media Elvis portrait, *Sr. Velvis*) went to Gene Rossetti, who boasts a burgeoning black velvet collection on view at Flashback.]

The Black Velvet artists' roster read like a regional who's who. Participating artists are from Memphis unless otherwise indicated: Neil Armstrong (Nashville), Rene Paul Barilleaux and Timothy Hedgepeth (Jackson, MS), Kelly Brother, Deborah Brown, David Burns, Hugh Busby, Mark Collins, Christine Conley, Tom Delaney, Jean Flint

(Jonesboro, AR), Tommy Foster, Tom Gettelfinger, Katherine Gore, Terry Gower, Zachary Smack, Greg Haller, Jan Hankins, Daphne Hewitt, Cordell Jackson, Amy Kidd, Kathleen Kondilas, Joe Louis Light, Wess Loudenslager and Mari Trevelyan Loudenslager, Darla Linerode-Henson, Jerry Lynn and Terry Lynn aka TWIN, Inc. (Arlington, TN), Michael Mallard (Jackson, TN), Karen L. Mulder, (Jackson, TN), Annabelle Meacham (Senatobia, MS), Milly Moorhead (Oxford, MS), Penny Price, Roy Tamboli, Gregory Shelnett (Oxford, MS), Rhonda Wilson, and Everett Charles Yates.

It is fitting that the "People's Choice" (a gift certificate courtesy of Art Center Supply Stores) was awarded to Jean Flint. Her soft sculpture of a peanut butter and banana sandwich, titled *A King's Lunch*, made dual reference to Elvis's favorite dish and the concurrent Trash Food Contest.

Guests huddled around the "No Contest" food table and passed the pork rinds from one end to the other. They were grateful that not all the food artists opted to compete in the 6th Annual Trash Food Contest; judging from the fare, several could have been contenders. The food entries awaiting the judge's decision were interspersed with black velvet art in the front galleries. Naughty guests who attempted to sample the fare before the judge had announced his decisions met with sharp reprimands from food warden Doris Lee, and her adolescent guards, Carly Kreighbaum and Amanda Morley.

Those in attendance applauded Dr. Cooper's choice for the coveted "Most Bestest." Martha Hunt Huie outdid herself with a life-sized (devil's food) guitar cake — one fit for a King and big enough to feed a kingdom; as Huie recounted on her recipe, her *TCB Cake* could "feed a goodly number of folks." Amanda Morley accepted the award for the exhausted Huie who was recovering at home, vowing never to make another birthday cake for anyone, ever again! The day after receiving her "Most Bestest" big fork prize (the mate to the big spoon we gave last year — both

cleverly designed by Susan Marcano Scott), Huie was victorious and thoroughly rejuvenated.

"Most Sculptural" went to Sheri Fleck Rieth for her *Apple Vienna Sausage Ball*. "Most Disgusting-Looking" was awarded to a dish by Diane Morley and daughter Amanda. "Highest in Cholesterol" went to Annabelle Meacham for her *Hawaiian Meatballs*. "Most Mysterious" (and perhaps the most egregious word play) went to Sherrye Wadlington for her *Tune-a-Ball*, subtitled *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*. Barbara Bouton won the "Most Like Something Elvis Would Eat" for her *Elvis Teddy Bear Sugar Cookies*.

Mari Askew won "Most Tacky" and Patrick Foley, "Most Uppity" for his *Potato Chip Tea Sandwiches*, which he translated for his lowbrow brethren as *Pommes de Terre Cheeps Whores de Ervs*.

In the heat of the moment, I suspect we got a couple of the awards mixed up. The Morleys' cute little pink bunnies (Snow Balls, M&Ms, and Twizzlers) deserved the "Most Tacky" award far more than Mari Askew's *Pink Flat Out Trifle*, and vice versa. With ingredients such as stale cranberry orange loaf, aging chutney, and barbecue sauce, how disgusting can you get?

We gave a new award this year — the "Trash Foodaholic" award for the person who had participated the most in the six-year history of the Trash Food Contest. Barbara Bouton and Diane Morley tied with three years each and won a gambler's getaway courtesy of Horseshoe Casino.

Rumors that our Elvis Impersonator/Trash Food Judge is related to at least two of the winning contestants may be true. [Isn't everyone is Mississippi related?] A group photo by David Nester of Black Velvet Elvis 2000 art and food artists slated for our next issue promises to detect any strong family resemblance. The truth will be revealed! -DG

PATTY BLADON LAWRENCE

PROFILE BY MARINA PACINI

As an artist living in Memphis, I'm grateful to Patty for her support through the years. She is great. First of all, we artists know she really likes our art. She almost always comes to our show openings. That's more than you can say about many other art administrators in the area. Second, she is truly dedicated to educating the public about art. The better educated the public, the better the chances that they will like what we area artists are doing.

LARRY EDWARDS, MEMPHIS ARTIST AND EDUCATOR

Patty Bladon Lawrence makes outstanding contributions to our community in her role as curator of education at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art [MBMA]. I am especially appreciative of her commitment to educators and students. Under her astute leadership, Brooks provides quality arts education workshops, tours, and special events. Her comprehensive knowledge of art history and the process of art-making, and her outstanding ability to share this knowledge with others makes her an indispensable consultant and resource to the Center for Arts Education.

AMELIA BARTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION, MEMPHIS ARTS COUNCIL

Patty was asked to be the Faux Arts Queen in 1997 because of her tremendous service to the art community. She has worn many hats over the years, at the Brooks in particular. Number: thought it was about time one of those hats was a crown.

DEBORA GORDON, NUMBER: EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The previous comments just begin to capture what Patty Bladon Lawrence has accomplished over the years and how people—artists, administrators, docents, and art lovers—feel about her. For thirty years, Patty has been contributing to the Memphis art scene in countless ways. Her ceaseless efforts on behalf of artists and students provide a model that more people should emulate.

She has held several positions at MBMA including curator of education, exhibitions curator, and acting director (twice). It was under her watch that the Brooks instituted the Biennial, the important exhibit of regional artists that is about to be revived. Her dedication is not limited to the Brooks or to what are considered normal work hours. Her zeal appears boundless and her efforts have touched Memphians and Mid-Southerners of all ages and backgrounds.

She began her museum career in volunteer coordination at the Pink Palace Museum, which had a long-standing, active, and important volunteer arm. During her tenure at the museum, Patty developed an appreciation of how deeply non-profits depend on the people who donate their time, energy, and talents. Feeling that it was incumbent upon her to do as much as she was asking of others, Patty threw herself into community service with a vengeance. There are very few artists and art organizations in Memphis, as well as throughout the state, that haven't been touched in some way by her knowledge and her generosity with that knowledge.

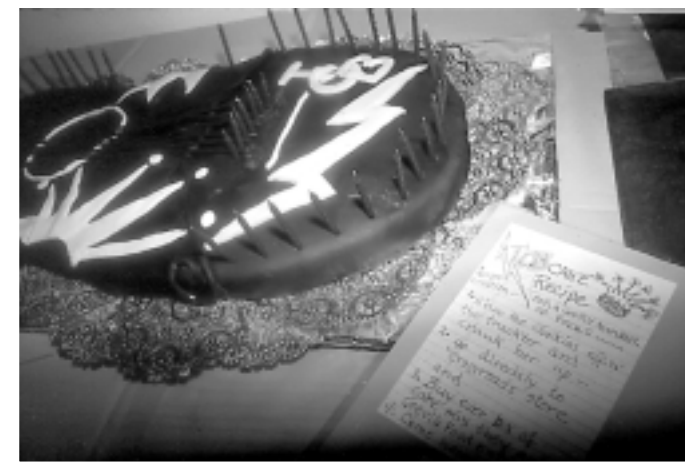
Let's begin with the Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC). Having received grants from TAC in all categories, she has shared her experiences of successful grant writing with smaller organizations to help them succeed. As a juror for TAC, she also was active in ensuring that valuable programs received necessary funds. She has helped to select artists

for exhibits in TAC's gallery, has encouraged artists to apply for TAC grants, and written innumerable letters of recommendation. She has juried just about every competition and student show in the area, from Ole Miss to Nashville in collegiate competitions and for both city and county schools in Shelby County. This is not including juried adult competitions in Alabama, Mississippi, throughout Tennessee and Arkansas. In Tennessee she has worked with the Memphis Arts Festival, the Mid-South Fair, the Heart Association, and the list goes on. Then there is her new position as head of the collections committee for the new UrbanArt Commission.

Some of this volunteer work is accomplished during her regular (long) museum hours; Patty feels that the museum has an obligation to provide professional service to public agencies and programs. However, many, many hours are logged during her personal time. For Patty, it doesn't have to do with how many hours there are on the clock, but rather with what is significant in terms of the arts and civic responsibility. Although she knows that the arts are not the bread and butter of people's lives, she is very much aware of how the role of the arts is changing as Americans have come to understand that a fully educated person, particularly children, should be exposed to the arts. With this change, her role in museum education and as a volunteer has become pivotal to providing access to and support for the arts.

Her interest in art began early in life, and was fostered in a home that also produced two sisters who are artists, one of whom, JoAnne Paschall, is also the director of Nexus Press in Atlanta. After starting her college career in Kentucky as a fine artist, Patty received her BA in art history from The University of Memphis. Having decided to make a career in art, she went on to earn an MA in art history from the University of Georgia, and then began her doctorate at Washington University. In between these degrees, she taught at The University of Memphis, Rhodes College, and Memphis College of Art for a number of years. Patty likes to give credit where credit is due, and she gave me an interesting list of people and experiences that helped shape her. Perhaps most significant was meeting Nancy Bogatin and Martha Hamilton Embree, founders of the Studio of Advertising and Art when she was a student at Central High School in Memphis. Active and aggressive in making a place for themselves in the community both at work and through public service, these women became important role models for Patty. Bogatin and Embree spent numberless hours designing marketing and advertising campaigns at no cost for non-profits such as the Memphis Arts Council and the Brooks in the late fifties and throughout the sixties. They demonstrated early in Patty's life the importance of volunteering. She also acknowledges being inspired by the talent and integrity of independent curator and art reviewer Susan Knowles.

Strong communities rely on the efforts of people who are willing to give generously of themselves. The Memphis art community has benefited for years from the selfless efforts Patty put forward. And from those opening comments, it is apparent her work has not gone unnoticed. One wonders, however, if it is ever possible to thank people like Patty often enough. Probably not.



DR. ROBERT COOPER BLOWS OUT ALL 65 CANDLES ON ELVIS'S BIRTHDAY CAKE.

"MOST BESTEST" AWARD WENT TO MARTHA HUNT HUIE FOR HER *TCB CAKE*.

PHOTOS BY SHANNON FAGAN.

SHANNON FAGAN, PHOTOGRAPH OF PATTY BLADON LAWRENCE IN HER OFFICE AT BROOKS MUSEUM, 1999. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

MARINA PACINI IS DIRECTOR OF CLOUGH-HANSON GALLERY, RHODES COLLEGE, MEMPHIS.

SHERRI WARNER HUNTER

PROFILE BY MARY LUCKING REILEY

People call her the mosaic lady.

Sherri Warner Hunter's best-known work is probably *Flights of Fantasy*, a mosaic installation seen and used by thousands of people passing through the Nashville International Airport. The work creates a lasting sense of delight; people talk about it with smiles and nods of recognition. It consists of a 28-foot undulating bench surrounding sculptures of airplanes and bulbous clouds, with colorful creatures (luna moth, dragonfly) perched on top. Her public art works create opportunities for fantasy and play; they include not only *Flights of Fantasy* but also *The One That Got Away* (at the Tennessee Welcome Center in Tiftonia) as well as a courtyard commissioned for the new Memphis/Shelby County Public Library. People don't merely view Hunter's sculptures: they interact with them and become participants in her fantasies.

While public commissions give Hunter the opportunity to work on a grand scale that would be impossible without their financial support, her private works show Hunter's imagination at full-throttle, unimpeded by practical considerations of building permanent outdoor sculpture. Her gallery-bound sculptures, whose forms and materials are informed by outsider art, incorporate found objects such as broken mirrors, bottle caps, and colored-glass bottles together with smooth branches, carved wood, and mosaic. In strong control of the media she uses, Warner creates objects that draw you in with their craftsmanship and then poke you back with a tight-lipped smirk. A series of abstract, faceless masks that she is working on hangs on her studio wall. References to childhood appear in several of them. One mask sports wooden antlers with plastic chess pieces stuck on the points, illustrating how Hunter works common objects and symbols into odd apparitions of our common imagination and memory.

