

The image features a minimalist, abstract geometric design. It consists of several large, solid black shapes on a white background. A prominent black triangle is positioned at the top left, with the text 'Young American Artists' written in white, sans-serif font along its hypotenuse. Below this triangle, a black trapezoidal shape extends towards the bottom left. In the center, a black square is tilted at an angle. To the right of the square, another black trapezoidal shape is visible. The overall composition is dynamic and modern, with sharp lines and high contrast.

Young American Artists

1978 Exxon National Exhibition



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Library and Archives

<http://www.archive.org/details/youngamericanart00shea>

Young American Artists

1978 Exxon National Exhibition

This exhibition is sponsored

by Exxon Corporation

Published by

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation,

New York, 1978

ISBN 0-89207-013-7

Library of Congress Card Catalogue Number. 78-54030

© The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, 1978

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

President Peter O. Lawson-Johnston
Trustees H.H. Arnason, The Right Honorable Earl Castle Stewart, Joseph W. Donner, John Hilson, Eugene W. Leake, Frank R. Milliken, A. Chauncey Newlin, Mrs. Henry Obre, Albert E. Thiele, Michael F. Wettach

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Director Thomas M. Messer
Staff Henry Berg, Deputy Director
Susan Halper, Executive Assistant; Vanessa Jalet, Secretary to the Director
Louise Averill Svendsen, Curator; Diane Waldman, Curator of Exhibitions; Margit Rowell, Curator of Special Exhibitions; Angelica Zander Rudenstine, Research Curator; Linda Konheim, Curatorial Administrator; Linda Shearer, Assistant Curator; Carol Fuerstein, Editor; Mary Joan Hall, Librarian; Ward Jackson, Archivist; Susan Ferleger, Philip Verre, Clair Zamoiski, Curatorial Assistants; Susan Hirschfeld, Editorial Assistant
Mimi Poser, Public Affairs Officer; Miriam Emden, Membership Department Head
Jane E. Heffner, Development Officer; Carolyn Porcelli, Development Associate
Agnes R. Connolly, Auditor; Philip Almeida, Restaurant Manager; Elizabeth McKirdie, Business Assistant; Charles Hovland, Sales Supervisor; Darrie Hammer, Katherine W. Briggs, Information
David Roger Anthony, Technical Officer; Orrin H. Riley, Conservator; Lucy Belloli, Associate Conservator; Dana L. Cranmer, Technical Manager; Elizabeth M. Funghini, Cherie A. Summers, Associate Registrars; Jack Coyle, Registrars' Assistant, Saul Fuerstein, Preparator; Scott A. Wixon, Operations Coordinator; David Mortensen, Carpenter; Robert E. Mates, Photographer; Mary Donlon, Associate Photographer
David A. Sutter, Building Superintendent; Guy Fletcher, Jr., Assistant Building Superintendent; Charles F. Banach, Head Guard

Lenders to the Exhibition

Siah Armajani, Minneapolis

Scott Burton, New York

Donald Droll

Charles Ennis

Faygo Beverage Corporation, Detroit

Denise Green, New York

Dr. Wilford Grover, Washington, D.C.

Bryan Hunt, New York

Mary Jane Jacob and Russell Lewis, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Marilyn Lenkowsky, New York

Sydney and Frances Lewis

Robert Lawrence Lobe, New York

Nachume Miller, New York

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Miro

Martin Puryear, Washington, D.C.

Jenny Snider, New York

Danny Williams, Dallas

Scott Wixon, New York

Blum-Helman Gallery, New York

Droll/Kolbert Gallery

Feigenson-Rosenstein Gallery, Detroit

Susanne Hilberry Gallery Inc., Birmingham, Michigan

Brooks Jackson Gallery, Iolas, New York

Max Protetch Gallery, New York

Dallas Museum of Fine Arts

Artists in the Exhibition

Siah Armajani

Scott Burton

John Egener

Denise Green

Bryan Hunt

Marilyn Lenkowsky

Robert Lawrence Lobe

Nachume Miller

Gordon Newton

Martin Puryear

Jenny Snider

Danny Williams

Scott Wixon

Preface and Acknowledgements

Organizers of young talent shows usually accept more or less explicit limitations and make certain implicit assumptions. Youth is clearly a prerequisite for inclusion in such a presentation. In the present exhibition, although no age limit has been stipulated, the oldest of the thirteen participants are 39, the youngest is 28 and the median age 33. The selection is further restricted to Americans who, with one temporary exception, currently work in the United States. They use a variety of media which often remain outside of conventional categories. The majority of the artists chosen work in New York, although many were born elsewhere. Others live in Detroit, Minneapolis, Washington and Dallas.

Few of these young talents are known to the general museum-going public and even specialists in the field of current art will find unfamiliar names among those selected. About one-half of the thirteen are represented by galleries. It was required that none of those chosen command high prices, so that the Guggenheim could acquire one work by each participant as part of the exhibition project.

Two seemingly contradictory but actually quite compatible assumptions are implicit in our procedure. We do not presume that the thirteen young Americans chosen are the only promising or deserving artists who might have been included. Yet, they have been selected on the grounds of quality alone. As in earlier exhibitions of this kind, the Guggenheim Museum, therefore, supports the decisions made by the exhibition's curator.

Young American Artists: 1978 Exxon National Exhibition opens a new chapter in the history of corporate art sponsorship. Corporations in this country have by now established an impressive record of assistance for the arts, and the Guggenheim Museum itself has repeatedly benefited from such aid. The present show, however, is among the first instances of substantial commitments by American corporations in support of contemporary, advanced art. Exxon Corporation made this commitment with full awareness of the controversial nature of exhibitions of current art. They know also that such undertakings usually do not bring public and critical acclaim. In fully and generously sponsoring this selection of young American talent, Exxon has thus taken a significant step for which we are deeply grateful.

The exhibition was chosen by Linda Shearer, the Guggenheim's Assistant Curator. In this difficult and sensitive task, Mrs. Shearer has benefited from advice from within and outside the museum; the selection, however, is ultimately a personal one, the result of her own continuing search, investigation and thought for which we are all indebted to her. Many individuals have worked on various levels to bring about this small but ambitious exhibition. In Mrs. Shearer's name, I therefore acknowledge the valuable contributions of the museum staff—and thank in particular Diane Waldman, Curator of Exhibitions, for her helpful suggestions, Hilarie Faberman, Curatorial Fellow, who assisted on all phases of the exhibition and preparation of the catalogue, Carol Fuerstein, the Museum's Editor, who intelligently edited the manuscript and, with the able assistance of Susan Hirschfeld, saw the publication through the presses, Susan Ferleger and Judith Tannenbaum, for their general help.

We are also indebted to Robert Murdock, Curator of Contemporary Art, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, to Murray Smither and the artist Sam Gummelt, both of Dallas, who have provided invaluable assistance on behalf of Danny Williams who was abroad during the preparation of the exhibition. Dawn Stewart must be thanked for her careful transcription of the lengthy interviews conducted by Mrs. Shearer. The lenders and dealers have given us their generous cooperation. Finally, we, of course, must extend our gratitude to the participating artists.

Young American Artists makes significant contributions in a number of ways. First, it allows the Guggenheim to welcome younger American talent. Secondly, the purchase fund provided by Exxon enables the Museum to acquire one work by each participant in the show and thereby purposefully enrich its collection. Finally, the exhibition and its catalogue will offer the Museum's visitors an opportunity to acquaint themselves with an aspect of a wide and largely undefined area of contemporary art. We hope, therefore, that this presentation, despite its necessarily fragmentary and subjective nature, will add to the understanding of current art which the public so eagerly seeks.

Thomas M. Messer, *Director*
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Introduction

Where is art going, what are the prevalent directions and trends? As we approach the end of the seventies, these are the questions at the core of any discussion of today's art. The answer, clearly, is that this is a time of vast stylistic diversity in New York and across the country, a period in which no single movement has become dominant. While there is complete unanimity on this point, there is, however, a wide range of opinion among those who attempt to find the reasons for this diversity and evaluate it. Artists are approvingly viewed as pursuing their own independent visions in intensely personal ways, or the seventies are disparagingly described as a decade of transition from which a major talent has yet to emerge.

Virtually all those who analyze the art of the seventies attempt to define it within the frame of reference of the sixties. While it is, of course, appropriate to keep in mind the relationships between successive generations of artists, there is a danger that the real achievements of younger artists will be obscured if excessive attention is paid to their predecessors. The sixties were characterized by radical innovation and pressure for constant change. To be sure, the artists of the seventies respect the high quality of the work produced in the sixties and are, to varying degrees, influenced by it. However, they reject much of the legacy of that decade. Most importantly they do not care to aggressively challenge the past, as their precursors did when, for example, they broke with Abstract Expressionism.

It is important to remember that the sixties was a time of social revolution and political polarization, conflict and confrontation, clearly defined and sharply contrasting values dominated our lives. Paradoxically, despite the turbulence of the decade and the rapid evolution of its art, this art seemed coherent even then. "Vivid" is a word that evokes the sixties and its painting and sculpture, but "complex" best describes the uncertainties and ambiguities of the experience and art of our own decade.

Because it is so difficult to come to terms with this complexity, we perhaps favor the vividness of the sixties and wish the current generation of artists would provide us with work that reflects a similar kind of clarity. Are we holding on to a lingering hope that the art of the seventies will create a sense of coherency that we lack?

Because the art of the sixties changed so dramatically, do we perhaps feel that current art, which is evolving almost imperceptibly, is not developing at all? Are we demanding that younger artists reaffirm the past in order to be acknowledged as part of the present? In our effort and need to divide art into trends and movements, we become impatient when we cannot do so because today's esthetic expression does not conform to the expectations born of the sixties.

Artists are no longer highly visible; they have withdrawn from the public eye and turned back into themselves, becoming more and more involved with personalizing their expression. The expressive, deeply personal components of their work have assumed greater significance in relation to the more formal elements. Their critical faculties seem attuned to what does not ring true emotionally. Thus, in order to better understand today's art we must learn how each artist sees himself and tries to fulfill his own sense of identity. An attempt to compare the artists of the present exhibition to one another does not, of course, provide us with a sense of coherency, but rather of the fragmentation and diversity that is the art of the seventies. While the participants in *Young American Artists* cannot be linked to a common style, there are connections among them—connections in their work and in their ideas. Both Nachume Miller and Jenny Snider cite Klee as an important influence. While they both refer to the literary, poetic nature of Klee's art, Miller responds to the metaphysical, symbolic aspects of his work, and Snider to his sense of scale and material. Snider's painting bears more obvious affinities with that of Danny Williams.

She and Williams look to the organic abstractions of twentieth-century European and American artists like early Kandinsky, Hartley and Dove. Snider and Williams as well as Denise Green and Scott Wixon are painters who are very much involved with the tradition of painting. But John Egner, Miller and Marilyn Lenkowsky, although they view themselves as painters, make constructions that are hybrids of painting and sculpture.

Many of these young artists are questioning the accepted forms of expression; indeed, a number of them, influenced by the Conceptual artists of the late sixties, are turning to disciplines outside of fine arts as sources of new meaning for their work. Thus, the rationale

for Siah Armajani's houses and bridges lies in the esthetic of architecture; Scott Burton's inspiration for his furniture is in the decorative arts, and he believes that artists will play a role as decorators in the future; the painting of both Snider and Williams reveals a debt to textiles and fabrics. Green, Bryan Hunt and Robert Lobe revitalize their forms by depicting isolated single images in an extremely literal way: these representational images, removed from their normal contexts, take on abstract qualities. In contrast the Pop artists parodied the images they drew from mass culture and were careful to maintain a certain distance from their work. There is no irony in the attitudes of Green, Hunt, Lobe and others whose images relate intimately to their personal surroundings and lives; they sincerely believe in the intrinsic beauty of the forms they portray and express their moral commitment to the integrity of the object. Aspects of nature appear—explicitly in the work of Hunt and Lobe, implicitly in that of Martin Puryear, Gordon Newton, Snider, Williams and Wixon. These natural forms contrast with the hard, industrial, anonymous elements of the Minimal Art of the mid-sixties.

In a desire to engage the viewer in their work, Armajani, Egner and Miller are careful to reveal the structure of their pieces, and Green, Lenkowsky, Newton and Wixon, call attention to their process. This tendency, as well as the intensely personal nature of their work, relates a number of these artists to Abstract Expressionism. They do not, however, share with the Abstract Expressionists their commitment to the grand, heroic statement, to the expression of transcendental meaning, but wish to convey their private feelings in a more intimate manner through an intense involvement with the object. The artists of the seventies, instead of completely and radically rejecting tradition, select elements of past art, alter and apply them to their own work. Thus, as the artists themselves point out, Egner appropriates aspects of Cubism, and Snider reinterpreted—and by her own admission, deliberately distorted—Abstract Expressionism. There is a very conscious effort on the part of certain younger artists to deny the facile, the sleek, the too easily imitated. For this reason they tend to avoid the crisp, clean surface in favor of roughness, spontaneity and directness, and actively reject the beautiful and sophisticated for calculated naiveté.

Thus, certain connections among current artists may be discerned, and some rather tentative general conclusions may be drawn. However, we must realize that the effort to compare artists is perhaps part of the problem confronting us—that it is an approach not necessarily pertinent to our own times. Furthermore, it is my contention, which these artists reinforce as they express in their interviews an indifference to a group esthetic, that the art experience of the seventies has yet to be defined in terms of this decade. This is not an accusation that either audience or artist has failed, but rather it represents an effort to focus on the complexity of the present situation. In reexamining our frame of reference, we may well come to realize that our attempt to find a unifying thread for the period is in fact a veiled qualitative judgement and is engaged in for the sake of simplification. We must, therefore, change our attitudes and approach artists as individuals, viewing their work as independent of specific movements or groups. We must view them from a new perspective, the perspective of the seventies.