Speaking to a broad and young audience, subjects that she addresses in her public works tend to be more straightforward than in her gallery pieces. Hunter's challenge in these works lies not so much in what to depict, but how to create it. She uses commissions as an opportunity to learn and use new techniques. For the airport piece, she had to solve structural problems in building the forms: mosaic does not lend itself naturally to cantilever-

ing. The donor wall at the Second Harvest Food Bank in Nashville started out as a mosaic, but grew into a complex project including broken plates, carved wood elements, imprinted ceramic pieces, and donor's names written in twisted wire.

Her large outdoor sculptures affect the way people experience public places. The playful, enveloping seating elements in *Flights of Fantasy* create a place that feels safe and separate from the surrounding flow of airport traffic. While children climb over the concrete clouds, adults run their fingertips over the patterns of smooth tiles pressed into the concrete benches. Hunter displays a rare sensitivity to tactile experience, something she attributes to her work

with fiber art earlier in her career. Most public artists see human touch the way they see rain or soot, as a mere environmental hazard which the art must be able to weather in a public space. But Hunter uses the tactile surface of her art to engage and enrich this experience. For Hunter, texture is a tool to help people center their attention on the small interface between sculpture and skin, causing the airport crowds to fade into the periphery.

The children's courtyard that Hunter is creating for the Memphis Library takes another step in the direction of creating fully realized environments. Along with her signature mosaic sculptures, Hunter's design also features mosaics on the walls, and designs set into special paving. The theme of the courtyard will be rainforests, chosen by Hunter because the animal theme appeals to younger children, while it also allows her to speak to an adolescent audience about researching the natural world.

After earning her Master's in sculpture and drawing from Claremont Graduate School and running her own installation gallery in Los Angeles, Hunter taught and directed the Continuing Education program at the Kansas City Art Institute before moving to Tennessee in 1989. She has turned her teaching skills into a summer business. Working out of her studio near Bell Buckle, TN, Hunter hosts a series of workshops every summer. Along with her own classes on mosaic and concrete sculptural forms, this summer she hosted a monotype class taught by Sheri Fleck Reith, and a woodcarving workshop by Tom Lee.

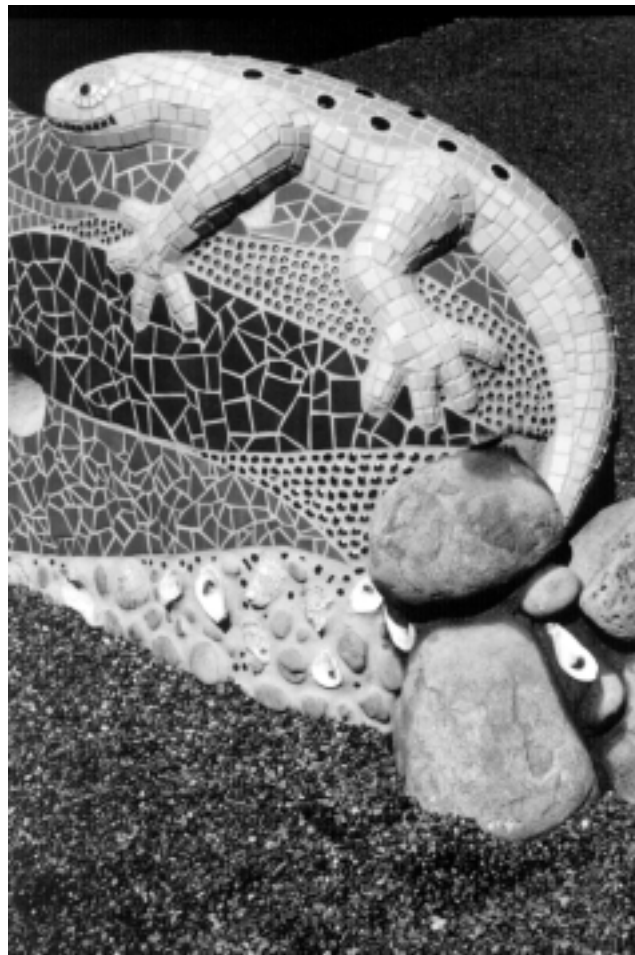
Hunter has also taught as a visiting artist in elementary schools. She works with the teachers and students in the entire process of creating the artwork, from leading discussions about the theme and symbolism of the piece to teaching how to make mosaics. At Ensworth School, Nashville, a courtyard completed this spring features stepping stones made by students and a central totem dedicated to a gym teacher who recently succumbed to cancer. The Ensworth project reflects Hunter's dedication to using her artistic talents as a tool for social good. When asked about meshing her artwork and public service, she responds, "I see being an artist as part of my being human."

Since 1993, Hunter has been collaborating with artist Renee LaRose on Stepping Stones Park at the Salvation Army Headquarters in Nashville. The artists have worked with the residents of the charity's Transitional Housing Unit to build a mosaic wall enclosing a small garden. The wall illustrates the beauty and also the challenges of artist-initiated projects. The garden is a community project, a result of hundreds of hands and minds creating a unique work for the site. Relying on volunteer labor and donations to fund the project has meant that the project has proceeded at a seriously slow pace; the garden is due to be completed Labor Day 2000, almost seven years after the project began.

What's next? In the studio, Hunter is creating large, two-dimensional works. A departure from her largely symbolic and abstract sculptural work, her drawings and gouaches deal with explicitly-rendered human forms. In the public arena, she wants to continue creating private spaces in public areas. Farther into the future, Hunter envisions creating an Alice in Wonderland park. She sees a place where different artists would be invited to create pieces based on the children's book — an appropriate project for an artist whose own work mirrors much of Lewis Carroll's curious world of dreams.

SHERRI WARNER HUNTER, *THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY* (DETAIL OF BENCH), TENNESSEE WELCOME CENTER IN TIFTONIA, 1994. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

MARY LUCKING REILEY IS AN ARTIST WHO LIVES IN NASHVILLE DOING GRADUATE WORK AT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.



KATHY ALBERS

PROFILE BY NANCY MUSE

Kathy Albers opened Albers Fine Art Gallery in a tiny East Memphis space in 1984 with \$6,000 and a lot of determination. It was a gutsy thing to do. At the time, Memphis native Alice Bingham had the only other commercial art gallery in town. Albers, who moved to Memphis in 1973, saw the need for another option for both the art-buying public and artists seeking representation.

Much has changed in fifteen years. The gallery now occupies over 2000 square feet in an AIA-award-winning space on Brookfield. In the early days, Albers's husband John hung the shows. Now, the gallery has a preparator among its staff of three. Albers built her stable of artists by drawing heavily on local talent, particularly graduates of Memphis College of Art and The University of Memphis. Now, the proportion of local to regional artists is forty and forty-five percent respectively, with national artists comprising about fifteen percent of the business.

The gallery maintains a fairly consistent stable of about 35 artists working in both two and three dimensions. Albers seeks contemporary work that "pushes the envelope" but demands that it be well-crafted. She pursued a degree in studio art rather than art history as preparation for a career in museum or gallery work so that she would have hands-on experience when dealing with artists. Albers herself no longer paints but directs all her creativity toward running the gallery, which she approaches much as a painter would a canvas: by letting the work tell her what to do next.

Albers describes her artists as "nice people" and regards her relationships with them as a benefit of her job, something she wouldn't have experienced in another profession. For their part, gallery artists speak of Albers with respect and even affection. She has a reputation for ethical conduct in a field that can be pretty ruthless.

In addition to operating the gallery, Albers serves as an art consultant for Independent Bank, the Memphis Cancer Center, the Memphis offices of Pfizer, Inc., and SAKS, Inc. of Birmingham, Alabama. Her commitment to public service and education clearly goes beyond the fulfillment of an obligation. She helped develop the use of art for public spaces in Memphis and serves on the board of the Urban Arts Commission of Memphis and Shelby County. She is former president and treasurer of Art Today, an art education and purchasing arm of Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, and sits on their board. In January of 1998, she went through Goals for Memphis Leadership Academy and is a member of that organization.

SHANNON FAGAN, PHOTOGRAPH OF KATHY ALBERS, 1999. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

MUSE IS A PAINTER, DOING GRADUATE STUDIES IN ART HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

In addition, Albers was a charter member of the Women's Foundation of Greater Memphis and was founding president of the now-defunct Memphis Art Gallery Association. For eight years, her gallery participated in MAGA's "Introductions" exhibitions, which introduced emerging artists to the community. She has served on selection committees for Memphis College of Art's Biennial Invitational Exhibition and Memphis Arts Festival. The Memphis Arts Council selected her as one of "100 For the Arts" for 1988-89, and, in July 1999, *Memphis Woman* recognized her in their "50 Women Who Make a Difference" issue for her promotion of women in the arts.

Albers's influence has been felt outside of Memphis as well. She participated in the selection of the State of Tennessee Exhibition for the Women in the Arts Museum in Washington, DC. In 1997, she juried and lectured at the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition Biennial in Oklahoma City. The gallery received national exposure in Chicago in the same year by participating in the prestigious SOFA (Sculpture Object of Functional Art) showcasing three-dimensional art.

The gallery has had mercifully few lean years. Albers believes the art market has stabilized somewhat in recent times. Still, she is a self-professed worrier, always asking herself, "Will we make it?"

Plans for the gallery include a website [www.albersgallery.com]. They have been listed in the online version of the *Art Now Gallery Guide* since 1996; the web page is through the Guide. Given her emphasis on the importance of human qualities, Albers is ambivalent about using the technology, but it is her desire to educate that wins out. For children today, she says, "the Web is their dictionary and encyclopedia." Besides, she recognizes that the marketplace dictates it.

What else does the future hold for Albers and the Albers Gallery? She'll just keep doing what she's been doing for the last fifteen years, with her characteristic energy and determination.



LISA HORSTMAN

PROFILE BY CHRIS BARRETT

So often, job satisfaction depends on a person's creativity. Not creativity on said job, mind you, but in coming up with adequate rationalizations for taking and keeping an annoying job, or one that's completely removed from one's talents and goals. No shame in painting landscapes on mailboxes, certainly; you've got all those oils left over from the MFA, right? Our imaginations get their workouts not in the studio, but at parties when we must defend the importance of such stepping stones and demeaning "apprentice" work.

Doofy, bill-paying hack work is a constant in the arts. Yet Knoxville artist, illustrator, children's book author, and full-time magazine designer Lisa Horstman makes all that seem easily side-stepped. She works for many different people, doing a lot of different things. But instead of convincing herself that what she needs to do today is illustrate disposable latté cozies or pay-at-the-pump marketing placards, she has convinced numerous clients, who have sensibilities very much in line with her own, that what they need today is her signature buoyant and sprightly style. It's clear that she works quite hard, and of course she has clients and an employer to whom she must answer. But Horstman has been so successful in cultivating a market for her charming work, that regardless of what direction a deadline, or assignment, or gallery invitation might push or pull her, it seems she's bound to fall like Br'er Rabbit into the briar patch. An ideal introduction to Horstman's hand was a month-long April solo show at Tomato Head (a restaurant downtown

in Knoxville's Market Square.) Alongside new works were the artist's favorite illustrations, including pages from her books. She makes it seem so simple: if you just give the right shape to a patch of the right color, the work will tell its own story. She actually sells illustrations — visual and relevant products of her own imagination. This in contrast to the more common and more easily peddled ability to illustrate.

"I was trained traditionally as a graphic designer, but as with a lot of designers-in-training, I also wanted to do illustration," says Horstman. "When I first started designing, I hadn't discovered my 'voice' or personal style of art — how I want to project my personality, to make my own unique contribution. It takes a lot of focus and time to discover what that voice is, and unless you make a firm dedication at the start to be a full-time artist, it gets harder and harder to divide your time."

Horstman admits that it can be frustrating to answer to a client or publisher when one would rather harken yon muse. Since early in 1995, she's been art director for the Knoxville weekly *Metro Pulse*, with plenty of after hours free-lancing besides. Before *Metro Pulse*, she designed numerous national publications for the Knoxville-based Whittle Communications. A sample submission in 1992 won her Random House's Dr. Seuss Picturebook Award, which led to the 1994 publication of her book *Fast Friends*, a swell tale lovingly illustrated. In 1997, the Great Smoky Mountains Natural History Association published her second book, *The Great Smoky Mountain Salamander Ball* — which is a terrific catalog of Horstman faces, critters, lettering, colors, and curlicues.

Still, one of Horstman's most creative feats is the way she has used art to meet her own needs. "Frankly," she says, "one of the things that holds me back from completely diving in to doing art full-time is the fact that I've been a diabetic for 21 years and need the insurance. I've been lucky to find a job that allows me to be creative during the day. But I've resigned myself to the fact that either until the day when insulin-dependent diabetes is cured or I find a good, affordable way to pay for medical expenses on my own, I'll have to split my creative time between guiding others and guiding myself."

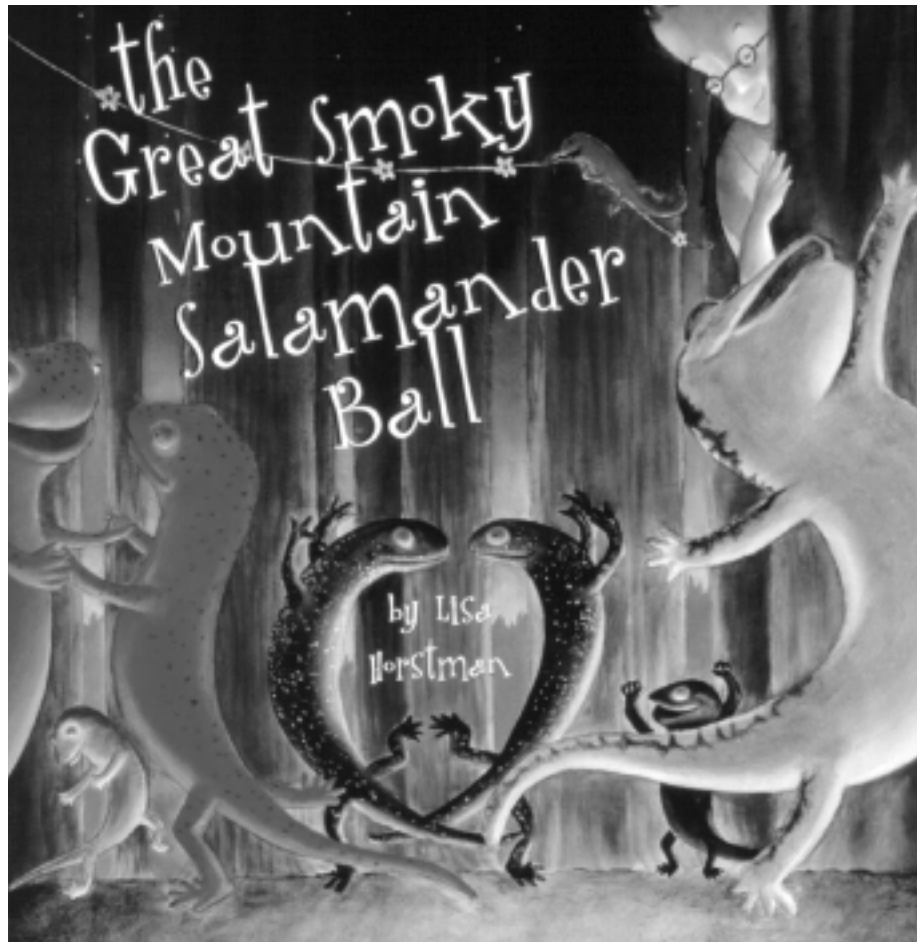
There's probably not much use mentioning this, because you either know it already or are immune to the concept: children's books are an ideal way to encounter art. Such art is easily and, in most cases, inexpensively had. And it is good fun. Horstman's books (including the one in progress, involving bears and litter and why the two should never be introduced) belong to a small but noble bundle of kid lit that defies age barriers and tells young and old important things about the world in which they live. Think Randall Jarrell's *The Bat-Poet*, or Jeff Daniel Marion's *Hello, Crow*. In case you happened to overlook his 100th birthday earlier this year, think of E.B. White and that pig book of his. Horstman, like her best work, has been thrust into splendid company.

"I do these books for myself," says Horstman. "I've heard a lot of children's book authors say this, and I think there's a lot to be said for doing something to please yourself before you inflict it on others. The book needs to speak to adults on their level as well as to kids on their level. Think of the old Chuck Jones/Warner Brothers cartoons and you see what I mean."

Horstman pauses thoughtfully, then adds, "Dr. Seuss was good at that, too."

CHRIS BARRETT IS A WRITER/RESEARCHER FOR HOME & GARDEN TELEVISION.

LISA HORSTMAN, *THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN SALAMANDER BALL*, COVER, 1997. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



ELIZABETH STEIN

PROFILE BY SAXON HENRY

"For an artist to be interesting to us he must have been interesting to himself. He must have been capable of intense feeling...of profound contemplation," writes Robert Henri in *The Art Spirit*.

It is the exceptional painter who is always pushing to greater levels of introspection and understanding, but rarer still is the artist who is driven to instill in others a passion for self-reflection in their art. Realist painter and teacher Elizabeth Stein is one of these exceptional people: an artist who believes that self-awareness and paying attention are key faculties in teaching art.

Stein, who lives in Chattanooga, teaches a variety of classes at the Chattanooga Arts Center and the Patten Arts Center. She also teaches privately at her studio and continues her own artistic training by painting weekly with a group of figurative artists.

She believes that authentic art springs equally from a heightened awareness of self and from a painter's technical training. Therefore Stein considers it to be her responsibility as a teacher to challenge her students to strive for optimal awareness as they attend to the development of technique and the discipline of practicing new skills. This heightened awareness, Stein believes, is how artists participate in shaping a better education for themselves.

"It's not just about how to paint," Stein explains, "it's also about how to see. It's about paying attention. Once you've learned how to see, it becomes easier to learn to paint what you see." One of the most challenging things about teaching her philosophy, Stein says, is to convince her students that it is positive to sometimes feel uncomfortable. Stein herself learned the value of sitting in discomfort as an artist when she studied with Jack Beal. "Jack would tell us to go out and make a lot of mistakes because that's what his workshops are all about," she explains. "He would say, 'make yourself try new things; make yourself be really uncomfortable. Then you can go back to your studio and create your own masterpieces.' This happens in your own environment, he would tell us, not in the classroom."

"One of Jack's favorite exclamations," she continues, "was More, More, More! Students who work with me over a long period of time learn to understand that making art is about process. They also come to understand that you never 'arrive.' There is always more, more, more—more to see and more to know."

Knowing more, according to Stein, includes knowing art history, so she often has her students diagram paintings by the great masters. "By putting tracing paper over a Degas or a Vermeer or a Rubens and breaking them down into lines and value," she explains, "my students discover that these compositions actually have intent. They see how Degas put together well-constructed compositions, even though they look loose and casual."

The composition theory that Stein teaches is derived from her years of study under Beal and Sondra Freckelton. In fact, Stein always begins her composition class with this Beal quotation: "One of the big excitements about painting representationally is trying to represent the illusion of the third dimension on a two-dimensional surface. I think that illusion is magical and that artists should use any tool nec-

SAXON HENRY IS A FREELANCE WRITER WHO LIVES IN LAKE PEESKILL, NEW YORK.

CUTLINES:
ELIZABETH STEIN, *SELF PORTRAIT*, OIL, 1998, 16 x 20 INCHES. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

essary to achieve that sense of magic."

Creating space is of the utmost importance in narrative painting because when an artist creates space he or she is introducing emotional content. "In order to tell a story, the artist must create a space for the viewer," Stein explains. "A great composition with a crude application of paint is far better than a flat painting that has greater technical proficiency when you are creating narratives," she tells her students. "Otherwise you are saying, 'boy, look how great I can paint!'"

Style is another element that an artist has to discover over a period of time, according to Stein. "One of my greatest joys when I am teaching is that moment when I am able to assist a student in discovering his or her own style; his or her own way of articulating what he or she sees and experiences." But Stein is clear that helping a student to discover individual style does not mean dictating a particular style to that student because she believes that style is just as individual as handwriting.

"I think that many students have a difficult time because they come in wanting me to dictate style; wanting me to say 'do it this way.'" But Stein has seen the negative effects of formulaic teaching. She remembers how Janet Fish, who she greatly admires, addressed this issue in a workshop once by saying, "I do not have an art pill that I can give you." "That's so true," Stein exclaims, "there is no such thing as an art pill!"

Robert Henri suggests that an artist's brush stroke at the moment of contact "carries inevitably the exact state of being of the artist at that exact moment into the work." Stein agrees: "I think art is fascinating because it forces you to reveal yourself."

Can self-awareness be taught? "I can teach color, I can teach composition, I can teach technique, I can teach it over and over and over again," she explains, "but I can't teach a student how to be an authentic painter unless they are willing to do the internal work themselves."

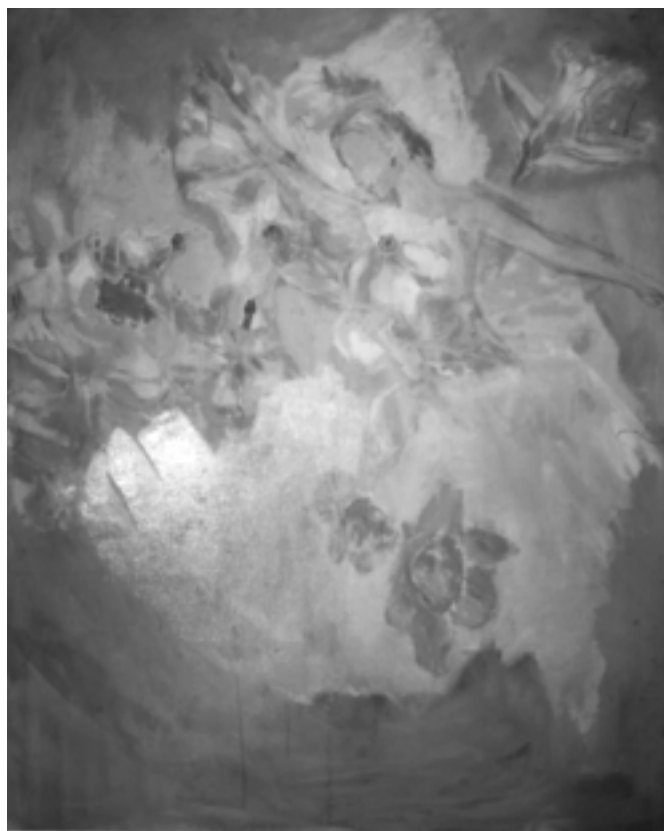


The Golden

Marjorie Liebman, painter and native Memphian, has been a great force in the arts, both locally and nationally, for the last fifty years. Liebman studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, Washington University, and the Art Students' League in New York, as well as The University of Memphis and the University of Mississippi at Oxford. She made her mark on New York in the 1940s and '50s. From 1952 until 1959, she was represented by Betty Parsons Gallery, an early proponent of the Abstract Expressionists. Her experiences prompted Liebman to found Art Today, a support group for new art, when she returned to Memphis and realized that it suffered from a total lack of contemporary art.

Liebman's paintings range in style from abstraction to landscape, portraiture, and still life. Over the past twenty years, her floral images have become particularly well known. Her work has hung in the Whitney, the Guggenheim, the Brooklyn Museum, the Memphis Brooks, and numerous galleries in the United States and Mexico.

NUMBER: interviewed Marjorie Liebman in June and July of 1999 as part of an oral history project. The following is excerpted and edited from the first two interviews. A third interview is planned for 2000, concentrating on Liebman's association with Art Today. Interviewers are Christina Huntington and Allyson Ross and transcriber Betty Williams.



Where were you born?

In Memphis. Somebody said near my mother. [Laughter]

Describe your family to us.

I had a very musical mother and a very practical father, who was in the paper business. My mother wanted me to be a musician. She was almost a musician, but she got married too young and didn't get to fulfill herself that way. She wanted me to play the piano and I liked it, but wasn't mad about it as other things. And I regretted later that I didn't stick with it.

When did you become interested in art?

It was so long ago, that it was a part of me since childhood. I was always interested. When I went to grammar school, I remember I used to love great big flat books because they looked like portfolios, and I would tell myself all kinds of stories that I had a studio in France or Italy. I dreamed of that when I was ten or twelve years old.

Were you close to any artists during childhood?

This friend of mine had an aunt that had scarlet fever when she was a child, and she was mentally retarded. She was an older woman. At the time I knew her she was very imaginative and would go around on Halloween with the children.

She also did something artistically. I never heard of anybody doing it. I thought to myself that that was an idea that was very original in art. She would dig holes in the ground. She would take pails — children's pails — and would put old costume jewelry in the pails. Then she would bury it and put a glass over it. You could see at night the jewelry, all over the garden.