Linda Shearer

Works in the Exhibition
Documentation
Interviews

† not reproduced

Explanatory Note

The following interviews are edited versions of taped discussions. The interviews with Siah Armajani, John Egner and Gordon Newton were conducted over the telephone, the rest in person. Each interview begins with a general statement on the artist's relationship to the art of the sixties. Danny Williams has been in India on a Fulbright fellowship since September 1977. He decided, therefore, to submit a written statement for inclusion in the catalogue.

Siah Armajani

Born in Teheran, 1939

Lives in Minneapolis

Education

Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota,
1960-63, B A

Selected Group Exhibitions

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago,
Towers, September 13-October 25, 1969

Traveled to Cranbrook Academy of Art,
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, November
9-December 7, 1969, Finch College
Museum of Art/Contemporary Wing,
Finch College, New York,
February 12-March 31, 1970

The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Information, July 2-September 20, 1970

Minnesota State Arts Council, Min-
neapolis and St. Paul, *9 Artists/9 Spaces*,
September 10-October 15, 1970

Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, West
Germany, *Documenta 5*, June 30-
October 8, 1972

Henry Gallery, University of Washington,
Seattle, *Operation Vesuvius*, November
10-December 10, 1972. Traveled to
Galleria d'Arte'Il Centro, Naples, 1973

The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at the Clocktower, New York,
Discussions: Works/Words, May 11-
June 1, 1974

Federal Center, Chicago, *Sculptures for
a New Era*, 1975

Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio,
*16 Projects/4 Artists: Siah Armajani,
Larry Bell, Lloyd Hamrol, Pat Steir.*
*Armajani installations Wright State
University, November 1-15, 1976, Moore
College of Art, Philadelphia, January
24-28, 1977; University of Kentucky,
Lexington, April 4-8, 1977. Armajani
seminar at California State University,
Long Beach, November 29-December 3,
1976. Catalogue with introduction by
Lawrence Alloway, texts on Armajani by
William Spurlock, Stacy Dukes and Kevin
Boyle, Dianne Vanderlip, Derrick
Woodham.*

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, *Scale
and Environment. 10 Sculptors*, October
2-November 27, 1977 Catalogue with

SA: To get a clear picture of my work at present, I think it would be useful to understand the situation in which I and other artists of my generation found ourselves in the mid-sixties. In 1966 I was studying philosophy and realized that there were so many ideas which I could not express in my painting. I was terribly dissatisfied with these paintings, and I think some other people at that time felt their work was inadequate in the same sort of way.

This dissatisfaction was based on the conclusion that there were certain ideas, not only philosophical ones, which could not be translated or expressed directly in the forms of painting and sculpture as they existed then. What was needed was a reinvestigation of art to determine what its properties and capabilities are. And so, many of us turned to the social sciences as a model for a compatible methodology which would provide an interrelationship between science and art. It was a search for a new form, a form for our content. The problem is that each new form creates a new content. For example, the anthropologist's methodology, when used by the artist, expands the possibilities of what art is about, until, by extending this procedure to other fields, ultimately art can become about everything. But I recognize that for me and my work art can't be about everything. Some decisions are necessary, and for me, one of the first ones was to cast my lot with architecture.

LS: Do you consider yourself an architect?

SA: All the pieces that I exhibit—whether they are models or large scale constructions—are final and finished works. So I doubt that they would be mistaken for examples of practical architecture. I am not an architect and have never formally studied architecture. But I have gained a background from the writings of Vincent Scully. The structure, the interaction of materials, the framing and the openness of construction which reveals process in my work are all derived from early American architecture—bridges, log cabins, barns and shingle-style buildings, etc. In terms of general attitudes and ideas, I am strongly influenced by Robert Venturi's writings, especially his *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. His perspective on American social democracy is very important because it incorporates political, social and economic considerations. It is the attitude of inclusion, not exclusion. If you want to build something new, you don't have to destroy something older that's next to it. This democratic approach deeply appeals to me, you know, I really see myself as a midwestern populist.

LS: Although you refer to architecture as the basis of your work, do you consider the actual objects to be sculpture?

SA: That is a hard question for me to answer directly. But if we assume that architecture, like science, could be categorized into pure and applied branches, then we can conclude that non-functional pure architecture shares the same properties as sculpture. So we must



1. Model for Sunset Bridge. 1972

introduction by Martin Friedman and text on Armajani by Michael R. Klein.

One-Man Exhibitions

White Bear, Minnesota, *First Bridge*, January 1968

Philadelphia College of Art, *Red School House for Thomas Paine*, opened March 3, 1978

Selected Bibliography

Christopher Finch, "Process and Imagination," *Design Quarterly*, no. 74/75, 1969, pp. 22-30

Richard Koshalek, "A New Idiom of Public Art," *Landscape Architecture*, vol. 61, July 1971, pp. 313-316

Jasia Reichardt, "Art at Large: Towers," *New Scientist*, November 2, 1972, p. 298

Joshua Kind, "Statues and Sculpture," *New Art Examiner*, October 1975, p. 67

Michelle Stone and Alison Sky, *Unbuilt America*, New York, 1976, pp. 5, 25-26

begin again with a single history of architecture and sculpture. In fact, along with a linguist friend, I am trying to find a word that describes this combination of architecture and sculpture. Because I recognize in my work a unified history of sculpture and architecture, the words "architectural" and "sculptural" create a false dichotomy and are not descriptive. *Thomas Jefferson's House, West Wing, Sunset House* (cat. no. 3), for instance, does not depend for its existence as a work of art on whether or not it can be lived in, any more than it is necessary to live in a piece of sculpture in order to appreciate it. I do not call them architectural sculptures, they are, however, investigations into the qualities and properties of the house in the context of the social history of lived-in structures.

LS: Your reference to Venturi's impact on your work suggests that you are not interested in the abstract idea of House. If this is so, how does the structure of the house function in your work?

SA: The house does not appear to me first in terms of its houseness, but rather in terms of its individual parts or what I call instruments—walls, doors, floor, etc. By focusing on the parts, rather than the whole, I am trying to substitute synergy for gestalt. This means that the individual parts do not necessarily make or predict the

3 *Thomas Jefferson's House, West
Wing, Sunset House. 1977*



Checklist

- 1 *Model for Sunset Bridge*. 1972
Balsa wood and enamel,
7 x 62½ x 8¼"
Collection Dr. Wilford Grover,
Washington, D.C.
- + 2 *Model for Thomas Jefferson's House,
West Wing, Sunset House*. 1976-1977
Balsa wood, enamel and sandpaper,
5 x 22½ x 16"
Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York
- 3 *Thomas Jefferson's House, West
Wing, Sunset House*. 1977
Wood, corrugated steel, shingles,
enamel, 10 x 42 x 32'
Collection of the artist
not in exhibition
- + 4 *Model for Lissitzky's Neighborhood
1977-78*
Balsa wood and enamel, 10 x
33 x 29"
Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York
- 5 *Model for Lissitzky's Neighborhood,
detail showing Center House*. 1977
Balsa wood and enamel, 7 x 18 x 16"
Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York
- + 6 *Lissitzky's Neighborhood, Center
House*. 1978
Wood, corrugated metal, plexiglass
and enamel, 14 x 36 x 32'
Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York

whole. Synergy is a process in which the whole, as revealed through the relationship of its parts, is not complete. It is therefore a process of "becoming," or to borrow Sartre's phrase, it remains "not yet certain."

I'm saying, for instance, that the house is made up of definite and distinct parts. But also I'm saying that the house is a kind of event which generates certain perspectives so that one can view or experience it. It doesn't mean, however, that one perspective is consistent or adequate for all the parts, nor does it mean that each side is going to enhance the previous experience of the other side, but may even contradict it, or annihilate it altogether.

LS: Does this mean you are trying to confound and disorient the viewer?

SA: No, not really. I am not trying to shock or confuse anyone. But, as I said, I do consider the house as an event (1) which compels an interaction between the viewer and the parts, and (2) which in turn becomes an exploration of its distinct properties. Take, for example, a room with a door. What interests me is the role of the door and the problem of entrance into an enclosed space. In order to have this enclosed structure, sides, a bottom, a top and a door are needed. But when I enter into the space, it is the emptiness that is important. So, the emptiness and the structure of the room are two elements that must be recognized as distinct and considered separately. This is what I mean when I refer to the house as an event. Unfortunately we tend to resist this dichotomy and limit the potential of our perceptual experience. Day-to-day life requires that we make assumptions based on knowledge, which does not come from this direct experience.

The house for me is the means for people to encounter things, not through knowledge, but through activity and investigation. Because this encounter in my work tends to undermine our assumptions about ourselves and external objects, there is necessarily a kind of disorientation, but I don't consider that a negative device, like shock.

LS: How does the piece, *Lissitzky's Neighborhood, Center House* (cat. no 6), relate to the rest of your work?

SA: There is a total of five houses, each one representing a style of American architecture: a Richardson shingle-style structure, one in the international style, another in the new shingle, one resembling Le Corbusier's early work, and finally the New York Five. Lissitzky is part of the title because I am fascinated by his character, his courage; he was a liaison between Russia and Europe during the early part of the twentieth century, bringing information back and forth. I call it *Lissitzky's Neighborhood* because he could live there; it's accommodating. I believe in that.



5 *Model for Lissitzky's Neighborhood*, detail showing *Center House*. 1977

LS: When you say he could live there, that it's accommodating, is this a kind of contradiction, given the fact that your work is not functional?

SA: Let me explain it this way: Dewey is very important to me, he felt that in a diversified and fragmented society like America, we need some force to bring the social, political and economic factions together. And the art experience could become the catalyst. Dewey was one of the very few people who looked on the art experience, not art per se, as a catalyst for that. There was a salvation there, that society could come together through the structure of culture, through the structure of experience. When I say it's accommodating, that Lissitzky could live there, what I mean is it brings together through the catalyst of an art experience many diversified elements into a unity which I believe Lissitzky would have appreciated.

Scott Burton

Born in Greensboro, Alabama, 1939
Lives in New York City

Education

Private study, Leon Berkowitz studio,
Washington, D.C., 1957-59
Hans Hofmann studio, Provincetown,
Massachusetts, Summers 1957-59
Columbia University, New York,
1959-62, B.A.
New York University, 1962-63, M.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions and Performances

The University of Iowa Museum of Art,
University of Iowa, Iowa City, *Two
Evenings*, July 31 and August 5, 1970
Artists Space, New York, *Persona*, April
25, 1974 (performance)
Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *1975 Biennial of Contemporary
American Art*, January 20-April 9, 1975
The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at P. S. 1, Long Island City, New
York, *Rooms, P. S. 1*, June 10-26, 1976
Institute for Contemporary Art, Univer-
sity of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia,
Improbable Furniture, March 10-April
10, 1977. Traveled to La Jolla Museum
of Contemporary Art, May 20-July 6,
1977; Museum of Contemporary Art,
Chicago, July 21-September 4, 1977
Rathaus, Kassel, West Germany,
Documenta 6, June 27-30, 1977
(performance)
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago,
A View of a Decade, September 10-
November 10, 1977

Selected One-Man Exhibitions and Performances

Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *Group Behavior Tableaux*, April 18
and 19, 1972; American Theatre Lab,
New York, October 27-29, 1972 (per-
formance)
Artists Space, New York [two chair
pieces], December 6-27, 1975
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York, *Pair Behavior Tableaux*,
February 24-April 4, 1976 (performance).
Pamphlet with text by Linda Shearer

SB: My work couldn't have existed in the sixties. My furniture is not Conceptual, but I see myself as an artist of the seventies in that Conceptual Art enabled me to find my own way as an artist. At that time, it freed art from having to be either painting or sculpture. I was able to start working in the late sixties through performance art, which, of course, is related to Conceptual Art. I'm also a Conceptual artist in that I don't do any of the actual constructing myself but have my pieces fabricated by someone else. But, of course, that is also a characteristic of Minimal Art. As a matter of fact, I think my tables and chairs must be indebted in some way to artists like Judd, Lewitt and Andre. I see them as artists of another generation, however, as part of a different tradition. I consider Judd's term "specific object" applies more accurately to my work than his own, which I see as sculpture. I do not consider my furniture pieces sculpture. The bronze chair (cat. no. 7) is a transitional piece because it is still half image, not totally a specific object. Insofar as it is a replica, like Johns' beer can, it's part of the past. But my tables and chairs are informed by a life-long love and experience of sculpture, even though I had always made paintings and collages and had never made three-dimensional work before I did them.

LS: What is it about furniture that appeals to you? How is your work related to real furniture?

SB: I find furniture releases something in my imagination whereas painting and sculpture do not; I can't explain it. It was in 1973 that I was first able to begin the tables series—that is, table as table, rather than table within tableau or as found object. And after that, I started doing chairs. I give life-size drawings and cardboard models to craftsmen from the interior decoration world who build real furniture. Of course, what I'm gambling on is that no one trained in design would ever come up with the kind of furniture I make. I somehow see myself as an *impersonator* of design. But the decorative and applied arts have become extremely important to me: I see the beginning of some new and significant form of decorative art—for want of a better phrase—in work that is jewelry, wall decoration, murals, clothing and furniture. Not only have the decorative arts been a major source for me, but I'm vitally involved and interested in their capacity to expand beyond the art context, in the possibility of appreciating them on a level other than fine art.

LS: What specifically are your sources?

SB: First there are autobiographical, personal sources. I have a life-long obsession with furniture; I can't really explain it, but I recognize it. My most important intellectual source and inspiration are the Russians, Tatlin, Rodchenko and Lissitzky, and what they did after the Revolution. They laid down their brushes and went out to do applied art, art for the people. Of course, those were revolutionary times and we're not in even a vaguely similar situation now. The



7. *Bronze Chair* 1975

Droll/Kolbert Gallery, Inc., New York
[tables and chairs], November 15-
December 3, 1977

Selected Bibliography

Edit de Ak and Walter Robinson, "An
Article on Scott Burton in the Form of a
Resumé," *Art-Rite*, issue no. eight,
Winter 1975, pp. 8-10

Scott Burton [Documentations of
*Furniture Landscape, Furniture Pieces,
Chair Drama*], *TriQuarterly* 32,
Winter 1975, n. p.

Robert Pincus-Witten, "Scott Burton:
Conceptual Performance as Sculpture,"
Arts Magazine, vol. 51, no. 1, September
1976, pp. 112-117; reprinted in Pincus-
Witten, *Postminimalism, American Art
of the Decade*, New York, 1978,
pp. 175-185

Checklist

- 7 *Bronze Chair*. 1975
Bronze, 42 x 18 x 20"
Cast no. 2/2
Collection Donald Droll
- 8 *Untitled*. 1975-77
Lacquered wood, 30 x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Courtesy Droll/Kolbert Gallery
- 9 *Spattered Table*. 1977
Painted and lacquered wood,
18 x 35 x 17"
Courtesy Droll/Kolbert Gallery
- † 10 *Child's Table and Chair*. 1978
Chair: lacquered wood with fabric
and rubber, 27 x 12 x 12", table:
lacquered wood and steel, 21 x
22 x 17"
Brooks Jackson Gallery Iolas,
New York

Bauhaus has also been important to me because there they believed
that art and craft were unified.

And there have been other great confirmations for me: the quilt
show at the Whitney and the Navajo rug exhibition at the Brooklyn
Museum in the early seventies; late Matisse decoration; Warhol's
wallpaper also. And in other ways, Diane Arbus' photograph of a
Levittown living room—a meditation on furniture; Philip Johnson's
glass house.

LS: Since you're making objects which are recognizable and
functional, part of the popular culture, I wonder if Pop Art has
influenced you in any way?



8. *Untitled*. 1975-77

SB: I suppose I couldn't have existed without Pop Art either. For example, my bronze chair is cast from the cheapest kind of fake Queen Anne-Grand Rapids mass-produced chair. So I have a definite attraction to the Pop vernacular, to ordinary, even unworthy things. But I think there is a major difference from Pop in that I don't mean my work to be ironic—there's no parody in it. The styles I use are genuinely beautiful to me. Also, Pop Art borrows its styles and I have by now gone beyond this idea of pastiche to my own style—which I actually consider "style-less."

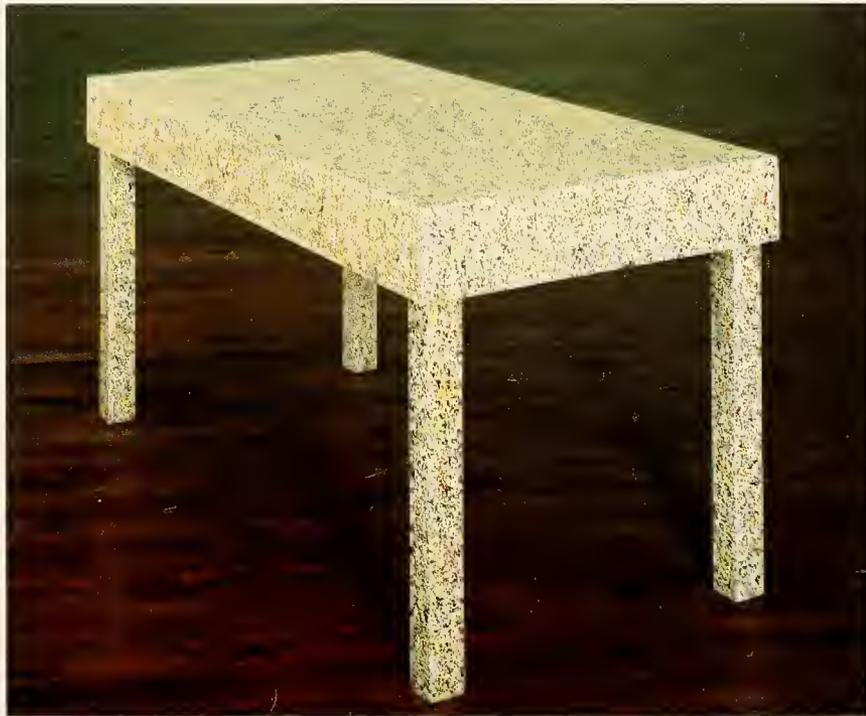
After making the individual chairs and tables, I started to design chair and table ensembles. I'm working on my first ensemble—a child's chair and table (cat. no. 10) right now. Then I want to do a suite with several chairs and a table. Eventually, I hope to do rooms and whole houses, as well as public areas, like theater lobbies or company cafeterias. I want my furniture to function within environmental ensembles.

LS: How does your furniture function in a social context?

SB: I want the furniture to be a factor in the behavioral dynamics of a social situation. For example, when two, three or four sit at the black table (cat. no. 8), they'll be quite close together. So that, although the table aims at a certain massiveness, it will force a psychological intimacy on the people who are sitting at it. So, by controlling the distance between people as they sit at my table, I am making a conscious effort to adapt what I know about behavioral dynamics to the design of my furniture.

LS: Do you expect people to react to your pieces as design or sculpture?

SB: My chairs and tables are independent, specific objects that you can walk around to look at from all sides; I want them to have presence. So, in many ways, I have a very sculptural definition of the furniture. I want the work to be forceful but not have too much tension. I designed the furniture with the intention that people like it. I attempt to arrive at some relation to human proportions in order to make it as comfortable as possible—and functional, of course. But people have said of my work—and it surprised me—that it's difficult, formidable, uninviting. And insofar as the furniture is like me, it's probably not ingratiating enough. This is a personal contradiction of artist as decorator. But, there's another important contradiction in art as decoration—a social one. There are three kinds of decoration, wealthy class, middle class and working class. Gallery clients are middle to wealthy class, but the true potential importance of a new movement of artists' decoration would be on a broader, economic scale, on a public scale.



9. *Spattered Table*. 1977

John Egner

Born in Philadelphia, 1940

Lives in Detroit

Education

Franklin and Marshall College,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1958-59

The Art Students League of New York,
Summer 1959

Philadelphia Museum College of Art,
1959-63, B. F. A

Brooklyn Museum Art School, Fall 1963

Yale University, School of Art,
New Haven, 1964-66, M. F. A

Selected Group Exhibitions

Vernon L. Bobbitt Visual Arts Center,
Albion College, Albion, Michigan, *Fred
Brian, John Egner, John Glick*,
October 1-26, 1967

Dianne Vanderlip Gallery, Philadelphia
[Group Exhibition], Fall 1968

Art School Slusser Gallery, The Uni-
versity of Michigan, Ann Arbor, *Detroit
Art Today—Diverse Directions*,
September 22-October 10, 1974

The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1974-75
Michigan Focus, December 6, 1974-
February 9, 1975

Kresge Art Center, Michigan State
University, East Lansing, *The 4th
Michigan Artists' Biennial*,
March 2-23, 1975

Willis Gallery, Detroit, *William Antonow,
John Egner, Steve Foust, Gordon
Newton*, September 1975

The Detroit Institute of Arts, *Works in
Progress, Part 2*, October 8-31, 1976

Susanne Hilberry Gallery Inc.,
Birmingham, Michigan, *Opening
Exhibition*, December 10, 1976-
January 15, 1977

One-Man Exhibitions

Willis Gallery, Detroit, Fall 1971

Willis Gallery, Detroit, Fall 1972

Community Arts Gallery, Wayne State
University, Detroit, November 17-
December 8, 1974

Susanne Hilberry Gallery Inc.,
Birmingham, Michigan, October 15-
November 12, 1977

JE: I would assume my work is unique to the seventies just because it's being done in the seventies and I'm certainly acutely aware of what's happened in both the sixties and seventies. But really, I see my work as being deeply influenced by everything that's gone on before in the history of art. There are lots of words you could use to describe my art—such as synthetic or eclectic—and I don't mean that in a pejorative sense, obviously, since I'm talking about my own work.

I have a million answers to a question about specific influences, I could talk for hours about that. I can't point to one individual; rather I'm interested in everything. I've got a hungry eye. I look at all things from all periods in history. The more complex the art, the richer in both plastic and literary terms it is, the more I like it. I have sat and read my own art as if it were a book by somebody else. I've seen parallels in my work to all kinds of occurrences in nature, history and my personal life. I think my art is loaded with metaphor, mixed metaphors. It's that kind of confusion that I think my work shares with Cubism. I see my work as a kind of classical Cubist statement.

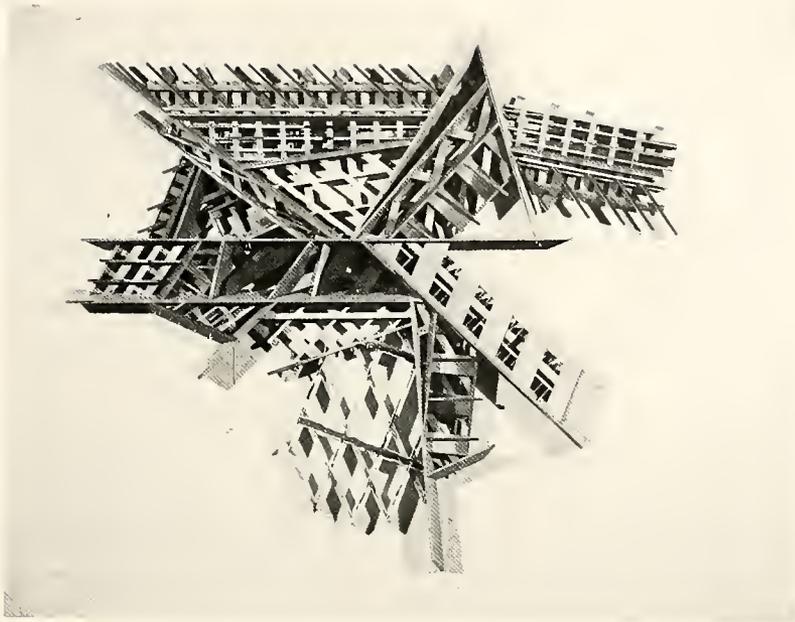
I still don't understand Cubism or I wouldn't be playing with it. And my work shares with it some of the tritest things that people used to say Cubism was about, fragmentation and simultaneous multiple views of things. It doesn't have the kind of contiguous space that one expects, but really it is a fragmented, changing, abruptly moving spatial situation. My pieces do have some sense of plane—there might be eight depths or twelve depths. It's not something I count or calculate, but it is something defined and crisp that has to do with the picture plane. The picture plane—that's a concept I never really understood. I read Hans Hofmann on this sort of thing many, many times; I spouted the rhetoric and I still didn't understand it.

LS: You seem to be saying that it's more important for you in some way to misunderstand, rather than understand your sources.

JE: I have a real problem with the word "understanding." Understanding is a word that the layman always uses when he confronts art—he says "I don't understand it." Well, I think the art that has moved me most profoundly has been that which I have not understood. So I don't see the experience of art as an experience of trying to understand. Although it might be one of trying to understand I'm hoping never to, because once you understand, you don't need it anymore.

LS: Can you be specific? What art has been both stimulating and incomprehensible to you?

JE: Well, I've been chasing Stella around for fifteen years and still feel I am, but with real differences now. When I look at Stellas



11. *Windmill*. 1977

12. *Monster*. 1977



Selected Bibliography

"John Egner, interview by Diane Spodarek," *detroit artists monthly*, vol two, no eight, October 1977, pp 3-4, 13-14

Robert Pincus-Witten, "Detroit Notes. Islands in the Blight," *Arts Magazine*, vol 52, no. 6, February 1978, pp 137-143

Checklist

- 11 *Windmill* 1977
Wood and spray paint, 48 x 53"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan
- + 14 *G S.* 1978
Wood and spray paint, 60 x 60"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan
- 12 *Monster* 1977
Wood and spray paint, 47 x 53"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan
- 13 *Interceptor.* 1977
Wood and spray paint, 27 x 41"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan

today, the aspect that most disturbs me is that they are so frontal—like stage sets. Although you can go to the side and see the superstructure revealed, it's still an art that has a front face. And like all painting, it has a stretcher or superstructure that I don't consider to be crucial to the piece. I feel that in my work the back is usually as good as the front, it's all art. It only takes one cut of the saw to make the back the front. I just like to think that every ounce of my work that goes on the wall is art, and there's no structure holding it there. It's somehow sculpture that finds itself slapped on a wall—the image of a Shaker chair hung on a peg just came to mind

LS: How do you make your work? Do you feel that an active, personal involvement with the object itself is an important aspect of your work?

JE: I work with wood. They're complex pieces, made with a number of small elements. I call them reliefs because, in fact, they are. They're usually about three inches deep and the largest dimension is no more than seven feet or so. They are made by assembling a grid or several grids, cutting those grids in half and putting them together with other halves of other grids, and then again cutting that assemblage and reassembling it with others—"inter-collaging" or intercutting many pieces with one another.