If you are talking about different forms of art, people stretching so hard to be different, I know what it meant because I was in New York at the time when everybody would stand on their heads to —they are doing the same thing now — to be just different. To be different—the only thing is to be different — not to be good, but to be different. It was a revolt. It was complete revoltage.

When I was in New York, I was very struck with the skyscrapers. I wanted to get that quality, so I had sequins—loose sequins—all over my paintings. Then my friend, who was a sculptor said, "Don't use that stuff. I want to give you some sculpture dust. It is really organic. Don't use that sequin stuff. It will turn black." Which I think it did. I was so struck with skyscrapers and with the lights at night and putting a lot of light and sequins on the pictures. It was a very inventive time.



left: Marjorie Liebman, *Flower Ballet*, 40 x 48 inches, n.d. Courtesy of the artist.

right: Marjorie Liebman, untitled painting, circa 1950, Courtesy of the artist.

Thread

An Interview with Marjorie Liebman

What sort of early training in art did you have?

When I went to Central High, Clara Snyder was a wonderful art teacher. Then I had a [private] instructor by the name of Howard Simon. He was a woodcut artist. There was a principal by the name of Mrs. Marler who thought it was very immoral that. . . I had this girl in a bathing suit to pose for me. I was almost suspended. . . I don't think she ever posed nude, but that was considered [scandalous]. All the teachers got together and said I had to learn anatomy and that I was going to be an artist. Isn't that funny!

After high school, did you go to college, or art school?

Art Students League [in New York], but I first . . . went to the Art Institute [of Chicago] for one year. I had a very good art history teacher there, Helen Gardner who wrote *Art Through the Ages*.

It was so cold up there, I couldn't take it. The Art Institute was right on the Lake. I remember I had written a paper and getting off the El, the wind was so strong, and I had a rubber band around the paper and it blew into Lake Michigan. It was the coldest and sharpest wind. [Gardner] didn't believe that I had written the paper, and I had another copy of it. And I said, "I will bring it in tomorrow." So she said she gave me a "B" instead of an "A" because she said she doubted me.

I was up there one year, and that was enough for me. Chicago was much too cold. The next year I went to St. Louis. I made a mistake and took a commercial course. It was very boring.

I used to design my clothes. I was very good at it . . . and [my mother] thought I would make a good designer and illustrator. So I took a very boring illustrative course the first year at Washington U.

Then that summer I went to Europe. I was mad about Florence. I studied so much before I left that I knew where everything was. I knew I could go to see San Marco and see the Fra Angelicos and another place and see Giotto's. I could walk in [The Uffizi] and see the famous Botticelli, especially *The Annunciation*.

Then I went back to St. Louis and I started in a painting class. I had a teacher by the name of Goetz and he said, "you are really a painter. You just wasted your year." I said, "I guess I did." So then I started to paint and I really worked hard after that. I don't worry about the commercial end of things. I never was any good at that.

Which of your teachers had the greatest influence on you?

I learned a lot about portraiture from [Robert] Brackman [at the Art Students' League]. He was a very terrific teacher.

I worked with [Vaclav] Vytlačil one summer, and I learned a lot about how things flow in space and the feeling of air, especially the Japanese feeling of air. He opened my way to contemporary because he was a student of [Hans] Hofmann.

I don't think I was terribly influenced by anybody much . . . not anybody that was living anyway. I always loved my own work too much. I liked to do what I wanted to do.

Marjorie Liebman on her studio balcony overlooking the Mississippi River. Photography by Shannon Fagan, 1999.



You were in the Carnegie International in the 1950s?

The Director of the Carnegie International [Washburn] was the judge of the Mid-South show that year [at] the Brooks Art Gallery. They gave me a Purchase Prize and he said to me, "you ought to be in Carnegie this year." I was at that time showing at Betty Parsons in New York. He said, "be sure and tell Ms. Parsons to show me your work when I come to the gallery."

I told her about it and she said, "You know, I didn't show your work at all. I forgot to." She said, "but there will be a next year." Oh no, I don't believe in that. There is not a next year. You either do it or have it done or there will never be a next year to anything. I wrote him a letter and told him, "you went to Betty Parsons's gallery and she did not show my work. In the social world if you are invited to a party you can't be uninvited unless the party is called off. It must to be the same in the art world."

I went to visit Betty, and I was going to stay with her. The elevator man opened the door to her penthouse, and the phone was ringing. I picked up the telephone and who was it but Mr. Washburn inviting Betty to an exhibition. I said, "You don't remember me, but I am visiting Betty. I am Marjorie Liebman." He said to me, " Ms. Liebman, how could I forget you. Didn't I go all the way back to New York to get your painting." That is known as persistence.

Tell us about meeting Betty Parsons and your experiences in New York with the Abstract Expressionists.

I was in Martha's Vineyard and was studying with Vaclav Vytlačil. I was there only one summer. I had a friend who had a marvelous studio. So she said, "I know Betty and supposing I ask her over for tea. She'll see some of your work." So I said it was all right with me. [My paintings] were mostly gouaches and I had worked very thin in oil. I went into oil and worked rather thin, transparent and wonderful on Belgian linen. It is beautiful before you put your brush to it, a texture I haven't ever seen since. It is very unusual, very fine woven stuff.

Anyway, she said to come to New York in the fall. So I went to New York and got an apartment and started to work, and I showed about a year later. It was very gratuitous that I happened to meet her, because you could carry stuff around in New York for years and have a hard time.

Do you think your work has been received differently because you are a woman, especially in the fifties and in New York?

It was such a fight with the men for

the women in the gallery. They didn't want some of the women in the gallery. Betty Parsons was a woman herself and she couldn't take that. But this was difficult.

I always wanted to write a story about . . . the women in the abstract movement. There were so many darn good painters—good women painters. For instance, there was Hetta Sterne. She was the wife of a cartoonist.

Marie Taylor just recently died. I don't have anything of her sculpture any more. I liked her work.

Why didn't women get as much recognition as men?

They didn't push themselves as much as the men. Other people didn't push them. There were many who were very good. There were some in the other galleries that were pretty good and were living in France.

There was [Lee] Krasner, [Jackson] Pollock's wife. She was a very good painter. She stopped painting and worked so hard for Jackson. She practically killed herself with him.

Did you have any experiences with Jackson Pollock or Lee Krasner?

Yes. [At my first exhibition at Betty Parsons' gallery] She had a place where pictures were stored behind a curtain in the back of her gallery. That morning I had the show all these people from Museum of Modern Art came and they were looking at everybody's work.

[Ad] Reinhart had a show, too. Everybody was having a show that day. Across the hall in there was [Josef] Albers who did the squares. There was a lot going on. The whole art world was out. They were all walking around having a big big day. So it happened that my paintings were hanging on the curtain.

Pollock . . . had to take them down to get back where his work was. It didn't last for hours, and it wasn't exactly in the middle of the show, but it was like having a bridal veil taken off or something on the first show you had.

He put them back. I don't think a woman would have done that. They wouldn't have done that to a man.

Did he ask if he could or did he just do it?

No, he didn't ask. I don't know if he did or not, he just took them off and put them back. That was my wedding day as far as to the art world of New York. I was getting married to the art world for the first time. I didn't like it a damn bit. [Laughter] Anyway, he put them back. Of course, the people had no idea. It wasn't that bad. After all, when things are past, they are past and you are just history. It is amazing. We are just history.

Why did you leave Betty Parsons' gallery?

[It was over] a painting of a rising figure that I called *The Ascension*. It was a nude, and it didn't fit. But I have always done that. I've worked two ways. I am not one way.

Anyway, it was probably not homogeneous for the rest of it, but I insisted on showing it because I had an announcement [with] the figure on [it]. Then she just kicked me out of the gallery. But that was all right, we were still friends. She said if I hang it, you won't hang anymore with

me. That was the end of that. I thought this was ridiculous because it was on my announcement. And that was the only picture that was sold.

Did you feel that the other painters in New York influenced you?

Oh yes. I think the whole community around me was influencing my work at that time. I knew I was [being influenced], and it was very exciting to me because that was what was going on around me. That is why I started Art Today. I was so thrilled about it. When I came back there wasn't anything in Memphis but the International Gallery. That was the first contemporary gallery. Mr. Bruce owned that gallery, and Bob Sandersen . . . worked in that gallery and showed the work. Mr. Bruce . . . had it on the river, and this was before urban renewal, we had an artist colony on the river.

It was in the fifties. I didn't have a view of the river, but all I had to do was walk outside and it was there. When Betty Parsons came down, we used to walk that old bridge — the condemned bridge. I think now you can't do it. It was safe in those days. You know you could walk a bridge in the moonlight.

I had one of the houses – shotgun houses – with a breezeway. I had all kinds of experiences down there. There was a young boy who was about 18, and he was a perfectly gorgeous young man. I wanted him to come and pose for me. And I never will forget he came up and I painted him. He was just handsome and just a beautiful young man. He sat there so innocent, and I paid him. And he said, "All you wanted me to do is sit here! He said, "You are going to pay me for sitting here?" I don't know what he thought I was going to do to him. It was years later that I figured out that he thought it was a waste of money. I guess he thought I would do something else.

Tell us about living in Mexico.

It was in the sixties. I married a New Yorker. He was in advertising. He said he was a refugee from Madison Avenue. He was a very good painter. He used to paint a lot of beggars. There were so many beggars at that time with their shawls over their heads.

Well, I came fresh out of New York, and I couldn't believe that I could be plunged into such a realistic environment. I could not paint an abstract painting in Mexico. It was not possible to paint an abstract in Mexico for me. I began to go back into painting churches with gold leaf. Did I use gold leaf! I saw the insides of churches that drove me crazy—the outside of churches. I went church mad. I started to work again. It was so different. What a tremendous impact the environment has on us.

Everything affects you. An artist is affected by everything because you are like a sponge. You soak things up somehow esthetically. It was almost impossible to work abstractly in Mexico because there was so much visual beauty in the churches and the outside things—beggars and people running around in revolt. It was all very concrete and photographic almost. I wasn't a great photographer, but I've taken lots of photographs. I never seem to be able to use them. I still believe I am going to use them sometime. They are good things to have as references.

You have said that painting is like poetry.

That is not true for everybody. I would say the people who paint like the Mexican people were realist and trying to show the political situation in Mexico. There were many political painters in the world who painted for a reason. It is propaganda painting that it is supposed to arouse anger, or pity, or whatever you want to do or to change things. There are so many kinds of ideas about what painting is.

I am only speaking of my painting. Painting to me is poetry. It is plastic visual poetry, but it doesn't have to be true for everybody. It is a very personal thing. But I've had people tell me when they buy my paintings that they see angels in them. It wasn't there when they bought it. Where does it come from? I say, sometimes I paint something, and I didn't put it in at all.

I've seen this picture, and it is definitely a woman holding a child whom I never put in. I don't know how it got in there, but it is a figure. Later on, maybe I'll use that figure in something that needs a figure. They happen better when you don't put them in.

I don't feel that the ugliness of the world is there to be immortalized. I guess as a Christian Scientist I never felt that error was real or that it had some real validity or it was sort of like some negative—it is very difficult to express what I feel. I don't feel like I am putting my head in the sand. I am very well aware of the harsher side of life. I know it exists, but I don't feel it should be made into such a reality. I mean I feel it should be worked out. I think you should overcome it within, you know. People don't understand you. They think you are not a realist. But what is real? What is absolutely real? That's what Christ said, isn't it? "If I be lifted up," I love that. Sometimes I think I am trying to paint that.

What artists have influenced your work?

When I was doing flowers, I thought of Monet. I thought of Monet a lot. Of course, I went through a Degas period when I was studying with Brackman. I did a little ballet dancer, and my cousin bought the first painting I ever sold in my life for \$300 and quite a big 25" by 30" canvas.

It is a ballet dancer with her back to us, a little chunky. I think it is as good as anything I am doing now. I had a real jump in that one. But I was in a real Degas period for awhile. I have always loved the ballet.

You designed sets for the ballet in the past.

Yes, I did a set for the Memphis ballet. I did two curtains and they may still be rotting away [in the Cook Convention Center]. I went to the old Kennedy gym [at the veterans hospital on Getwell].

They had these great big things that you paint scenery with—great big cans. I had brushes that were this long. Harry Sorrell fixed those brushes for me. I love that man dearly. He took the felt and put them on these long dial sticks. I would put brooms with them on the floor and take a whole bucket of paint and mess around with it on the floor—big with a broom. Then you run up on the gallery second floor to look down and see what you did. You couldn't see because you were so close to it. You were worried about your footprints! Instead of fingerprints you had footprints on everything.

I did a couple of them. It was Israeli music [called *Songs and Psalms*, April 29, 1973]. My cousin [Sigfried Lowenstein] wrote the music. So I did the sets, and I had this enormous figure of a girl sending a dove to

the lion. The other set was a church.

When did you start painting flowers?

When I came back from New York, I really started to work on flowers a lot. I had a friend that had such a wonderful garden. I didn't have any flowers. I didn't do any flowers in New York.

I've read this and I can see it also that you seem to work in verticals and long lines.

Yes, upward movement. Now I was working very high key like that in New York. A whole series of paintings that I did at that time . . . were very high key pictures. You are whiter than the white of the canvas. Some people don't know that and you can get lighter and higher than the canvas. I think they keep the luminosity. When you are doing heads and portraits, it is a wonderful thing because it keeps the paint very clean. You don't muddy the waters when you work down there. That is one thing I learned from Brack. I don't know if he went as far as I did with trying to do that, but you would leave the light sections high and open until the end. The richest color existed on the part before it turned into the highest light. I don't understand . . . the ones down in the local galleries [that] start with black, and I haven't thought much about working with black.

Tell us more about your flower paintings and your work in the last few years.

I am doing a flower thing at the moment. To tell you the truth, I warm up on flowers. I don't think they are the ultimate, but I can always paint flowers when I can't paint some abstract ideas I have. I think it is cool and fine and I can play around with it. It warms you up for other things. You don't always do something wonderful, but you can enjoy them.

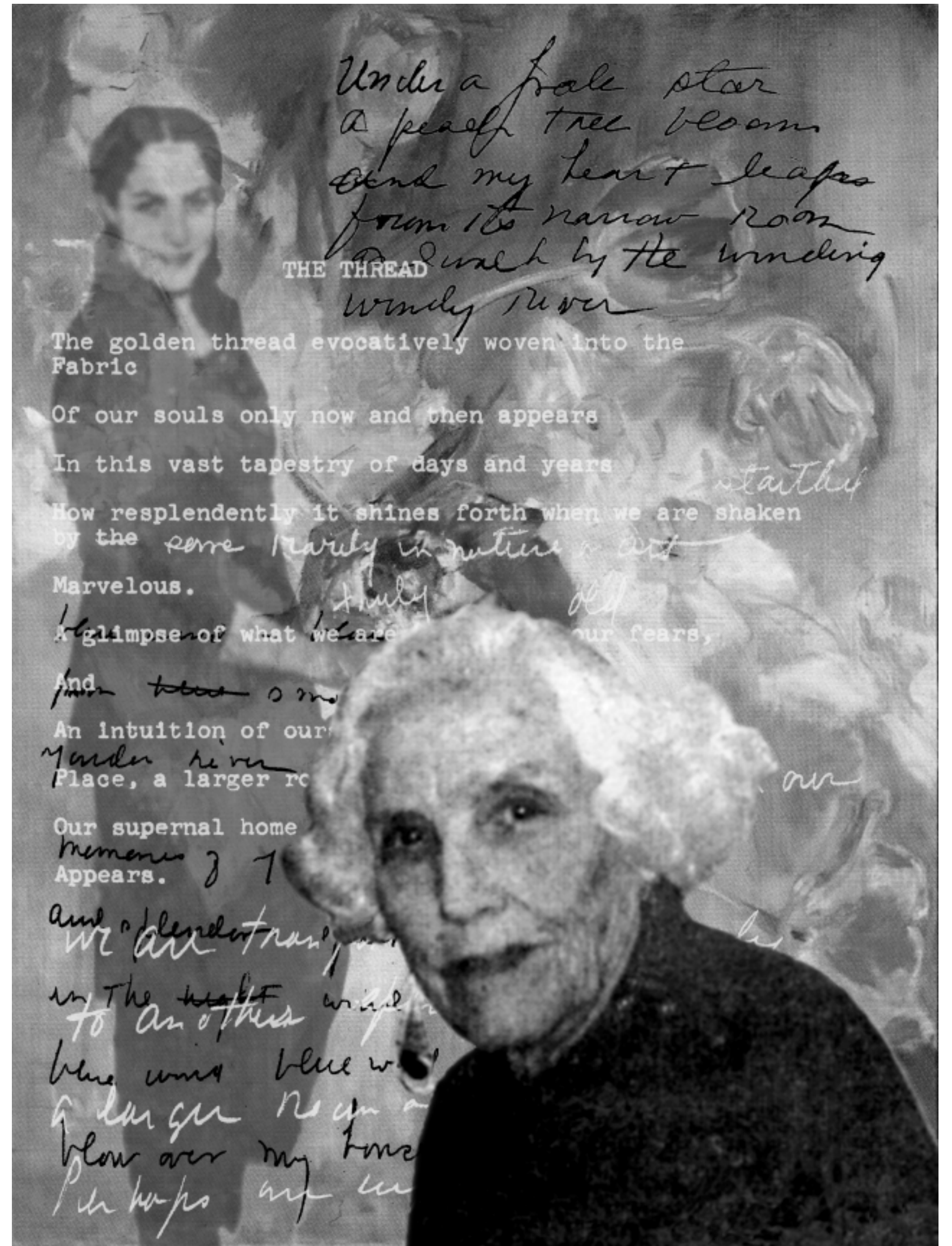
Which medium do you like the best?

I don't know. It is like asking which child do you like the best. I like pastels too. I started with watercolor, and I think that I like watercolor the best. I don't like it better than oil because I work thin in oil and I think it came from my watercolor years that I've worked with a transparent way in oil. I never sort of got away from that. I am not crazy about acrylic, but one thing I like about it is you can collage with it. I like collaging.

I always say to students, follow the picture like an adventure. Don't be so intellectual. Let the picture talk to you a little bit. Let things happen. I don't do preliminary sketches. I think you put everything you have in the sketches. By the time you get to the painting, you don't have anything to put into the painting.

So when I am doing an abstract painting, I do not sketch. I do not know what I am going to do. I let the picture talk to me and move me. After I get through, I look at things and I don't remember ever putting those things in. Things happen and I think it is the mystery of painting. As long as it is mysterious, it is interesting because it is always different.

I don't think anybody should stop drawing and thinking in terms of reality. But when you are out, I think you should draw realistically if you want to and afterwards something metaphysically comes out of it. I think you should always draw, study, and keep on looking.



Sheri Fleck Rieth, *The Golden Thread*, 1999, digital collage of artist Marjorie Liebman, her paintings, and poetry.

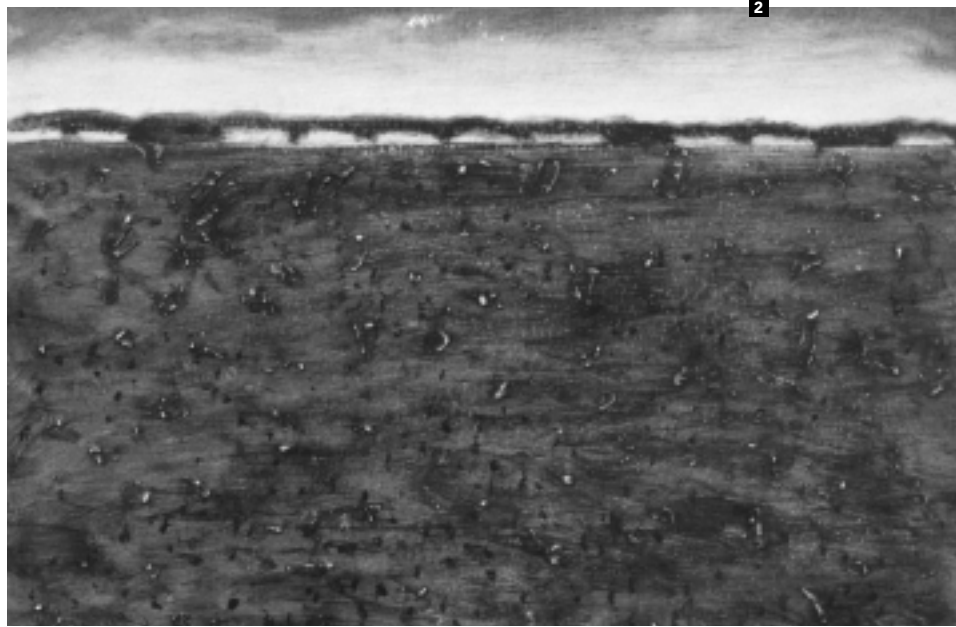
DEBORAH BROWN
PAMELA COBB
JANE FLOWERS
COOPER STREET GALLERY
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
JULY 9 - AUGUST 14, 1999

The joint exhibition of works by Deborah Brown, Pamela Cobb, and Jane Flowers at Cooper Street Gallery provides a perfect opportunity for the study and comparison of contemporary women's art in Memphis. But how do we talk about women's art at the dawn of the twenty-first century? Much feminist study of the last two decades has indicated that there is nothing essential about being a woman, no unified "women's experience," transcendent of race, class, and other defining factors, that underlies women's creative processes. It is becoming more and more difficult, if not impossible, to define "what it is to be a woman"; yet few would argue against devoting particular attention to the artistic activity of women, an activity that has been so often overlooked and underrepresented in the past. How, then, should we approach the works in this exhibit?

It is difficult, at first, to find common threads connecting the works of these three artists. Cobb's paintings feature depictions of men and women, natural scenes and manufactured objects, while Brown focuses on images of the body (specifically, women's bodies). In sharp contrast to these two artists, Flowers's "Delta Series" is a record of change in the natural landscape and contains no explicitly human content at all. The marked differences between the works of these three artists thwart any attempt to group them under a heading of "women's experience." Despite the fact that Cobb, Brown, and Flowers draw from widely varying experiences to produce their artwork, there are points of intersection among the works that give the exhibition a sense of overall coherence.

Much of Cobb's work in this show is concerned with the past, with pressures of memory and heredity. *Heroes* is a large acrylic painting on canvas of (presumably) war veterans standing in front of a propeller airplane. Liberal use of gold leaf carries association with medieval and Byzantine icons, suggesting that the subjects of the work are particularly precious and venerable. The gold accents give the painting the yellowed, faded quality of an old photograph. The faces of the men are eerily familiar yet anonymous, lacking just enough detail to stand in for the heroic ghosts of anyone's past. *Flying Cross* has a similar theme, calling into question what, whom, and how we remember.

Cobb's *North Hollywood* documents a past that has



been reduced to written correspondence, based on a series of unanswered letters the artist's grandmother wrote to the husband who abandoned her during the Depression. This painting records the text of one of these letters, framed by an empty shadowed landscape and a faceless woman.

While *Artifacts*, an acrylic-on-paper composition depicting a stack of envelopes, suggests a complete cycle of communication and response, *North Hollywood* is infused with a sense of loneliness and hopelessness as the text of the letter dissolves into the dark landscape. Brown's mixed-media compositions in her "Points of Entry" series also address issues of communication, but in a very different way. The cropped physical details of the women in her works serve as the external expressions of internal tensions and struggles. Brown uses worn, used, damaged materials in each of her works, from rusted hinges and strips of metal to ripped and unraveling fabrics. These pieces of fabric often serve as the ground for paintings of her subjects; the fabrics are then stretched and nailed to the base of the composition, highlighting the expressive tension in the figures themselves. The smooth, pure skin of the women in her paintings contrasts with these worn and torn materials.

The "Points of Entry" series is both beautiful and complex, and Brown makes use of the female body in a powerful way. Although the subjects of her works are often severely cropped, Brown uses this cropping to depict bodies that are revealed yet concealed, completely in control of their display. In her pictures of pregnant women, the hands of the subjects are shown drawing aside draperies to reveal the physical proof of their pregnancies. These are visual statements, delicately recorded yet displayed with painful, almost violent images of rusted metal and crooked nails. In "Points of Entry," nothing seems straightforward, even in its most visually simplified form: love, pain, and exhaustion are delivered

together. It is quite a shift to turn from Brown's multi-faceted images to Flowers's comparatively simple landscapes. Their bright colors are almost shocking after the subtle earth tones of Brown's works and the dark acrylics of Cobb's paintings. The "Delta Series" is a sequence of expressive landscapes documenting

the seasonal changes in fields along the Mississippi River. Flowers's observations of the landscape, if not her technique, could certainly be classified as Impressionist. Timelessness is suggested in these works, the repetition of a seemingly endless cycle of growth. Although the "Delta Series" captures the subtle variations in a landscape, it leaves the viewer with little to contemplate or explore compared to the rich narrative imagery and emotional tensions in Cobb's paintings and Brown's compositions.