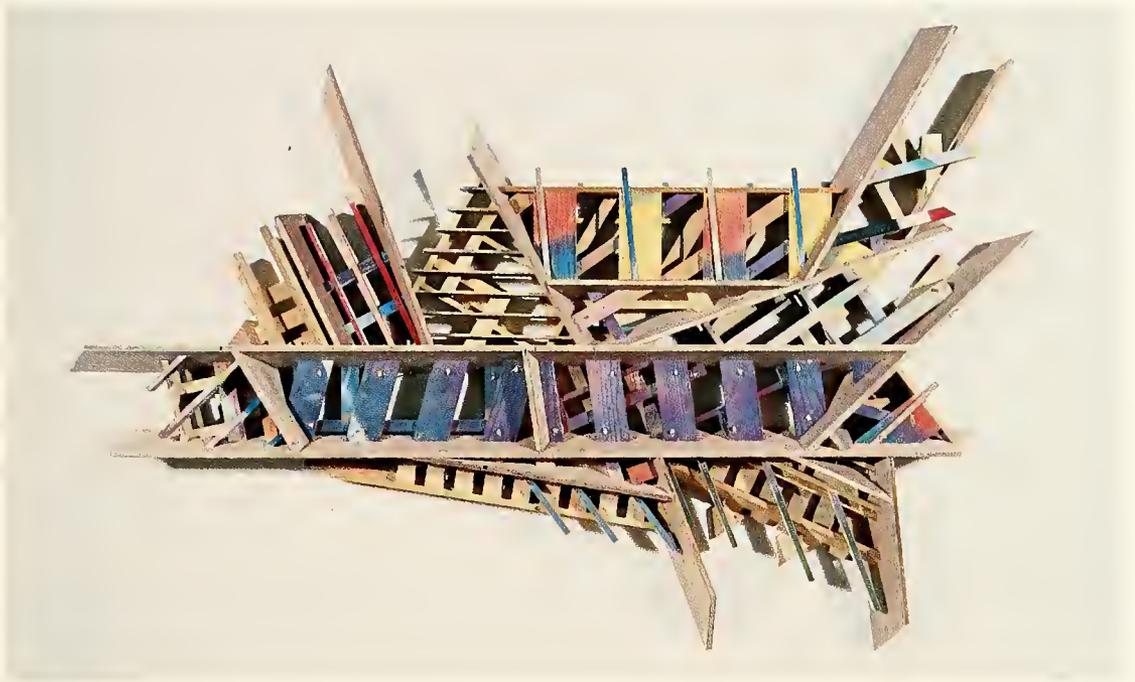
What artist doesn't think of the day he might be able to say to an assistant "Go over and cut those hundred pieces of wood and stick them to those other hundred pieces of wood?" That would be nice, but I know that all my choices are made with materials in my hands. I might try to make a choice ahead of time, but usually I'll find myself actually standing there with some wood in my hand and I just cut it the way I want to at that moment. It's improvisational.

LS: Then you rely on an improvisational process to arrive at a complex formal unity in your work?

JE: Yes, but I think there is a kind of dissonance about the work. I don't want to keep harping on Stella, but there's another lesson I learned from him. I was looking at his *Protractor* paintings when he first did them. I was trying to figure out the color and came away deciding that you can't do anything wrong with color. I thought that was what he was saying, and it's a lesson I've never forgotten. I'd hate to characterize my attitude simply as "you can't do anything wrong," but I certainly feel liberated when I'm working and I don't worry about whether this *looks* good with that.

LS: But aren't you nonetheless saying that the intuitive process contributes to the resolution of the rigid structural problems your work presents?

JE: I think the art I love and respect most is that which somehow really reflects the world—as John Cage would say, that which copies



13. *Interceptor*. 1977

nature and the manner of her operation as well as, or instead of, her appearance. You look at the world and you see how mad it is, and if you want your art to reflect that madness, you have to make choices in your art out of a similar kind of capriciousness. An example I use in teaching is when you can look up at the sky through the trees and say "It's beautiful." Well, the tree didn't ask the sky if it could be in front of it. The clouds go one way, the tree goes the other way. They're not cooperating visually, but they look wonderful together. In the same way I can make this grid, I can make that grid; I can somehow, all of a sudden, put them together in this most awkward way and it doesn't really matter too much *how* at that particular moment. If they both have integrity, they're going to work together.

Denise Green

Born in Melbourne, Australia, 1946
Lives in New York City

Education

Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1966-69
Université de Paris, Sorbonne, 1969, B A
Hunter College, New York, 1969-76,
M.F.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson,
New York, *Paintings on Paper*,
November 4-December 8, 1972

The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary
Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut, *Contem-
porary Reflections*, April 21-
August 18, 1974

Women's Interart Center, New York,
Inside/Outside, February 27-March
30, 1975

Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
[Opening Group Exhibition], opened
September 6, 1975

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,
*Power Gallery of Contemporary Art/
Acquisitions 1973-75*, August 7-
September 7, 1975

Sarah Lawrence College Art Gallery,
Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville,
New York, 24 x 24, February 24-
March 14, 1976

Max Protetch Gallery, New York [Group
Exhibition], September 1976

Max Protetch, Washington, D.C., *Brice
Marden, Jerry Clapsaddle, Denise Green*,
opened April 16, 1977

The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at P. S. 1, Long Island City, New
York, *A Painting Show*, May 1-29, 1977

Bonomo Diffusione Arte, Bari, Italy,
Denise Green, Kazuko Miyamoto:
Disegni, January 21-February 25, 1978

Protetch-McIntosh, Washington, D.C.,
The Minimal Image, March 7-
April 5, 1978

One-Woman Exhibitions

98 Greene Street Loft, New York,
September 18-October 5, 1973

Whitney Museum Art Resources Center,
New York, May 1-15, 1975

DG: I certainly could not have done my present work during the sixties. However, my work does share and derive from a kind of self-consciousness that was very much part of the sixties, although for a time I resented what I felt was an attitude of smug elitism prevalent in that decade. The increasing disillusionment and eventual loss of hope that took place—the collapse of what the sixties were all about—ironically is the part of the sixties that affected me most.

I think of the sixties in terms of two very broad trends: the intellectual/conceptual work that took a number of forms, including process and body art, and the formalist tradition. Today there has been a fusion of these two directions—and this is not just a mechanical and unquestioning synthesis of the past. Artists were involved in a highly self-critical search for a kind of moral ground for their work, by which I mean that what you do is what you believe.

LS: But don't you think the art of the sixties was made with the same sense of moral conviction?

DG: Yes, but the sixties was a time in which moral convictions were applied more to the systems and processes of external experience. Now I think this conviction has to do with internal experience. But I don't want to suggest that this internalization produces autobiographical or confessional art. I want to acknowledge in my work my own personal experience, a larger experience that relates to the activity of painting itself, and beyond this, an awareness of my place in the context of other art.

LS: Who has influenced you?

DG: Naturally, many of my own friends and peers are very important to me. I would include Rothko and Newman along with Cézanne and Matisse as among my major sources in the art of the past. Outside of painting, I would cite Tony Smith and Robert Morris. I was recently in Europe and visited Tarquinia to see the Etruscan tomb paintings; I also saw Giotto. My trip to Europe was in some ways a quest for material that I could relate to, that had some substance for me. Substance is a really important word for me.

LS: How do you achieve what you call substance?

DG: I start with specific intentions, but then usually bypass or contradict them. My process then becomes one of groping and rejecting until something emerges which somehow surprises me. For example, that I came up with the form of a trapdoor (cat. no. 15) was surprising, given my leaning towards abstraction. This form is not meant to realistically depict a trapdoor; it is both an abstracted image of the object and a representation of an idea—in this case the idea of an obstacle. While I often select my images from the objects that surround me, these images must work in an abstract way and must also connect as ideas with my personal identity. These connections interest me. The jug or vessel (cat. no. 17) is an appropriate

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, opened
July 2, 1975

Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane, Australia,
September 27-October 16, 1975

Max Protetch Gallery, New York,
October 2-23, 1976

Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane,
Australia, *20 Recent Drawings*, August
22-September 3, 1977. Traveled to
Coventry Gallery, Paddington, Septem-
ber 6-24, 1977; Royal Melbourne Insti-
tute of Technology, School of Art Gallery,
October 10-28, 1977

Checklist

15 *Trapdoor*. 1976

Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48"

Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York

16 *Origin is the Goal*. 1977

Oil, wax and crayon on canvas,
60 x 60"

Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York

17 *What if She Dreams*. 1977

Oil, wax and crayon on canvas,
60 x 60"

Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York

† 18 *To Draw On*. 1977

Oil, wax, and crayon on canvas,
60 x 60"

Lent by the artist, courtesy Max
Protetch Gallery, New York



15. *Trapdoor*. 1976

image because paintings are vessels which carry emotions and ideas. And in the past women throughout history have been identified with vessels in the sense that they too can carry things—an idea expressed in annunciation scenes, which always contain vessels. But then a vessel also has the connotation of voyage and travel, so I can explore meaning in a multiplicity of ways. But I am equally concerned with formal ideas about how a painting is structured and how a surface is made, how it's painted and how drawing is executed. I place the esthetic experience above all—it's the priority because it's what moves you, it's what really communicates on an emotional level.

LS: Do you consider that your work is accessible?

DG: Necessity is a very important part of my esthetic. By that I mean there is a sense that every element in the work must belong there. I hope that the viewer feels this quality of necessity and responds to it. Equally, I want the viewer to sense my decision-making process and thus, in a way, participate in it. For example, I feel there is a certain logic in my painting of the grid—the lines are based on the proportions of the stretcher itself. I hope anyone willing to make the effort will be able to understand the logic of my decisions.



16. *Origin is the Goal*, 1977



17. *What if She Dreams*. 1977

Bryan Hunt

Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, 1947
Lives in New York City

Education

University of South Florida, Tampa,
1966-68

Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles,
1969-71

Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, Independent Study, Spring 1972

Selected Group Exhibitions

Portland Center for the Visual Arts,
Oregon, *Via Los Angeles*, January 8-
February 8, 1976

Willard Gallery, New York, *Selections*,
February 7-March 4, 1976

The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at P S 1, Long Island City, New
York, *Projects for the Seventies*,
October 9-November 6, 1977. Will travel
internationally until 1979

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco,
Up Against the Wall, January 28-
February 25, 1978

Vassar College Art Gallery, Pough-
keepsie, New York, *Jenny, Hunt, Lane,*
Rothenberg, Shapiro, April 9-
June 4, 1978

One-Man Exhibitions

The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at the Clocktower, New York,
October 17-November 16, 1974

Jack Glenn Gallery, Corona del Mar,
California, December 7, 1974-January
12, 1975

Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels,
March 29-April 13, 1976

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco,
July 10-August 7, 1976

Blum-Helman Gallery, New York,
March 15-April 16, 1977

Blum-Helman Gallery, New York,
April 17-May 13, 1978

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco,
July 9-September 8, 1978

Selected Bibliography

Jeanne Siegel, "Bryan Hunt," *Arts*
Magazine, vol 51, no. 9, May 1977, p 20

BH: It seems to me that the sixties were characterized by an impulse on the part of artists to do work that was defined, at least in part, by a connection to a group effort or direction. Minimal sculpture, for instance, seems to me to work within, or because of, the boundaries of a clearly defined art form. It's geometric and sometimes mathematical; it relates to itself. It seems logical, then, that the seventies would tend to reverse that idea, and to personalize art more overtly. At any rate, Minimal sculpture was really a foundation for me. I like the idea of having a simplified shape, one that can be understood easily, and yet suggests geometric or even mathematical properties. Then after this beginning, I'm interested in the expansion of the object

LS: Could you elaborate on this process?

BH: I look for things and images that expand in their own way. For example, a lake is a contained form (see illus.). As an idea, it is a volume of water, but as an image, it's a volume of water with specific characteristics, like a bottom, a shoreline and a surface. My lakes are a combination of the visual image, which is what you see, and the idea, which is what you know about it. Even though they pose very different problems for me, I think my waterfalls (for example, cat nos 20 to 24) illustrate the same point. A waterfall is, on the one hand, just a quantity of falling water, but it becomes interesting to me when I abstract and recreate in sculptural terms my conceptual knowledge of it.

LS: Are the decisions which govern your re-creations primarily esthetic, connected to the experience of your sculpture?

Edison, 1976, Bronze, 34 x 12 x 5 1/2"

Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery, New York



20. *Step Falls*. 1977



21. *First Falls I*. 1977



19 *King Crest*. 1976



Checklist

- 19 *King Crest*. 1976
Spruce wood, silk, aluminum leaf,
8 x 64 x 7"
Collection of the artist
- 20 *Step Falls*. 1977
Plaster, 9' 6" x 12" x 12"
Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery,
New York
not in exhibition
- 21 *First Falls I*. 1977
Plaster, 9' 4" x 10" x 3"
Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery,
New York
not in exhibition
- † 22 *First Falls II*. 1978
Bronze, 9' 4" x 10" x 3"
Cast no. 1/3
Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery,
New York
- † 23 *Untitled*. 1978
Plaster with limestone base,
52 x 9 x 9"
Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery,
New York
- † 24 *Big Twist*. 1978
Bronze, 12' x 18" x 18"
Cast no. 1/3
Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery,
New York

BH: When I'm making a decision about my work, I think only of how it exists sculpturally. Let's take the airships (cat. no. 19). I saw in them the potential for a perceptual experience of latent energy that could create a very real kind of sculptural presence. Eventually, I realized what most compelled me about the airship was the object quality of its structure in a state of suspension. In reality and as an image in my mind, it just sits there. This is what made it sculpturally exciting and was the feeling I was trying to get by extending it out from the wall, above the viewer's head.