Despite the fact that these artists seem to be working from quite different bases of experience, all three of them demonstrate an interest in transformations wrought by and within the natural world. Brown utilizes scraps of wood and metal that have been transformed by weather — by the changes in atmosphere that are traced in Flowers's landscape paintings. Cobb's *View from the Pier* depicts the landscape transformed by light and water at a particular time of day, at a point when light and shadow coexist as equal elements and solid forms of nature are stripped of their physicality. These transformations occur with the passage of time, which is tracked by Cobb, Brown, and Flowers in their highly diverse works.

MELODY BARNETT DEUSNER

DEUSNER IS ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF EDUCATION, MEMPHIS BROOKS MUSEUM OF ART.



1 DEBORAH BROWN, *POINTS OF ENTRY, NO. 6*, MIXED MEDIA, 1999. COURTESY OF COOPER STREET GALLERY.

2 JANE FLOWERS, *DELTA SERIES*, OIL ON PAPER, 1999. COURTESY OF COOPER STREET GALLERY.

3 PAMELA COBB, *ARTIFACT*, ACRYLIC ON PAPER, 1999. COURTESY OF COOPER STREET GALLERY.

LURLYNN FRANKLIN
LEVY GALLERY
BUCKMAN ARTS CENTER
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
SEPTEMBER 27 - NOVEMBER 5, 1999

The 28 acrylic and collage paintings on wood and paper in Lurlynn Franklin's exhibition titled "Body and Soul" at the Levy Gallery consolidate her position as an insightful, pungent, streetwise satirist of both white and black folk. She uses physiognomy, hairstyle, and clothing as props to dramatize the human condition while probing its flaws, foibles, and racial stereotypes.

Initially, Franklin seems to phrase her worldview in the terms of a naive artist. At first glance her stylistic approach appears to dovetail neatly into the long Southern outsider tradition, but extended observation reveals far deeper strategies at work. Uniting a host of multi-cultural influences, including both high and low art approaches tweaked with flair and imagination, she plays with simplified forms, flattened perspectives, areas of pure color, and tight linear structures that absorb Gustav Klimt, popular graphic art, and Byzantine surfaces filtered through a sophisticated vision rife with keen wit and wisdom. And all of this at the service of her satirical intentions, as if the ghosts of William Hogarth, Honoré Daumier, or Toulouse-Lautrec were being channeled through the mind of a hip black woman.

The majority of the paintings range from a diminutive 4 x 6 inches, up to 50 x 40 inches in size, but flanking the main gallery entrance are two eccentric, single figure paintings, 8 feet x 16 inches. Both are titled *Size One*. Most of Franklin's titles succinctly convey her pointed humor and add a delicious resonance to the images: *Boticelli Butts* and *Elvis in the Food Stamp Line* are particularly good examples.

MELISSA CHRISTIANO
SAI GALLERY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
APRIL 3 - 24, 1999

An exhibition of recent work by Jonesboro artist Melissa Christiano was held at SAI Gallery in the Chelsea district of New York.

Christiano sees her new works as a wake up call to those of us who live our lives in a state of trance: a trance where we experience only moments when we are allowed to peek into reality. Through the formal use of repetition, the juxtaposition, and selection of material, she strives to awaken members of a catatonic society to the transience of their sacred lives.

As an artist, Christiano conducts her own singular experiments from fragments and scraps that make up our world. Her assemblages contain intense distilled images, objects, and surfaces that create a confronta-

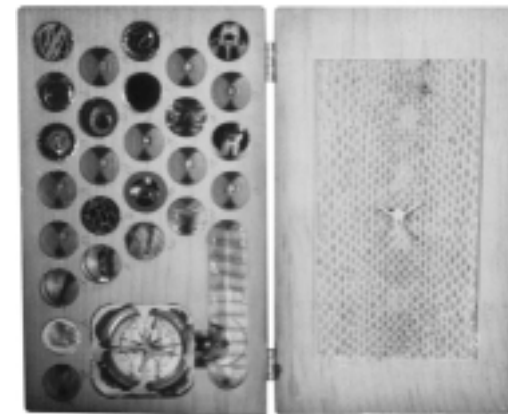
The latter presents a faceless Elvis-with-pompadour figure on the extreme left of the panel, holding actual food stamps collaged onto the surface. He is balanced on the right by a descending line of silhouettes: pregnant women characterized by stooped and defeated stances, paper doll cut-outs, and child-like forms. This calculated, asymmetrical composition is a double-edged riposte: the deflated gestures of the small figures communicate both the futile states of mind and class status of ongoing generations while also symbolizing the early poverty of this most famous of American icons.

Cataloguing the seductive promenade of Franklin's color, tracking her singular methods of applying paint, and describing the myriad marks and symbols enlivening her pictorial universe reveal the broad, thoughtful range of her picturemaking strategies. Every panel is a vessel brimming with fertile color: cobalt, cerulean and teal blues, cadmium oranges and reds, deep ultramarine and violet blacks, cool and warm grays, tans, siennas, a host of lime and emerald greens, gold and bronze metallics, lemon and zinc yellows: all nudge, bump, and dance around each other while generating a flatly conceived, neatly luminous space that is theatrical in its intentions. Her color sense is a special gift, and it's the first thing beckoning the viewer toward these paintings.

Franklin is erudite with pigment: she squeezes her paint directly from the tube, creating raised linear skeins; it is also scumbled, knifed-on and dry brushed, dotted and blended,

tion between past and present. They are affirmations of serenity, recollection, and enchantment. She incorporates found objects, worn man-made tools, animal bones, and natural science in an attempt to achieve timelessness in each construction. Her assemblages function as a type of sealed up mausoleum and have a way of shifting one's focus from outer world phenomena into inward reflections about oneself and one's place in the outer world.

In Christiano's hands every object is sacred, but nothing is stable. Objects decompose, collide, and appear only to disappear, and are compressed to reemerge as new, surprising beautiful forms. For example, in *Tooth Fairy*, the artist combines a worn wood plane, mirror, and a tooth to bring to mind the memories of the past with the reality of innocence never to be recovered. For another of her box-like transformations, *Song & Dance*, she gathered ticking clocks with swinging pendulums, thorns, and mirrors then reconstructed them inside an old sewing machine drawer. Between the rhythm of



Franklin's take on the syntax of kitschy clothing worn by both races. This strong instinctive bent toward pattern and color complements Franklin's rambunctious, acutely comic sense of skewed conventionality. Her work often sashays into the realm of poetry because of its heightened relationship to common experience and the paradoxes contained therein; these paintings most definitely get under the skin.

FRED BURTON

BURTON IS A PAINTER AND INSTRUCTOR AT MEMPHIS COLLEGE OF ART. LURLYNN FRANKLIN, *BAD TIES*, 20 X 36 INCHES, MIXED-MEDIA, 1999. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

the ticking, the movement of the pendulum, alarms going off randomly, and the fragmented image of the viewer, the artist strives to raise an awareness of the present: how we are living each day, each moment.

The intimate scale of her work reflects the memories of childhood as well as a type of containment. Though the space may be small, light floods through unseen windows creating an illusion of depth. Her forms evoke an emotional response because of their aesthetic significance quite apart from their content. Each object is handled as if it were the rarest heirloom.

Melissa Christiano's work is an analogy of life itself, a series of balance that goes from one extreme to the other: building up, then breaking down, forming and then the dissolution of form.

Although this was Christiano's first solo show in New York, the work with its own regional flavor held its own. A strong Delta influence came through.

LARA SHELTON

SHELTON IS A PAINTER/PRINTMAKER AND RECENT GRADUATE OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY.

MELISSA CHRISTIANO, *ALPHABET*, MIXED-MEDIA: MIRROR, SHELL, 8 X 10 INCHES. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

LARRY EDWARDS

COOPER STREET GALLERY

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

APRIL 9 - MAY 8, 1999

Danger figures prominently in the work of Larry Edwards. The word itself pops up in titles five times in this exhibition, complemented by "accident," "fears," "doubts," "ghosts." And indeed the world appears to be a perilous, or at least vexing place, populated with alligators, large-mandibled insects, and murderous garden tools.

Edwards's gouaches resemble illustrations, both in their fantastic subject matter and their graphic qualities—bright colors, repetitive forms and patterns, and sketchy brushstrokes that produce a cartoonish effect. In particular, *Gardens Are Dangerous at Dusk* looks like an episode lifted from a wicked children's book, a story of blood-thirsty trowels. The scene is a backyard at sunset viewed through a wrought-iron fence. Against warm-hued clouds looms a tall brown house, its windows a fully-lit yellow like the recurring image in Magritte's "Empire of Lights" series: a home silhouetted and lit for night, complete with street lamp, but under a noontime sky.

The artist owes a debt to Surrealism, not only for the borrowed imagery, but for his belief in the secret life of inanimate objects. *Gardens Are Dangerous at Dusk* seems to present a sneak attack of trowels upon the unwitting suburban gardener. One hangs from the fence; another impales a glove to the ground, the first drops of blood trickling from three gashes. Behind this violence, we see



LEFT
LARRY EDWARDS, *DAANGEROUS AQUARIUM*, 1996, GOUACHE, PASTEL, 22 x 30 INCHES.
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

ABOVE
LARRY EDWARDS, *DAANGER AT TURTLE POND*, 1998, PASTEL, GOUACHE ON PAPER, 36 x 32 INCHES.
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

a figure's frumpy lower half—dressed in baggy pants and brown oxfords—as he drives a pitchfork into the ground.

However absurd this image, with its showdown between gardener and tools, it captures a dramatic tension. Dusky lighting, long shadows, and eerily lit house set the mood for a confrontation, and who can predict the outcome? It would depend on whether the narrative were a horror story or a comedy. Edwards's best images combine both.

Edwards looks upon a natural world seething with strange and deadly wildlife; creatures emerge from the shade of tall grass to threaten humans or each other. Still, the images maintain a quirkiness that prevents them from becoming deadly serious.

One of Edwards's frequent tactics plays upon the conventions of the nature illustration; at moments he quotes them so literally that his paintings look like pages torn from a biology textbook. *Danger At Turtle Pond* exemplifies the strategy, with its inconsistent, flattened spaces. The lower majority of the image reads as a straightforward depiction of life at the bottom of a pond. You have your water plants, schools of fish, the underbelly of a turtle paddling upward; but what is seen at the top changes everything. For out of this top fringe of reeds and swamp grass emerges an alligator, mouth open, about to slip into the water. Its position is spatially impossible, given the viewpoint already established by the lower portion of the painting. For how can we gaze down upon the alligator if we were just looking up from the floor of the lake? The collage-like, superimposed upper section accentuates the contained flatness of the teeming lower area, as if it were a stage set, a hammy scene of faked threat.

Spatially ambiguous blocks of aquatic life appear repeatedly. In *Aquarium Floater*, an apparent curtain of water (and the creatures suspended within it) hangs from poles in the main terminal of the deserted Memphis train station. In *Dangerous Aquarium*, animals float free of both water and the confines of their glass box, but remain trapped in an invisible plane. The repeated effect approaches the look of stock footage used in old horror films, a splicing of real and imaginary in a hybrid that feeds both hysteria and humor with its exaggerated cries of "danger, danger!"

Edwards's fascination with flatness carries over to his paintings of Moroccan-inspired dreamscapes, in which patterned planes open onto others to form an infinite regress of chambers and gardens. As in the animal paintings, space is not about discrete elements that fit together logically; rather it is fluid, encompassing numerous views and scenes, like a confused dream.

Edwards does not take idyllic joy in nature. Rather, humans encounter it on equal footing, or at a disadvantage, as in *Boot and Broken Flower*. The hapless owner of fancy hiking boots is defenseless against a swarm of insects that have descended upon his leg, as if in revenge for the flower he has just stomped. In the strange land of gardens infested with tiny but ferocious bears and grimacing irises, nature has at least a fighting chance against parking lots and chem-lawns.

By CHRISTINA HUNTINGTON

HUNTINGTON IS ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF NUMBER: AND ASSOCIATE EDITOR (INTERNET AND PUBLICATIONS) FOR TOWERLY PUBLISHING.