That's when I started the lakes. Because lakes are flat on the earth they are entirely different from the airships. So, in terms of sculpture, I felt it was exciting because when an artist thinks of flat sculpture, it's generally in terms of a Minimal concept. But then I decided to put a bottom on it, that made it right for me and different from Minimal sculpture. It existed on the floor on its own plane, but was still referentially flat; that was the kind of dialogue I wanted. The passivity of the lake's surface led me into the articulation of a subdued surface. And from there I was drawn to the fall, primarily because it's vertical and active.

LS: Are we putting too much emphasis on this process of discovering an image?

BH: Perhaps. I don't think I'm as much interested in manipulating the idea of what a waterfall is, as much as broadening the idea of sculpture, or creating my own statement out of the sculpture. I do a lot of looking for images or situations, but I look also for interrelating ideas that can lead to a new piece. I find it intimidating to think in terms of *The Waterfall*. I'm not trying to get at the essence of waterfall. I don't think that's sculpturally possible. I'm only interested in a dynamic and a form and the way they connect. I'm always thinking in terms of threads and connections.

LS: But don't these connections inevitably come into conflict with one another?

BH: Yes, particularly in terms of the ideas associated with the specific image that I have chosen and those intuitive decisions I have to make in order to get at those personal connections and associations I want in the work. In my earlier pieces, I was interested exclusively in ideas like scale and internal relationships. After I selected the images, they made their own decisions. Nothing in the form looked spontaneous or intuitive. Gradually I began to think differently about what I was doing. My role in developing the form became much more visible. When I made the airships, I left their surfaces tight and impersonal but I worked over the lake surfaces in a free, almost gestural manner to subtly articulate them. In the falls, the surfaces show more gesture. In this way I have progressively attempted to resolve the conflict between the conceptual properties of my work and my intuitive decisions.

Marilyn Lenkowsky

Born in New York City, 1947

Lives in New York City

Education

Hunter College, New York, 1964-73,
B.F.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York,
*Marilyn Lenkowsky, David Reed,
Herbert Schiffrin*, March 23-April 17,
1974

Paula Cooper Gallery, New York,
*Marilyn Lenkowsky, Elizabeth Murray,
John Torreano*, April 6-May 1, 1974

Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *1975 Biennial of Contemporary
American Art*, January 20-April 9, 1975

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C., *34th Biennial of Contemporary
American Painting*, February 22-
April 6, 1975

Michael Walls Gallery, New York, *Thirty
Artists in America: Part I*, June 7-
July 3, 1975

Fine Arts Gallery, California State
University, Los Angeles, *New York/
New York*, October 4-28, 1976

Susanne Hilberry Gallery Inc., Birming-
ham, Michigan, *Opening Exhibition*,
December 10, 1976-January 15, 1977

The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at P. S. 1, Long Island City, New
York, *A Painting Show*, May 1-29, 1977

Woods Gerry Gallery, Rhode Island
School of Design, Providence, *Space
Window**, September 14-October
6, 1977

Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco,
Up Against the Wall, January 28-
February 25, 1978

ML: In general, the situation now seems far more open than in the sixties. It seems as if younger artists today are more conscious of their freedom, or perhaps less conscious of restriction. Today, for example, it doesn't matter for me if my work is considered painting, sculpture or something in between. The fact that these categories are breaking down in this way certainly seems characteristic of the seventies. I use oil paint because it offers me an experience that's rich, but I often think about working in other forms, like welding steel or making films. While I do see myself more as a painter, I like to keep my options open.

LS: What sort of work are you doing now?

ML: The work I'm doing now fits in corners; it's oil paint on canvas with wood structures underneath. I draw the structure out to get the edges, so the edges become very important and strong. The pieces are human scale, with a few exceptions. They hang close to the floor and since they extend out from the wall, they make shadows on the floor. Usually they're one color, sometimes two; the paint is brushed on in a way that creates a modulated, almost broken surface. The structure is usually triangular. I find the triangle a wonderful form. I am especially interested in the fact that it pulls up vertically and at the same time seems to be strongly weighted down; it almost appears to be floating and yet it is so heavy. I'm also interested in the tension in the point at the top, the central spine and the edges. The edges fascinate me, as I've said, it sometimes seems as though there isn't any kind of mark that is as strong as the edge itself. When I first made a triangular shape, it shocked me. But it has sustained me for a long time.

LS: Despite the importance of this triangular form, you say you consider yourself a painter. Does this mean you're more concerned with the process of painting than with the very specific physical structure you use?

ML: I would have to say that I'm more involved with the process of painting, that is, with the paint surface I make. The structure evolved simply from the need to find a support I liked working on. And, although I have no objection to flat, rectangular canvases—which I could well go back to again—the triangular form works well for me and allows me to do the kinds of things I want.

LS: Do you feel that the highly reductive form of your paintings relates them to Minimal Art?

ML: I've always responded to work that was very reduced and clear—but very personal. The most obvious difference between my painting and Minimal Art is that my work reflects process. I want to communicate whatever takes place while I'm making a piece.

Once I said that my pieces confront the viewer. Now I'm not sure I like the sound of that because it seems aggressive and I don't see my

Checklist

- 25 *Untitled*. 1974
Oil on canvas, 96 x 11½ x 11"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan
- † 26 *Boomerang*. 1974
Oil on canvas, 78 x 19 x 18"
Sydney and Frances Lewis Collection
- 27 *Untitled (Dog Star)*. 1975
Oil on canvas, 96 x 32 x 24"
Courtesy Susanne Hilberry Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan
- 28 *Untitled*. 1977
Oil on canvas, 69 x 40 x 7"
Collection of the artist

25. *Untitled*. 1974





27. *Untitled (Dog Star)*. 1975



28. *Untitled*. 1977

work as being aggressive. I prefer to think that it seems to meet you halfway. When I'm making a piece, I intuitively know when it's about to be finished—it begins to feel separate from me and then I can complete it. A relationship, some sort of an exchange, develops between me and the object. I hope that the viewer can experience a similar relationship. This is certainly not part of the Minimal experience.

LS: Is this relationship ultimately intuitive; how important are conscious formal decisions in your process?

ML: Tony Smith has been an important influence on me. Even though his work is big, geometric sculpture and seemingly intellectual, there's something else happening in it. It's not about ideas alone. His sculptures are not only products of the mind; it's as if they come from some other place. It is that kind of effect that I want to achieve in my own work. My feeling is that art is basically mysterious, intangible—something your rational mind simply can't partake of.

Robert Lawrance Lobe

Born in Detroit, 1945
Lives in New York City

Education

Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio,
1963-67, B. A.
Hunter College, New York, 1967-68

Selected Group Exhibitions

Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/
Materials*, May 19-July 6, 1969
The Detroit Institute of Arts, *Other Ideas*,
September 10-October 19, 1969
Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *1970 Annual Exhibition: Con-
temporary American Sculpture*,
December 12, 1970-February 7, 1971
Bykert Gallery, New York, *Sculpture by
Robert Lobe, Drawings and Prints by
Jan Dibbets, Eva Hesse, Ralph Hum-
phrey, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin,
David Novros, Dorothea Rockburne,
Alan Saret*, November 6-December
2, 1971
LoGiudice Gallery, New York [Group
Exhibition], Winter 1972
Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *1973 Biennial Exhibition Con-
temporary American Art*, January 10-
March 18, 1973
The Museum of Modern Art, Art Lending
Service, New York, *76 Jefferson*,
September 11-December 1, 1975
The Institute for Art and Urban Re-
sources at P. S. 1, Long Island City,
New York, *A Month of Sundays*,
September 19-October 10, 1976
Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State
University, University Park, *The Material
Dominant. Some Current Artists and
Their Media*, January 29-March 27, 1977

One-Man Exhibitions

Zabriskie Gallery, New York,
September 10-October 5, 1974
Hammarskjöld Plaza Sculpture Garden,
New York, March 7-May 20, 1977

RLL: While I don't think that my work is necessarily typical of the seventies, I do know that what I'm doing now would probably never have been done in the sixties. I think the seventies are a transitional time—it's really still the sixties winding down. In the sixties we were always reacting against things, and there were a lot of things that were easy to react against. Today there is more willingness to accept and assimilate into our thinking ideas not only from art, but from the widest range of experience.

LS: Do you feel your own point of view has changed?

RLL: During the sixties, I saw myself somewhere between abstract and Conceptual Art. I was trying to define my work in those terms. Until approximately three years ago, I felt disconnected from everything, including my own sculpture. But, in the last three years, my work has started to come together. I didn't realize it at first, but I think I made this progress because I directed myself more openly toward subjects drawn from nature. I actually searched for them.

LS: What motivated this determination to search for a new kind of subject matter?

RLL: It was actually a lack of motivation. It was based on a disillusionment with rationality, with geometry, with the intellect. I realized that all the things that really are exciting about art, like accident, discovery and spontaneity, were simply not available to me, given my thinking at that time.

When I went to Ireland in 1975, my ideas about nature collapsed. Until then I had been making wood sculptures, which I allowed to weather outdoors, where they acquired a beautiful patina. I had been mimicking a natural process—it was even competing with nature in a way—but this now became a very sentimental and useless idea for me. As a result, the work I tried to do in Ireland was a complete disaster, I couldn't make anything. I feel that what I'm doing now is observing nature. I'm giving myself a certain distance.

LS: Now that your attitude is one of detached observation, how has your work changed?

RLL: I've been looking more clearly at nature, looking for those things I sense have a direct relationship to me. I gradually realized that the kinds of shapes, the qualities of mass and density and the character of surface which most compelled me, I found in rock formations. Since everything about them seemed to make sense, I focused on rocks and studied them. I made drawings which at that time I thought were abstract. Now, looking back at them, I realize they are rather rock-like. Then I stopped drawing and spent a year making clay studies which I cast into stone, so I actually made my own rocks. It then became apparent that it was more to the point to simply pick up rocks.



30. *Tree Supporting Boulder*. 1977



31 *Tree Supporting Boulder*. 1977
(cat no. 30, *Tree Supporting Boulder*,
1977, visible in background)

Selected Bibliography

Jeanne Siegel, "Review of Exhibitions: New York, Robert Lobe at Zabriskie," *Art in America*, vol. 62, no. Five, September-October 1974, pp. 105-106

Roberta Smith, "Reviews: Robert Lobe, Zabriskie Gallery," *Artforum*, vol. XIII, no. 4, December 1974, p. 73

Checklist

- † 29 *Times Lost in Stone*. 1976
Aluminum, 23½ x 24 x 17"
Collection of the artist

- 30 *Tree Supporting Boulder*. 1977
Aluminum, 78 x 83 x 55"
Collection of the artist

- 31 *Tree Supporting Boulder*. 1977
Oak, 85 x 78 x 49"
Collection of the artist

- 32 *Bolted Together*. 1977
Aluminum, 17½ x 19 x 15"
Collection of the artist

- † 33 *Manhattan Schist*. 1977
Aluminum, 137 x 87" diameter
Collection of the artist



32. *Bolted Together*. 1977

LS: Would any rock do, or are you concerned with the integrity of the individual rock?

RLL: Originally there were certain rocks which I found inspiring because they seemed to embody so many of my concerns in sculpture. I was looking for a surface that could convey my idea of mass, density and structure. I called my sculptures of rocks "portraits" because I treated the rocks in them as if they were sentient. I think I even anthropomorphized them to some extent. But, as I said, my aim was basically to find ways of organizing surfaces so they would convey the type of volume and mass that I felt the rock was about. I am no longer making portraits of rocks as individual entities. Now I am involved with showing relationships between entities and materials, I am concerned with rocks in general. At this point, any rock will do.

LS: Why did you decide to use aluminum after you made much of your earlier work in wood?

RLL: I was interested in aluminum because I wanted to work with something that was very different from wood. Also I wanted to do something that could be made more quickly than the wood pieces. And hammering on the surface of the aluminum makes it somewhat resemble drawing. So, in a way, the aluminum allows me to incorporate drawing in the sculpture. But, initially, I used it so I could work outside of my studio: I could go out into nature and actually pound aluminum sheet around rocks. Instead of picking up rocks, I actually made a sculpture of a rock. Aluminum was also appealing because it is antithetical to what you might think of as natural. And, of course, I still like wood, whereas I don't like steel. Steel is for me too suggestive of skyscrapers, bridges and industry. I think some sculptors have identified too closely with that kind of image in order to give their work strength.

LS: Despite your use of natural elements like the boulder and tree as subject matter, do you consider yourself a formalist?

RLL: Although I deal with representational images, I am a formalist in the most rudimentary sense, in that I am interested in abstract qualities such as shape, density and surface. But I think my work is new in that I'm dealing with impurities, impure physical states, rather than pure ones. I always liked volumes that were structured in uneven ways, as a rock might be structured, with cleavages, faults and different types of densities. So it is really because of my use of natural elements, not despite it, that I have been able to explore the formal possibilities of my work, to get at the things I think sculpture is about.

Nachume Miller

Born in Frankfurt, West Germany, 1949
Lives in New York City

Education

Art Teachers Institute, Tel-Aviv, 1966-69
The School of Visual Arts, New York,
1973-75, B. F. A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Exhibited with *10 plus* group in Israel,
1969-73

Yodfat Gallery, Tel-Aviv, *5 Painters*,
opened December 25, 1972

112 Greene Street Gallery, New York,
The Work of Nine School of Visual Arts
June 1975 Graduates, June 28-July 10,
1975

Rina Gallery, New York, *Buky, Cohen-
Gan, Doktori, Gitlin, Kadishman, Koren,
Miller, Neustein*, February 10-
March 6, 1976

One-Man Exhibition

Rina Gallery, New York, *Drawings*,
March 9-April 3, 1976

NM: I think my work could have been done in the sixties, maybe even the fifties. It seems to share a similar sensibility and to deal with the same fundamental problems as much of the art of the fifties, but I think there's a basic difference in that sixties art was based in large part on a reaction against Abstract Expressionism. For instance, people like Rauschenberg and then the Pop artists appropriated certain elements from previously established movements like Dada, but always with a freshness of vision. But the artists of my generation look to those of the sixties like Rauschenberg for solutions and a working vocabulary that we can now extend in new directions. I want to develop a very personal language so that everything I do will look like I did it, whether you call it a painting or a real object.

LS: I know you consider yourself a painter. Is this a contradiction since you are working in real space with real objects?

NM: I consider myself a painter because I feel my sources are in painting. Even though I use objects, I usually use them as a painter would, and not as a sculptor. I'm never really interested in the three-dimensional quality of the work; I'm more concerned with flatness, looking at it and approaching it from the front, like a painter. Some of my objects are more sculptural than others, but I feel I deal with the three-dimensionality in a very painterly way . . . like a painter making an assemblage or collage by putting materials together and painting them over. The work always has a close relationship to the wall. I had wanted to get away from the wall in some earlier pieces, and they became extremely sculptural. But the structure of these sculptures seemed to demand or compel a kind of artificial wall, so I eventually returned to using the real wall itself.

I'm not interested in painting just for its own sake, but rather in creating some holistic, all-inclusive form that incorporates all the dimensions of my personality. I feel I am a very expressionistic artist and have always been influenced by all forms of expressionism. The immediate impact of the movies, technology, the media—anything from our surroundings—is very strongly and directly reflected in my work. The slide projections, for instance, which I have been using for the past four years, function explicitly to enrich the range of images I work with. They also are a metaphor for the additive process that is central to my work—the multiple, changing images stand for the way my mind generates, my eye picks up a series of ideas and images. And the slides allow me to depict space, objects, time, activities, painting, drawing, etc. on a flat surface, using the projections of light without the intervention of any tangible materials, such as paint, ink or charcoal. This medium has the special qualities of light, intangibility and illusion, a certain aura of mystery and magic, like that created by the old-fashioned magic lantern show.

LS: When you refer to expressionism, you obviously are using the term in a very broad sense. Would you clarify your use of the word?



34 *Studio Piece*. 1977

Checklist

34 *Studio Piece*. 1977

Acrylic, pencil, ink, mylar and encaustic on wood with cardboard chest, painted wood chair, glass, sculp-metal on cardboard and slide projector, 11' 3" x 20' x 48"
Collection of the artist

35 *Living Room Piece*. 1977

Acrylic, pencil, ink and encaustic on wood with painted wood table, plywood screen, glass, sculp-metal on plywood and slide projector, 8' 8" x 14' x 48"
Collection of the artist

36 *Table, Chair and Chest*. 1977

Acrylic, pencil, ink, encaustic and paper and plywood collage on wood with wood chair, metal chest, glass, sculp-metal on plywood and slide projector, 5' 10" x 10' 11" x 28"
Collection of the artist

NM: I see expressionism as the very general direction of my work. When I was a student, I was influenced by Surrealism, by Bacon, even Bosch, and, of course, Michelangelo and the Baroque artists. My idol in the twentieth century was always Picasso. His art is fascinating to me because he was able to use other people's work and capture, assimilate and personalize everything. I make a deliberate effort to establish references to other artists, to build on their achievements and integrate them into my work, evolving my own personal kind of construction.

Turning specifically to contemporary artists who have influenced me, I would cite Rauschenberg, Johns, Twombly, as well as Beuys. Rauschenberg's influence on me was very dominant at a certain time because of the way he dealt with the object and the painting, the illusion and the reality and the relation between them. His very free, often spontaneous handling of materials, and the richness of his images appealed to me.

Now I'm looking closely at earlier abstract European art like Cubism, Mondrian and especially Klee. Klee, because his work is not purely formalistic; he deals on different levels with art, reality and symbolism, and even has a rather literary element that I like. I want my art to be a broad statement that is about more than just the painting.

The problem that I have to face as a young artist is to maintain my connection with the past without becoming assimilated into the establishment or any other tradition. So I feel strongly that I should try to create a very personal art out of myself but be free to refer to the art of the past in my terms.

LS: Although your work has the superficial appearance of environmental art, do you feel it is closer to the Cubist tradition of self-contained constructions?

NM: Yes, it's closer, I think, to the Cubist tradition. I never like to use the word "environmental" because it refers very specifically to the sixties when conceptual and process-oriented artists transformed specific indoor or outdoor spaces. Even though I'm using some of this tradition in my work, I want my pieces to be very definite objects which exist by themselves and are not dependent on a particular environment. As a matter of fact, I have done some things that are close to environmental work, but recently my work tends to be a very traditional kind of object-painting. I don't even consider myself an avant-garde artist.

LS: Can we extend this reference to Cubism by suggesting a parallel between your constructions and the art of assemblage and collage?

NM: I feel that arranging the pieces is like arranging a room. I am referring to the specific series of interiors (cat. nos. 34 to 36). I take into account the very obvious necessities involved in arranging a room; for example, you put a bed in a bedroom or a chair in a dining

room. Then there are those considerations that have more to do with your own taste and sensibility, such as what color to paint the wall and where to place a plant; that's clearly a different type of necessity. In the same way, when I construct the pieces, I'm trying to put certain elements of information together. Some of it is absolutely necessary and should be there, and some of it is more arbitrary and spontaneous. It is in this way that the work comes closest to assemblage. Above all, I try to leave the process open; I don't hide anything I do. I like people to see the genesis of the work. I often look at my work as a document of my activities. I don't like it to be seen as something that has been too planned or directed, even though it is always arranged with a certain logic. It is something I do as an everyday thing, and the result is the object, the painting we can perceive in the end.

35 *Living Room Piece* 1977



LS: What precisely do you mean by perceive? How do you intend the viewer to interact with the objects? Do you expect them, for instance, to sit on the chairs?

NM: In some pieces, that would be impossible because they're fragile. But in my imagination, I think of people getting in them, around them, touching them—just not moving anything. I work with a very human scale; my pieces are never too big. My work always bears a relation to an object for human use like a table or chair. I think the viewer can refer to my work not only in formal terms, but as a very human type of experience because of the familiar, everyday objects. And, in a way, it's even a didactic experience, because I try to include so much information, especially of an art-historical nature.

36. *Table, Chair and Chest.* 1977



Gordon Newton

Born in Detroit, 1948

Lives in Detroit

Education

Port Huron Community College, Port Huron, Michigan

Society of Arts and Crafts, Detroit

Wayne State University, Detroit

Selected Group Exhibitions

The Detroit Institute of Arts, *58th Exhibition for Michigan Artists*, December 15, 1970-February 7, 1971

Willis Gallery, Detroit, *Stan Dolega, Michael Luchs, Gordon Newton*, April 1971

M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York, *Tony Berlant, Mario Dubsy, Sylvia Mangold, Gordon Newton, Susan Shatter, Sylvia Stone, Robert Swain, Lynton Wells*, June 10-July 31, 1971

The Detroit Institute of Arts, *12 Statements Beyond the 60's*, September 27-November 5, 1972

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, *American Drawings 1963-1973*, May 25-June 22, 1973

Somerset Mall, Troy, Michigan, *Cass Corridor Artists*, September 4-14, 1975

Willis Gallery, Detroit, Michigan, *William Antonow, John Egner, Steve Foust, Gordon Newton*, September 1975

Macomb County Community College, Warren, Michigan, *Michigan Sculpture '77*, March 20-April 17, 1977

One-Man Exhibition

J. L. Hudson Gallery, Detroit, October 18-November 10, 1973. Catalogue with text by Frederick J. Cummings

Selected Bibliography

Robert Pincus Witten, "Detroit Notes: Islands in Blight," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 52, no. 6, February 1978, pp. 137-143, repr. cover

GN: During the sixties and even early seventies, there was an abundance of movements and groups. I feel the sixties provided us with some kind of foundation. You have to be educated before you can break away, you have to have something to use or misuse and disagree with. It seems that social and cultural institutions have broken down. For example, it used to be that painting and sculpture were considered the highest forms of art, but now art has assumed many different forms and they are all being taken seriously. Because of this breakdown it's been necessary for artists to explore new ideas and alternatives. I think that this has made us feel more self-reliant and confident, willing to work independently and outside the tradition. I like the idea of not being part of a movement, but rather being an individual working away, on my own.

LS: How did the breakdown of traditions specifically affect your work?

GN: In my earlier more abstract drawings, I was trying to focus on the medium of drawing so that it would be taken more seriously. But I turned to my objects for two basic reasons: I wanted to have something I could keep working on every day in a totally unplanned way over a prolonged period. But, more importantly, I was interested in conveying a sense of physicality to the viewer and thus allowing him to project himself into the pieces in a way that a flat drawing doesn't allow.

LS: Although you are not trying to realistically depict specific objects, you are nonetheless giving your pieces names of specific things like "roller coasters" and "diving boards."

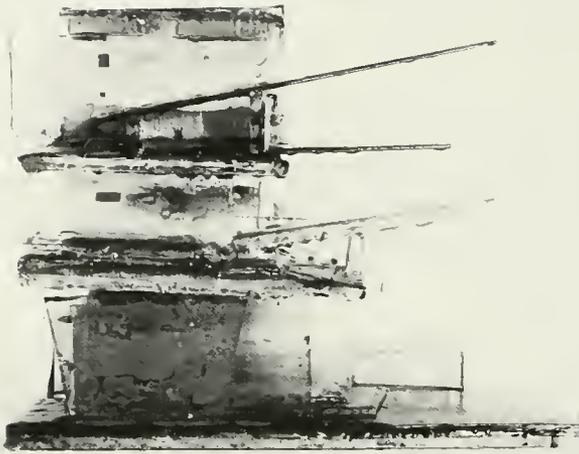
GN: They're not supposed to be real, those are just names I use in a general way. I use them because I've always been fascinated by board games—where you open up a box and look inside to see all the parts. The first roller coaster seems like an abstract game to me. In the second and third roller coasters, I wanted not to be realistic but to be a little more specific and also draw the viewer into the piece. So to make them accessible and bring back memories, I included those small plastic "dodge-em" cars. I also see the subject as a metaphor—a roller coaster represents life's ups and downs, as well as the fact that you're always moving and traveling during a lifetime. The traumas in your life are indicated by the explosions in the coaster tracks. You've really got to keep your sense of humor.

LS: Tell me more about your interest in games and how they relate to your work.

GN: I don't really understand why I'm so drawn to games. I like the fact that roulette wheels and slot machines are so well made, that the wood is beautifully carved but worn down and that people become so obsessed and involved with them. I would like to think that my work evokes these sorts of associations.



41. *Coaster III*, 1977



38 *Diving Board #3*. 1977

LS: While you're interested in man-made objects, you're also concerned with natural elements. How do they relate to each other?

GN: I begin each of my projects (I prefer to call my works "projects" instead of art) as a geometric shape and then alter it. I see this process as being like nature taking over and changing the original form—or like man altering nature. I've been heavily influenced by the environment of Michigan—the pine trees, the Great Lakes, the cycles of nature that I see. I hope to suggest these cycles and the passage or even freezing of time in my work.

LS: Why do you choose certain materials?

GN: I try to use materials that are going to work together. I find I seem to know intuitively what materials to use once I have an idea of what I'm going to make. I tried using fired ceramic clay, but that didn't work for me because it's too confining; it's water-based and as soon as it's exposed to air, it starts hardening and then cracks. I like plasticine because it's pliable, although I was hesitant about using it at first because its properties change with changes in the temperature.

LS: Is working out your ideas in series important to you?

GN: Although I work from my emotions, I make things to solve or clarify problems. If my answer is not clear the first time, I try to improve it the next time.

Checklist

- 37 *Roan*. 1977
Wood, metal, polyester resin and
paint, 104 x 42"
Collection Faygo Beverage Corpora-
tion, Detroit
- 38 *Diving Board #3*. 1977
Plasticine, polyester resin, glass
and paint, 14½ x 16½ x 7"
Collection Mary Jane Jacob and
Russell Lewis, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- † 39 *Diving Board #4*. 1977
Glass and polyester resin,
10½ x 34¾ x 8"
Courtesy Feigenson-Rosenstein
Gallery, Detroit
- † 40 *Roller Coaster #1*. 1977
Plasticine, polyester resin, paint and
mixed media on wood, 11 x 88 x 6"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Miro
- 41 *Coaster III*. 1977
Glass, plasticine, polyester resin,
paint and mixed media on wood,
36 x 30 x 12"
Courtesy Feigenson-Rosenstein
Gallery, Detroit



37. *Roan*. 1977

Martin Puryear

Born in Washington, D.C., 1941
Lives in Washington, D.C. and
Brooklyn, New York

Education

The Catholic University of America,
1960-63, B A

Royal Academy of Art, Stockholm,
1966-68

Yale University, School of Art,
New Haven, 1969-71, M F A

Selected Group Exhibitions

Fisk University Gallery of Art, Fisk
University, Nashville, Tennessee,
Stephanie Pogue and Martin Puryear,
November 5-26, 1972

University of Maryland Art Gallery,
University of Maryland, College Park,
Demonte, Puryear, Richer, Samuels,
Willis, October 1-26, 1974

Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State
University, University Park, *The Material*
Dominant. Some Current Artists and
Their Media, January 29-March 27, 1977

Lewiston, New York, *Art Park*,
August 4-September 1, 1977

One-Man Exhibitions

Grona Palletten Gallery, Stockholm,
May 18-30, 1968

Henri 2 Gallery, Washington, D.C.,
January 8-February 4, 1972

Henri 2 Gallery, Washington, D.C.,
September 8-October 3, 1973

The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington,
D.C., July 29-September 18, 1977

Selected Bibliography

David Bourdon, "Martin Puryear at Henri
2," *Art in America*, vol. 62, no. 1,
January-February 1974, p. 110

David Tannous [review of 1977 ex-
hibition at The Corcoran Gallery of Art],
Art in America, vol. 66, no. Three,
May-June 1978

MP: The sixties were important and especially rich in terms of art because so much opened up and this created a lot of possibilities. I see the sixties as having been a time when artists could colonize different areas of reality for art. Minimalism, for example, cultivated a distance, a sense of anonymity, so that you didn't get involved with any kind of signature or personal touch. But that too just opens up your options, or at least it did for me. I remember being deeply impressed with the idea that a cube of a certain size could be a really powerful object and recognizing that I would like to make things like that. In the complex life we lead, there are so few occasions to actually confront something as pure and direct as a cube of a given size.