RICHARD KNOWLES

ART MUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

OCTOBER 1 - NOVEMBER 13, 1999

On display at The University of Memphis Art Museum last fall was the mini-retrospective of works by retiring art professor Richard Knowles. The works reflect the lifelong development of the artist, rather than any dominant phase or theme. The paintings chosen for his exhibit included works depicting aerial landscapes, ones involving female figures in water, and forest-inspired imagery. All of the works, however, are closer to abstract expressionism than to representational; their apparent subjects are often barely recognizable. According to Knowles, these "subjects" are of minimal importance; the substance of his paintings emerges from metaphor and the emotional aspects of color and form. Two paintings in particular, *Night Pool* and *Dante I*, define the polar extremes of the emotional continuum represented in Knowles's work.

Night Pool is part of Knowles's series of paintings depicting the female form in water. In the painting, we see an abstract figure submerged in water, with the exception of the head, which appears to hover just above the surface. The woman's body is distorted by the water's motion,



RICHARD KNOWLES, *DAANTE I*, 44 x 40 INCHES, OIL ON CANVAS, 1991.
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

resulting in an uneven yet graceful segmentation. The curve of the ripples flowing through and around her body form a loose, organic radial symmetry which merges her body with its environment, obscuring where the body ends and the water begins. The convergence of radial lines, of which her outstretched arms are a part, draws the viewer's attention toward the figure's head, where a radiating "halo" mirrors the water's distortion of the body. The face is shrouded in darkness; this, combined with the halo effect, suggests a hind source of light which silhouettes the head. The cool, soothing blues and greens result in an analogous color harmony which reflects the serene, spiritual nature of the painting. Metaphorically, the fusion of body and environment suggest a spiritual unity between the self and nature; at any rate, the painting's spiritual nature is strongly reinforced by the figure's Christ-like pose and glowing halo.

In sharp contrast to the tranquility of *Night Pool* is the tortured ferocity of *Dante I*, a disturbing solo work. This angry, brooding painting crouches uneasily among some of Knowles's other, less belligerent works, a simmering cauldron of the darkest emotions. The image appears to be an abstraction of a building — suggested primarily by the presence of a pattern of window-like squares — which is on fire. However, any relation to objective reality is purely nominal. The painting consists almost entirely of angry reds and consuming blacks, suggesting aggression and profound

suffering; complementing these chaotic elements is the geometrical distortion of the lines in the "building," suggesting confusion and disorientation. Furthermore, there is a feeling of downward motion, of descent, embodied in the curious tunnel which stretches from the "roof" of the building to the base of the painting; indeed, the concept of descent is explicitly mirrored in the painting's title, which refers to Dante's *Inferno*, the epic poem describing a descent into Hell. Finally, there is no spatial depth in the painting, which might imply a lack of objectivity. Such interpretations seem likely since, by Knowles's own admission, the painting was created in the wake of a traumatic divorce.

Although some of Knowles's paintings might appear initially as mere expressions, it soon becomes evident that they are also abstract, that the "subject," when identifiable, is of little or no importance. The body in water, the burning building — these are of little significance in themselves; for Knowles, they are vehicles for conveying emotional states and ideas through shape and color, a means of communicating with his audience.

SCOTT FULMAR

FULMAR IS A SENIOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS MAJORING IN COMPUTER SCIENCE.

CHARLES KEIGER

LISA KURTS GALLERY

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

JULY 13 - AUGUST 9, 1999

"The Veiled Journey," Charles Keiger's first one-person show at Lisa Kurts Gallery, takes the viewer into a whimsical world where figures perform acrobatic feats atop bicycles, or dance and play musical instruments in natural settings. These figures resemble the solid figures of Fernand Léger. They are rendered with the same dense modeling, but they appear less metallic and machine-like. Their facial features are anonymously depicted, and throughout the series of paintings the figures are interchangeable. Even in the sole portrait, *Dorothy*, the woman resembles all the other female figures in the exhibition. A recurring element is fluffy clouds floating in the sky above the figures' heads, almost as if they are the figures' dreams or aspirations. The clouds are painted with the same weight as the figures, and help unify the compositions. The paintings, while less than three feet in size, project into the gallery by the use of bright, complementary colors. The bright, candy-colors give the paintings a playful, child-like quality, which is reinforced by the artist's faux-naïf style.

Several of the paintings feature large vases holding a single flower. One such piece, *Inside-Outside*, depicts a centrally-placed vase holding a yellow flower with blue leaves. To the right of the vase are a wine glass and crackers, possibly signifying religion or religious experience. Resting on the same table, to the right, is an open sketchbook. Etched into the paint are drawings of the wine glass and a flower. Behind the vase is a large rectangle containing two dancing figures, with another figure playing a flute-

like instrument. While resembling the figures of Léger, these figures also call to mind the dancing figures of Matisse's *Joy of Life*. In front of the figures grows a small flower, which echoes the drawing on the sketchbook page. There is some ambiguity as to whether this rectangle is a framed painting or a window, alluding to the Renaissance view of painting as creating the illusion that one is looking through a window into a scene. An interesting tension is created between the growing flower and the flower on the sketchbook page, as it is unclear whether the artist is drawing the flower from life or merely recreating it from his own painting. Clearly *Inside-Outside* is a celebration of life, both the interior life of the mind, and the exterior pleasures of the world.

Another recurring theme of the exhibition is the balancing act required by life. Numerous figures in these paintings balance atop bicycles or large wheels. In *Acrobat with Assistant*, a purple, male figure balances upon a large wheel which is held by a nude woman. At the base of the wheel rests a small hammer. The male figure's arms are outstretched for balance, but also suggest a sense of reaching out and embracing the world. Keiger's use of color creates an interesting optical effect in that the figure's purple arms, juxtaposed against yellow clouds and a red sky, appear to move slightly as he hovers on the wheel. The hammer at the wheel's base might symbolize the man's labor, which has been abandoned in favor of a pursuit which may seem meaningless to all but himself. Another painting, *The Cyclist* depicts a figure balancing precariously on the seat of a bicycle, crossing a tightrope strung between the sawed-off branches of the tree (possibly the tree of knowledge) against which a ladder is resting. At the base of the tree are two saplings, which grow upward despite the possible fate

that may await them. The cut-off limbs of the tree suggest the futility of this effort. Nonetheless, he persists in balancing upon the tightrope. While *The Cyclist* is one of the more interesting compositions in the show, the artist here has abandoned his high-keyed palette for a less satisfying use of local color, causing the work to appear somewhat flat compared to other paintings.

A figure setting out on course appears in the painting, *Different Paths*. A nude male figure carrying a staff walks along a road leading away from a city, over which a dark cloud of smoke hangs. As the figure walks along the road toward the horizon, he reaches upward toward a small bird etched into the paint. To the right of the figure grows a large, whimsical tree. In the foreground are a table and chair. Resting upon the table are an open book, a pencil, and reading glasses. As with many of the figures in these paintings, this lone man has left behind toiling anonymously at a routine job and the world of books to pursue a journey of self-discovery. Unlike the bright yellow clouds of the other paintings, however, the clouds in the sky of *Different Paths* are a sooty grey, suggesting that the figure may not encounter on his journey that which he hopes to find.

That this lone figure appears again and again throughout the series suggests that he serves as the artist's alter-ego, and that the balancing act he performs atop bicycles and wheels is a metaphor for the creative process. In that the figures repeatedly abandon their books for these other pursuits, Keiger is reminding the viewer that while reading is a valuable source of knowledge, one must experience the world and live in it.

OMNESE CAMPBELL

CAMPBELL IS AN ARTIST AND FREELANCE WRITER WHO RESIDES IN MEMPHIS.

JIM BUONACCORSI

MARSHALL ARTS

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

MAY 8 - JUNE 5, 1999

What effect, if any, do the daily headlines have on us? Has that reaction changed from the seventies to the beginning of the twenty-first century? Can art still help to "awaken," "motivate," or "rescue" us like Beuys thought, because it is the last "warden of metaphysical awareness?"

I am not going to attempt to untangle this conundrum. However, it was this line of inquisition that first came into my mind upon viewing the exhibit "Unlearned Lessons" by Jim Buonaccorsi at Marshall Arts. Always the cynical interlocutor, I approached this exhibit thinking about the effectiveness of politically-based art, especially inside the confines of the somewhat educated and liberally-minded enclave of artists and art lovers. In the late seventies and early eighties many artists and artist groups went beyond the gallery walls to take their art to the people. These works were effective because they went to the people, involving, challenging, and confronting them on their home court. With this in mind I question this work's efficacy in a gallery setting.

Nonetheless, I continued looking, deciphering, and asking yet more questions. Is this work didactic? Is it supposed to be a wake-up call to the spoils of the global society? Or is it just one man's ineffable scream of frustration aimed towards the world? I think it is all three, and what keeps it from falling into the quagmire of woe-is-me or angry-as-hell sophomoric attempts to "change the world" is that this work is the artist's cries of frustration, anguish, and fear from a very personal place. Still I pondered, why not choose to write, give speeches, or protest these atrocities rather than make sculptures about them? The answer evaded me until my second visit. It was obvious, for in the right hands and mind visual art can possess so much of the person who created it that it becomes more personal than public, more internal than external, more effective in changing a person from the inside-out. This being true, it is easy to comprehend why Beuys thought if we were all "artists" the world could be changed. This is the power of art that is manifested in the work of Jim Buonaccorsi.

What we are presented with in this exhibit is a personal, poetic, and visually resplendent commentary on political doctrines and the status quo, not a brash series of statements on how we should live our lives. Buonaccorsi is talking with us, not to us—discussing societal problems and wanting to hear a response back from us. This work is a physical document of the discussion—temperamental and awkward at times, brilliant and engaging at others. An example of the latter is *Unlearned Lessons* where the viewer is confronted with a large structure reminiscent simultaneously of a factory, gas chamber, and tenement house. The title for this piece is spelled out in relief on the

ONLY ART IS CAPABLE OF DISMANTLING THE REPRESSIVE EFFECTS OF A SENILE SOCIAL SYSTEM THAT CONTINUES TO TOTTER ALONG THE DEATHLINE: TO DISMANTLE IN ORDER TO BUILD A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART

EXCERPT FROM *DIRECT DEMOCRACY THROUGH REFERENDUM (FREE PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE)* WRITTEN BY JOSEPH BEUYS, JUNE 1971



door to the "house" which is shaped appropriately enough like a tombstone although it contains the hinges and bolt of a furnace door. With the door ajar you see in the setting an oversized bomb on a bullseye stage illuminated by an eerie red light. This piece seems to be a commentary on our society's stockpile of death devices and our willingness to perpetuate the search for better ways to kill. It is as if Buonaccorsi is questioning why we are using all of our vast technologies to destroy rather than to create.

Like most of the other free-standing sculptures in this exhibit, *Unlearned Lessons* is approximately 8 feet high and constructed primarily of steel and cast iron. Buonaccorsi's visual vocabulary consists mainly of cast sets of human teeth, targets, bombs, bullets, death chambers, and various military paraphernalia: simple and limited. He consistently calls on the building form in these sculptures which are mounted on a pedestal embedded with gadgets, wires, hoses, and the aforementioned teeth. These sculptures also

appear to be connected to a power source in the wall via a large steel box that reaches back to the pedestal form through large steel coils. It does not take much imagination to see the connections to death chambers and tombs in this work, and it's precisely that literalness that makes them successful at times and not at others.

If *Unlearned Lessons* is succinct and successful in communicating a personal viewpoint to us, the same formula is detrimental to *Piccolo Mauseleo* whereby employing the same literalness seems trite. Inside of the marble "house" found in this piece, easily recognizable as a mausoleum, the viewer finds a small bronze bust of an emaciated victim. This piece is too direct and does not leave enough unanswered questions to capture the mind or the eye. Hence, its failure lies in its inability to embrace and engage the viewer.

It is, however, this precarious balance between too much and too little that makes these sculptures, including the wall reliefs, intriguing. At times his reduced vocabulary fails, as in *Piccolo Mauseleo*, but at others it is a triumph. The single most successful piece in the show is a spare construction entitled *We Saw You Coming*. Intonation is the decisive difference in this piece—it does not scream at you. Its meaning is veiled, encoded, even obscure. One has to slow down to comprehend it. It is also viscerally more attractive since the use of material is not as heavy-handed or self-conscious. The majority of the other work in this exhibit was concerned primarily with the inside of the "house." This piece is approached like a stage, with meaning being read on multiple surfaces, interior and exterior alike. Nothing about this piece seems superficial or trite; even the inclusion of the cast teeth which became redundant in other works, seems poetic and eulogistic in this context. The title suggests many readings that could apply to myriad wartime abominations. This piece is less a protest than an homage. It is more narrative than didactic. In this piece Buonaccorsi did not give us an exact opinion, or offer an answer—just presented an environment and allowed us to think.

If there is one thing that I took away from this exhibit it was remembering why I started making art in the first place: to communicate my opinions, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world to others in hopes of making an impact in someone else's life. As lofty a goal as this sounds, I think we all must remember that art is the best way to communicate to others because it engages not only their minds and hearts intellectually, it gets "inside" them if it's done right. In this way it can move a person more than any other form of communication. Therefore, maybe Beuys wasn't wrong theorizing that only through art could we change the world. I am grateful to Jim Buonaccorsi for reminding me of this.

BRIAN L. BISHOP

BISHOP IS AN ARTIST, TEACHER, AND CURATOR. THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF PLAN B GALLERY, MEMPHIS, HAS RECENTLY MOVED TO DURHAM, NC.

JIM BUONACCORSI. *THEY SAW YOU COMING*, STEEL, CAST IRON, BRONZE, BRASS, 1999. PHOTO BY ROBERT LOWERY, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



ABOVE: CHARLES KEIGER, *DOROTHY*, 1999, OIL ON CANVAS, 26 X 30 INCHES. COURTESY OF LISA KURTS GALLERY.

LEFT: CHARLES KEIGER, *CYCLIST*, 1999, OIL ON CANVAS, 20 X 18 INCHES. COURTESY OF LISA KURTS GALLERY.

EXHIBITIONS

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Pinkney Herbert, 2/7-3/3; High School Art Exhibition from Northeast Arkansas, 3/9-4/4; ASU Student Art Exhibition, 4/10-4/25; Spring Scholarship Sale, sponsored by ASU Pottery Club, 4/27-29; FINE ARTS GALLERY, Arkansas State University, Caraway Rd., Mon.-Fri. 10am-5pm, (870) 972-3050, [www.astate.edu/finearts/]

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Paul Signac: collection of Watercolors and Drawings, at the grand re-opening of the Center, 2/19-4/9, gallery dedicated to regional artists opens with Prophet, Parables and Paradoxes: Recent Drawings by David Ballin, 2/19-3/12; ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER, MacArthur Park, 9th & Commerce, (501) 372-4000.

COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Crafts Exhibition, 2/28-4/16; MAIN GALLERY, Mississippi University for Women, between 11th & 12th Streets on 6th Ave. S., Mon.-Fri. 9-12 & 1-4, (601) 329-7131.

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

The American West: Out of Myth, Into Reality, 2/12-6/6, MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART, 201 East Pascagoula Street, daily 10am-6pm, extended hours 'til 8pm on Tues./Thurs., (601) 960-1515, [www.ms museumart.org]

CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

Informed Spirit/Skilled Hand: drawings and lithographs by master printer Ron Adams (NM) and sculpture by Chattanooga artist Calvin Dennis, 2/1-2/29; Fifth Annual Russian/Ukrainian Exhibition, 3/1-3/31; The Liturgical Year: collaborative works by Chattanooga artists Bobbie Brooks Crow and Patrick Ellis, 4/1-30; RIVER GALLERY, 400 E. Second St., call for hours, (423) 267-7353, (800) 374-2923.

CLARKSVILLE, TENNESSEE

Threads of Continuity: installation by Marjorie Amdur and APSU students, 2/14-3/3; 32nd Annual Student Art Show, 3/27-4/16; Cat Cratchett/Anne Bagby, 4/24-5/12; Bettye Shely Holte/Janice Page, 6/12-8/4; TRAHERN GALLERY, Austin Peay State University, Mon.-Fri. 9am-4pm, Sat. 10am-2pm, Sun. 1-4, (931) 221-7333.

JACKSON, TENNESSEE

Ceramic Sculpture by Preston Saunders, 2/11 - 3/8; Sculpture by Ken Steinbach, 3/9-4/5 (reception 3/9, 4pm); Painting by Joel Sheesley, 4/8-5/8; Student Show, 5/10-5/19; UNION UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, Pennick Building, 1050 Union University Dr., Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. & Sun. 1-4pm, (901) 661-5378.

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

John W. Ford/Robert Van Vranken through 3/5; Exhibition including 85 works by legendary Dutch printmaker M.C. Escher (1898-1972), 2/4-5/14; Willie Cole/Renee Stout, 3/17-7/9; Niki Ketchman: Fabrications, 4/7-10/29; KNOXVILLE MUSEUM OF ART, 1050 World's Fair Park Dr., call for hours (423) 525-6101, [www.knoxart.org].

Local/Global, 3/3 -3/31 (reception 3/3, 7pm), A-1/LAB, see web site for location and hours of exhibition [www.kornet.org/artist3/index.html]

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Marcia Myers: New Fresco Paintings, 2/9-3/31; LISA KURTS GALLERY 766 S. White Station, Tues.-Fri. 10am-5:30pm, Sat. 11am-4pm, (901) 683-6200. [www.lisakurts.com]

Micaela Riseling, 2/1-2/25, ALBERS GALLERY, 1102 Brookfield Rd., (901) 683-2256, [www.albersgallery.com]

17th Annual Juried Student Exhibition, 1/29-3/2; Friedemann von Stockhausen, the visiting German artist and professor creates a drawing installation, 3/10-4/22; ART MUSEUM of The University of Memphis, Communication and Fine Arts Bldg., 3750 Norriswood, Mon.-Sat. 9am-5pm, (901) 678-2224. [www.people.mwmpphis.edu/artmuseum/AMHome.html]

FireHouse Community Arts Academy Student Exhibit, 2/5-3/5; FireHouse Quilters Circle Display, 3/18-31; 2nd Annual Soulsville, USA/FireHouse Community Arts Festival, 5/13, 9am-10pm; FIREHOUSE ARTS COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER GALLERY, a service of the Memphis Black Arts Alliance Inc., 985 South Bellevue, Mon.-Fri. 10am-7pm, Sat. 10am-2pm; (901) 948-9522.

Peter Bowman: My Space/Paul Arensmeyer: Meditations, 2/29-3/25; Greely Myatt: New Sculpture/Carol Sams: Recent Paintings, 3/28-4/29; Bob Burdette/Marjorie Guyon, 5/5-27; LEDBETTER LUSK GALLERY, 4540 Poplar Ave., Laurelwood, Tues.-Fri. 10am-5:30pm, Sat. 11am-5pm, (901) 767-3800 [www.llg.com]

Power and Paper: Margaret Bourke-White, Modernity, and the Documentary Mode, 2/5-3/17; Juried Student Exhibit, 3/25-4/7; Senior Thesis Exhibit, 4/15-5/6; CLOUGH-HANSON GALLERY, Rhodes College, 2000 N. Parkway, Tues.-Sat. 11am-5pm (closed 3/4-3/13), (901) 843-3442. [http://artslides2.art.rhodes.edu/gallery.html.]

Donald Sultan: In the Still-Life Tradition, 1/23-4/9, MEMPHIS BROOKS MUSEUM OF ART, 1934 Poplar Ave., Tues.-Fri. 9am-4pm, Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 11:30am-5pm, free admission on Wed., (901) 544-6200.

Made for Use: Furniture and Accessories, 2/22-4/30; NATIONAL ORNAMENTAL METAL MUSEUM, 374 Metal Museum Dr., Tues.-Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 12-5pm, (901) 774-6380 [www.metalmuseum.org]

Seven Aspiring Artists and their teacher, Bernadette Grantham, 2/11-3/10; UNIVERSITY GALLERY, Christian Brothers University, lower level of Plough Library, Mon.-Thurs. 7:45am-11pm, Fri. 7:45am-4:30pm, sat. 12-4pm, Sun. 2-11pm, (901) 321-3000 [www.cbu.edu/library/gall/]

NUMBER: PUBLISHES THE FOLLOWING LISTINGS AND INFORMATION AS A SERVICE TO GALLERIES, EXHIBITING ARTISTS, AND ITS READERSHIP. LISTINGS UNDER THE FOLLOWING CLASSIFICATIONS ARE PRINTED FREE OF CHARGE: EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, AND STUDIO RENTALS, ETC. EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES ARE FREE OF CHARGE IF THERE IS NO FEE REQUIRED FROM THE SUBMITTING ARTIST. EXHIBITIONS REQUIRING AN ENTRY FEE FROM THE ARTISTS WILL BE BILLED AT A RATE OF 40 CENTS PER WORD, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE OF PUBLICATION. INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD CONTACT NUMBER: AT PO BOX 820226, MEMPHIS TN 38182 FOR DEADLINE & PUBLICATION INFORMATION.

MICHAEL DURHAM, WATCH YOUR STEP, POLYESTER PRINT, ON VIEW AT RUBY GREEN, NASHVILLE.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

"an intimate journey" by Paul Harmon, 2/19-3/30; Portraits: Jeff Hand (Nashville)/Peter Monroe (New York), 4/29-5/30. Monroe brings his show to Nashville called "Mama's Boys," a series of interviews and photographs of adult men living with their mothers; Johan Hagaman: Shadow People/Heath Seymour: Sediments, 6/3-7/1; ZEITGEIST GALLERY, 1819 21st Avenue South, Tues.-Sat. 11am-5pm, 'til 8pm on Thurs., (615) 256-4805, [zeitgeist@home.com]

Ron Adams, Master Printmaker, A Survey of Work, 1984-1999, 2/10-3/19; Heaven and Earth: The Figure in Religious and Secular Art, 3/25-5/13; Creacion en Espacio: A Photographic Portrait of the Art and Studios of Joan Miro by Joaquim Gomis, 5/23-8/19; VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY FINE ARTS GALLERY, 23rd and West End Avenues, Mon.-Fri. 12-4pm; Sat. & Sun. 1-5pm, (615) 322-0605, [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/finearts/gallery.html]

Exploring Family: Myth and Memory, works by Robin Adsit and Ashley Cameron Waldvogel, 2/19-3/17; Through the Viewfinder: photographic works by Buffy Holton, Alan Lemire, and Laura Noel, 4/23-5/19; Food and Ritual in the Southern Experience: Fiber Works by Betty Bivins Edwards, 5/26-7/26; SARRATT GALLERY at Vanderbilt University, 402 Sarratt Student Center, Mon.-Sat. 9am-9pm, Sun. 11am-9pm, (615) 322-2471. [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/sarratt/gallery.htm]

Light/Speed, color photography and 8mm film by Michael Durham, 1/14-2/26; The Handweavers Guild, biennial textile show, 3/3-4/1; Installation using construction materials by David Holland, 4/8-5/13; Mixed-media work by Annie Freeman, 5/20-7/1; RUBY GREEN, a non-profit contemporary arts foundation, 514 5th Ave. South., Wed.-Sun 1- 6pm, (615) 244-7179. [www.rubygreen.org]

Two Visions: paintings by Anne Bagby and Nance Cooley, 2/9-3/17, TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION, 401 Charlotte, Ave., Mon.-Fri. 8am-4:30pm, (615) 741-1701.

LECTURES

The Photographic Society at The University of Memphis presents 2000 Lecture and Workshop Series. Pinky Bass lecture on 3/3, 7pm (Psychology Auditorium) and workshop on 3/4, 10am (rm. 120, Meeman Journalism Bldg.). Linda Troeller lecture on 4/14, 7pm (Psychology Auditorium) and workshop on 4/15, 10am (rm. 120, Meeman Journalism Bldg.). Lectures and workshops are free and open to the public.

CALL FOR ARTISTS

New York Gallery, located in the Chelsea district seeks artists for its 99-2000 season. Open to all artists, all media, for group or solo shows. A fee involved. 40% commission after \$2000 of sales. Send 10-20 slides, resume, artist statement, SASE to Melissa Christiano Studios, 509 Jill Dr., Jonesboro, AR 72404.



NUMBER: INC.
an independent journal
of the visual arts



Editorial #37



Art News

Black Velvet Elvis 2000



Profiles

Patty Bladon Lawrence
Sherri Warner Hunter
Kathy Albers
Lisa Horstman
Elizabeth Stein

by Marina Pacini
by Mary Lucking Reiley
by Nancy Muse
by Chris Barrett
by Saxon Henry

The Golden Thread

An Interview with Marjorie Liebman



Exhibition Reviews

Brown, Cobb, Flowers
Lurlynn Franklin
Larry Edwards
Melissa Christiano
Richard Knowles
Charles Keiger
Jim Buonaccorsi

by Melody Barnett Deusner
by Fred Burton
by Christina Huntington
by Lara Shelton
by Scott Fulmar
by Omnese Campbell
by Brian L. Bishop



Information

Exhibitions, Lectures, Opportunities, etc.