A lot of my own thinking has always been about reducing things to some real core, a concrete kind of core. It's a tendency that I feel is a personal one and it was confirmed by Minimalism. In my earliest work, when I was really not even aware of being an artist, I was always selecting a single image and putting it in the middle of a picture. What I'm focusing on now is discovering what is going to give the work validity on its own, in terms of some connection to a personal source.

LS: How do you establish this kind of connection you refer to?

MP: Presently I'm very aware of trying to make particular kinds of objects to create just the right sort of link between my world and myself. More than ever, I feel this is a time for me to trust intuition. For example, I feel better than ever about making things with my hands. I work with a certain awareness of putting materials together. Since I was small, I've been a maker of things of all sorts, including tools, musical instruments, boats and furniture.

LS: Many of your pieces certainly look like tools. But, if they are tools, they are implements which suggest little or no utilitarian function.

MP: If they're tools, then their function is to effect visual responses—if I'm fortunate, spiritual responses, too. They're objects which I want to have survive on as many levels as possible. They are made to be felt, not to do physical work. There's a kind of principle which grows out of the needs of function. This can be admired in strictly utilitarian things, including organic nature—it results in a fullness of being within very strict limits—an inevitability, almost. The most powerful art for me has always contained something of this inevitability.

LS: Is the function of these tools essentially the exploration of your materials?

MP: As I've said, my way of working, my personal inclination, is basically reductivist. And when I can, I prefer to work with materials close to their original state. I've worked with a lot of different

materials, but I prefer wood, and I always come back to it. I feel at home with it. It's versatile. I've carved it of course, but now I'm most interested in the ways it can be used structurally. Even with the logic and joinery that this requires, the work can still be like nature in having a sense of its own growth contained in it. I want to approach that kind of wholeness no matter how made or controlled it is.

LS: Is it correct to say that despite the organic sense you wish to convey, your work depends to a high degree on careful planning, formal and technical manipulation? Do you feel that you can be at all spontaneous in your approach?

43. *Bask*, 1976

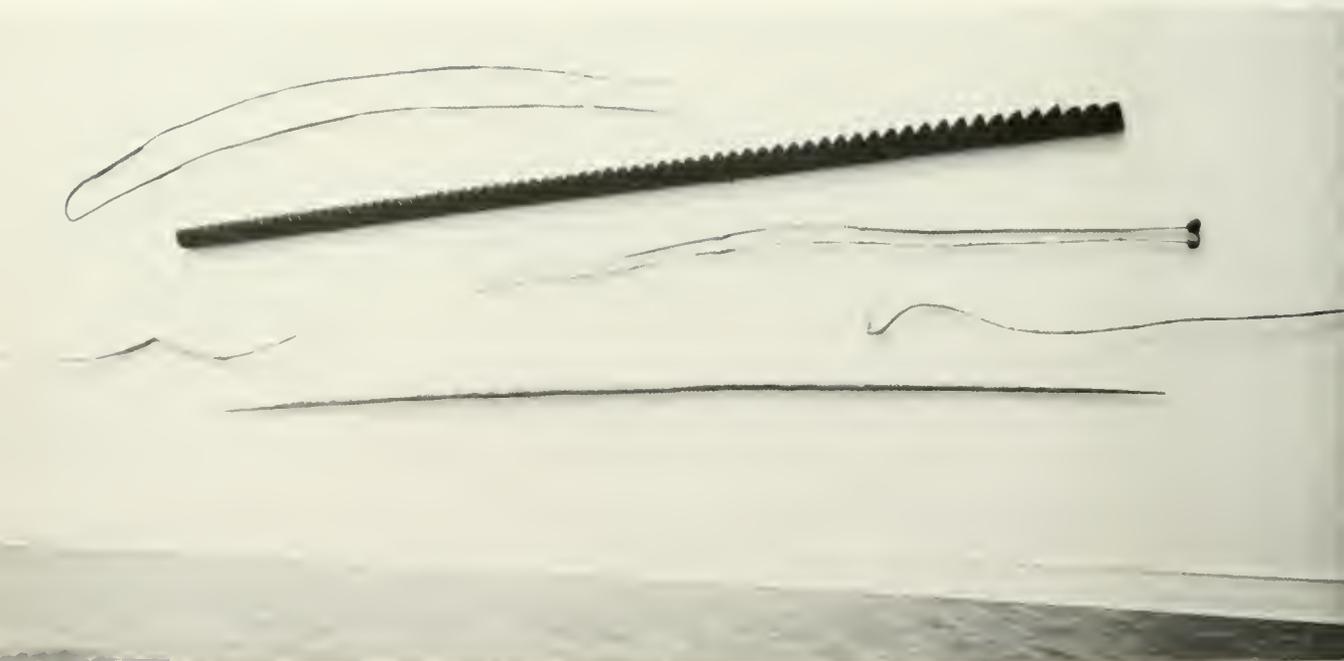


MP: Yes, because working with wood, for instance, often necessitates planning the thing out totally in advance, especially in certain pieces where I use cabinet-making techniques. There's not a lot of room for any form of spontaneity since you have to have it fairly well conceived beforehand.

LS: How does the conceptual process work for you?

MP: I can't conceive of a piece independently of my hands being at work. The two things are really very intimately locked together—my actual manual manipulation and whatever concept I have. However, the actual conceptualization can happen at different stages. For example, when I've carved I've been aware of digging around under the surface of the material and when I'd recognize what I was looking for I'd stop. The thing shows itself near the end, but when I build or construct a piece I need to have what seems like a sixth sense about working, so I can conceive the thing in space, beforehand, totally, and then work backwards down to the details of how it's going to go together. Whatever way I work my hope is the same—that the object should have a rationale which grows out of the making and points to the maker. I want this rationale to be perceivable to the senses and not be simply cerebral.

42 *Some Tales, 1975-78*



Checklist

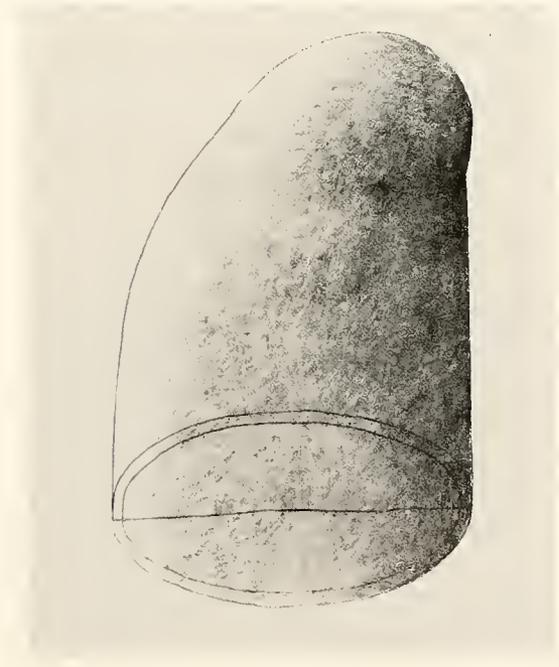
- 42 *Some Tales*. 1975-78
Pine, ash, hickory, rawhide, multiple elements, longest element 24"
Collection of the artist
- 43 *Bask*. 1976
Staved pine, 12" x 12' 2³/₄" x 24"
Collection of the artist
- † 44 *Self*. 1978
Polychromed wood, 68 x 52 x 28"
Collection of the artist
- 45 *Drawing for Self*. 1978
Pencil on paper, 11³/₄ x 9"
Collection of the artist
not in exhibition

LS: Do you intend that your objects be seen as self-contained and referring only to themselves?

MP: I think there are a number of levels at which my work can be dealt with and appreciated. It gives me pleasure to feel there's a level that doesn't require knowledge of, or immersion in the esthetic of a given time and place. I realize you can never totally escape this kind of thing, because art objects are linked to a given culture. We aren't aware of what it was like to live in the Greek Cyclades 3,000 years ago and what conditions produced Cycladic sculpture, but we can certainly experience a sensual pleasure in these objects, even from a great distance. So I feel that real art can be appreciated on more than one level.

My work should have meaning in a broader sense: I want to make objects that somehow have their own history and their own reason for being and their own sense of themselves. I'm not concerned just with the object's formal meaning, although it should be an intelligible artifact, a thing of one's own culture and time. It's equally crucial that there exist in the work a recognition of the maker, of who I am. In order to achieve this, ultimately I have to rely on myself.

45. *Drawing for "Self."* 1978



Jenny Snider

Born in New York City, 1944

Lives in New York City

Education

Queens College, New York, 1961-63

Yale University, School of Art,
New Haven, 1963-66, B.F.A., M.F.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Whitney Museum of American Art,
New York, *1972 Annual Exhibition,
Contemporary American Painting*,
January 25-March 19, 1972

The New Gallery, Cleveland, *Frances
Barth, Don Dudley, Tony Robbin, Jenny
Snider*, October 10-November 4, 1972

Whitney Museum of American Art, New
York, *American Drawings 1963-1973*,
May 25-July 22, 1973

Nancy Hoffman Gallery, New York, *A
Women's Group: Sarah Draney, Louise
Fishman, Harmony Hammond, Patsy
Norvell, Jenny Snider*, January 5-24,
1974

Downtown Branch, Whitney Museum of
American Art, New York, *Continuing
Abstraction in American Art*,
September 19-November 1, 1974

The Womancenter, Boulder, Colorado,
*Preparatory Notes—Thinking Drawings,
Part I*, opened May 23, 1976, 80 Wash-
ington Square East Gallery, New York
University, *Preparatory Notes—Thinking
Drawings, Part II*, February 16-
March 11, 1977

Artists Space, New York, *New Art
Exhibition Auction*, January 7-22, 1977

55 Mercer Gallery, New York, *Touching
on Nature: Sarah Draney, Harmony
Hammond, Ann Heimann, Jenny Snider*,
June 4-22, 1977

One-Woman Exhibitions

Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, *Five
(5) Movies by Jenny Snider*, February
26, 1976

N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago, opened
May 13, 1977

Bibliography

Jenny Snider, *Pencil Picture Dictionary*,
New York, A Head, Hand, Heart and
Tooth Publication, 1973

JS: During the sixties, the major influence on me was Abstract Expressionism. That painting taught me my process and my approach to imagery. In a sense, it shielded me from the art of the sixties; it helped me ignore a lot that was going on then. I remember making it my business not to learn many things. I didn't handle my work with respect. This was not in the tradition of Abstract Expressionism, but that was certainly my interpretation of it. My most intense feeling at that time was of alienation; I felt definite about not being involved with any kind of non-painterly tradition. Although my focus and my basic premises were there in the very beginning, in the sixties, it truly came into being in the seventies.

The primary experience of the seventies for me was the women's movement. It formed a bridge for me. It taught me how to relate my formal education to the very personal process of making art on a daily basis. I had been using sources from outside of painting—textiles, folk decoration—for about two years. And I got involved in a women's group. We all quite coincidentally were using grids to organize our work. In talking and looking at it, certain differences in meaning and intention became clear. It was through talks like this that I was able to get in touch with my content, my core. The grid gave way to an image that grew out of the process of marking and handwork in general—a nervous line that was about writing, knitting, sewing, an image that was drawn horizontally and read like a narrative on the page.

LS: For some time now, you haven't been working on canvas or using paint. Do you consider your work to be related to painting despite your rejection of traditional materials?

JS: For the last five or six years, I've worked primarily on paper. Its thinness and lightness seemed more hospitable to words and the word-inspired images I use. In a sense, I've been looking for a vocabulary for my painting. But it only becomes painting when I build up the image in layers, one on top of the next.

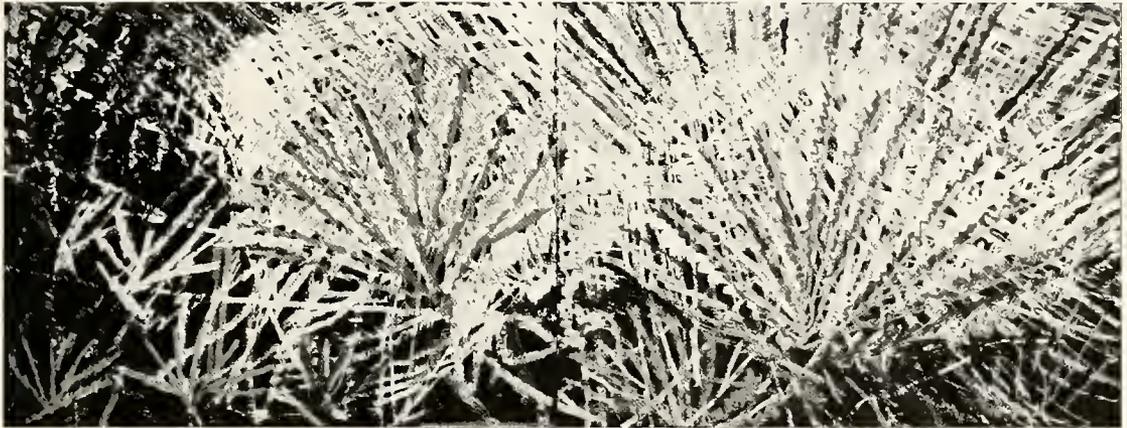
LS: What painters have been important to you?

JS: Right now, I've been looking at late nineteenth and twentieth-century painters, such as Cézanne, Matisse, Dove, Guston and Klee, among others.

LS: When you refer to Klee, I immediately think of your interest in pattern, repetition and calligraphic effects. What else is appealing to you?

JS: I also respond to his appreciation of the small and his sensitivity to exactly the right scale and material. He has an incredible sense of how many different materials you can use in one piece. His paintings become poems.

I've also always loved Guston's work. As a matter of fact, I feel very deprived that we can't see more of his earlier work more often. His



46. *I Used to Be Color Blind*. 1977

Checklist

- 46 *I Used to Be Color Blind*. 1977
Craypa on paper, 2 sheets, each
19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{2}$, total 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 51"
Collection of the artist
- 47 *Salad Days*. 1977
Craypa on paper, 59 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 66"
Collection of the artist
not in exhibition
- 48 *Mr. Sleary's Circus*. 1977
Craypa on paper, 59 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 96 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
Collection of the artist

work is a major source of strength for me, especially in the way he uses paint and in the direct, almost ugly quality of his paintings.

More recently and more specifically, I've been looking at Arthur Dove. His work reminds me that large, clear areas of color can be unbelievably expressive. His use of landscape impressed me at a time when memories of hills, trees and fields in California and Georgia were a rich source of imagery for me. While these images came from my own experience, they also refer to other art.

LS: I take it that the sources for your work right now are not exclusively naturalistic.

JS: There is a reference to books. I've been making books for a number of years now. Two of the new drawings (cat. nos. 48, 49) actually come from a small page in a book I made this summer. The combination of the pictures in the books and the words on the pages are very important, as is the relationship of handwriting to a picture.



47 *Salad Days*. 1977

+ 49 *Booklearning*. 1978

Craypa on paper, 60 x 132"

Collection of the artist. This work was made possible with a grant from the Creative Artists Public Service Program (CAPS)

+ 50 *Clara's Gifts*. 1978

Craypa on paper, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Collection of the artist. This work was made possible with a grant from the Creative Artists Public Service Program (CAPS)

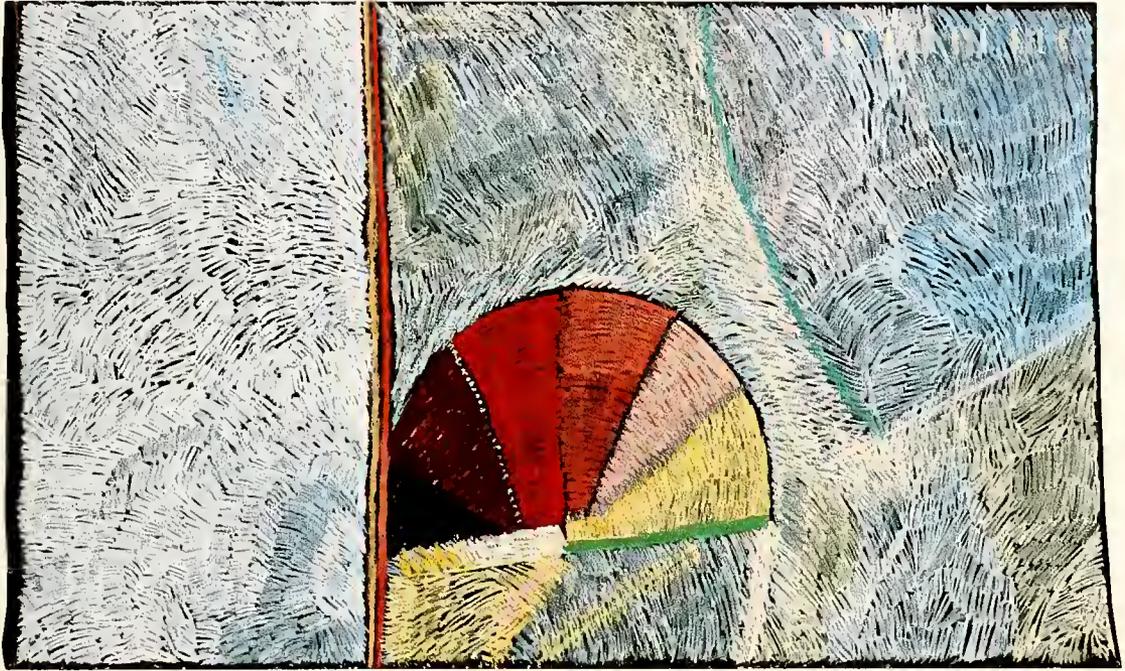
I have begun to enlarge the scale of the work enormously and that has brought about a shift in focus. There is a quality of stage performance in them. They are about costumes and dance. The animating gesture comes from my arm now; it is an arc that radiates out from my body

LS: Is it fair to refer to your work as abstract in a broad sense?

JS: Yes, abstract in the sense that its form derives from natural or figurative imagery, or possibly some specific reference which may or may not be visible. I'm concerned with the experience of making and discovering an image.

LS: Does this mean you're primarily concerned with the process of discovery in your work?

JS: I think that the object, the fact that you make an object and finish it, is very important. I wouldn't do it if there wasn't something left from the process. So it doesn't have meaning to me merely



48 *Mr. Sleary's Circus*. 1977

because it is a record of the process; it has meaning to me because, after being made, it is an object which has a certain beauty and formal structure.

LS: And yet I sense in your work a very real concern with process.

JS: Yes, the process has to do with achieving a certain balance between an image that is explicitly simple and clear yet inherently complex, even chaotic. It is this quality of continual tension and balance in the image that guides me in what I put where. More specifically, there's been a curious metamorphosis of certain images in my work that started with a kind of scribble, a calligraphic element which then turned into a figure and then into a rather hand-like form and then a tree. This idea of metamorphosis is very important in my work. What connects all of it is a focus on marking— a gesture, and that gesture is aimed at creating a movement or an illusion of movement or change.

Danny Williams

Born in Waco, Texas, 1950

Lives in Dallas

Education

Southern Methodist University, Dallas,
1968-72, B.A.

University of Iowa, Iowa City,
1974-76, M.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Margo Jones Theatre, Southern
Methodist University, Dallas [two-
man exhibition], Spring 1973

Hathorn Gallery, Skidmore College,
Saratoga Springs, New York, *M.F.A.*
Invitational, October 31-November 19,
1975

The Art Center, Waco, Texas, *The Art
Center 1975 Competition*, November 8-
22, 1975

D. W. Co-Op Gallery, Dallas, *Two Mints
in One: Ron Moody, Danny Williams*,
August 14-September 9, 1976

Hamilton Gallery, Elmira College,
Elmira, New York, *Texas Print and
Drawing Show*, January 20-February
16, 1977

The Fort Worth Art Museum, *The
Southwest/Tarrant County Annual*,
April 24-June 5, 1977

Bibliography

Roberta Smith, "Twelve Days of Texas,"
Art in America, vol. 64, no. Four, July-
August 1976, pp. 42-48

Checklist

51 *In the Black Night*. 1977

Acrylic on paper, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 31 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

Collection of the artist

† 52 *Jasmine*. 1977

Acrylic on paper, 28 x 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Collection of the artist

† 53 *Within a Sleeping Wood*. 1976

Acrylic on paper, 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 31"

Collection of the artist

For years, painting has been for me a personal means of isolating and assessing thoughts which sustain assumptions, an artistry directly responsive to the changing nature of perception. This involvement has at times led to the development of symbols—characters, shapes and colors which serve to depict thought and feeling as experience. Correspondingly, altered references have meant an elimination of various images as meaningless to the expression of real concerns. I find my interest in making art now turns increasingly toward a search for sustained balance and unity. Knowing art and life as one is the insistent focus.

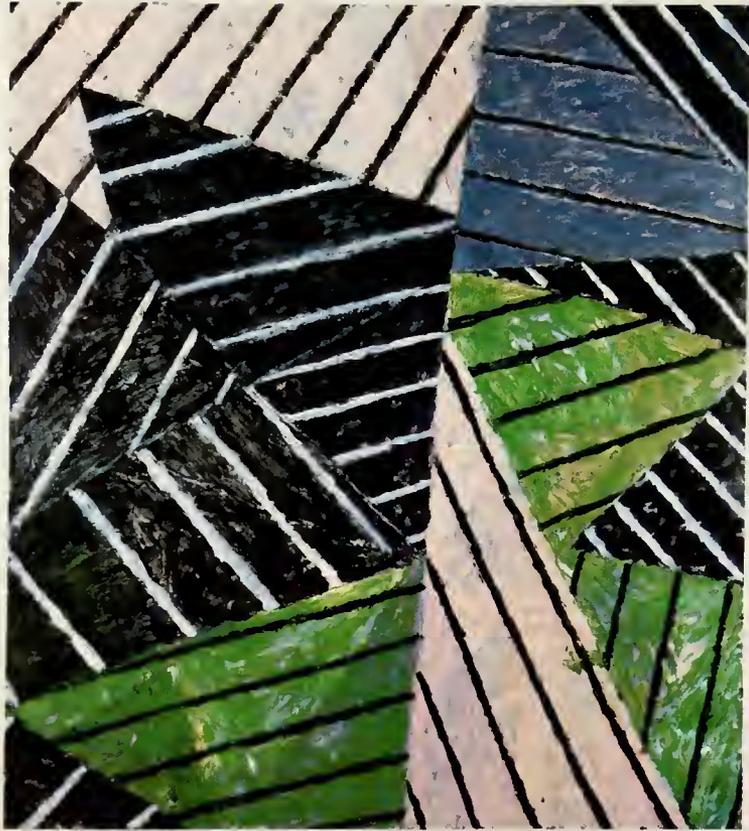
54 *This Quickened Season*. 1977
Acrylic on paper, 58 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Collection Dallas Museum of
Fine Arts

55 *My Home and Native Land*. 1977
Acrylic on paper, 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 34"
Collection of the artist

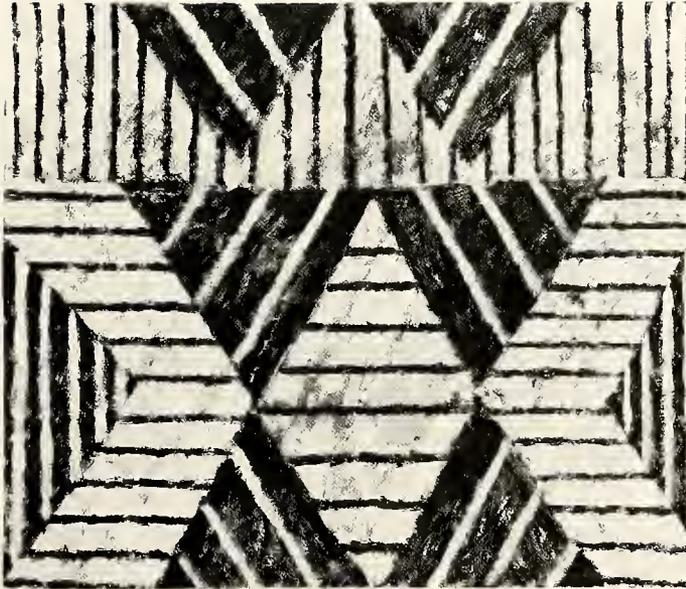
56 *Orchard*. 1977
Acrylic on paper, 25 x 29"
Collection Charles Ennis



56. *Orchard*. 1977



54 *This Quickened Season*. 1977



55. *My Home and Native Land*. 1977

Scott Wixon

Born in Hyannis, Massachusetts, 1948

Lives in New York City

Education

Massachusetts College of Art, Boston,
1966-70, B.F.A

Yale University, School of Art,
New Haven, 1970-72, M.F.A

Selected Group Exhibitions

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Earth, Air,
Fire, Water. Elements of Art*,
February 5-April 11, 1971

Touchstone Gallery, New York, *New
Talent*, July 5-29, 1977

The New Gallery, Russell Sage College,
Troy, New York, *Drawings*,
September 21-October 21, 1977

Checklist

57 *Untitled*. 1977

Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 106"

Collection of the artist

58 *Untitled*. 1977

Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 98½"

Collection of the artist

59 *Untitled*. 1977

Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 141"

Collection of the artist

SW: In the sixties there were certain artists working in various styles, who dominated other artists' attention. These dominant figures defined the things that art was about during those years. You'd wait each year to see what they were doing—it was important to know because otherwise you felt out of touch with what was going on. In the seventies I think we have been looking elsewhere—that is, within ourselves—to find out what is going on. Much of the work being done today by younger artists reflects a process of turning inward, trying to make sense out of the things which are most important to them personally.

LS: Does this mean you have rejected the artists of the sixties as sources of influence?

SW: Not at all. I consider myself to have been strongly influenced by many of them—Noland, especially—although the influence may not be immediately obvious. Color has always been extremely important for me, so it really would have been impossible for me not to have been affected by Noland's use of vibrant color bands. On the other hand, I'm actively involved in gesture and in creating a personal vocabulary of shapes, which I don't think he's interested in.

LS: How is shape related to composition in your work?

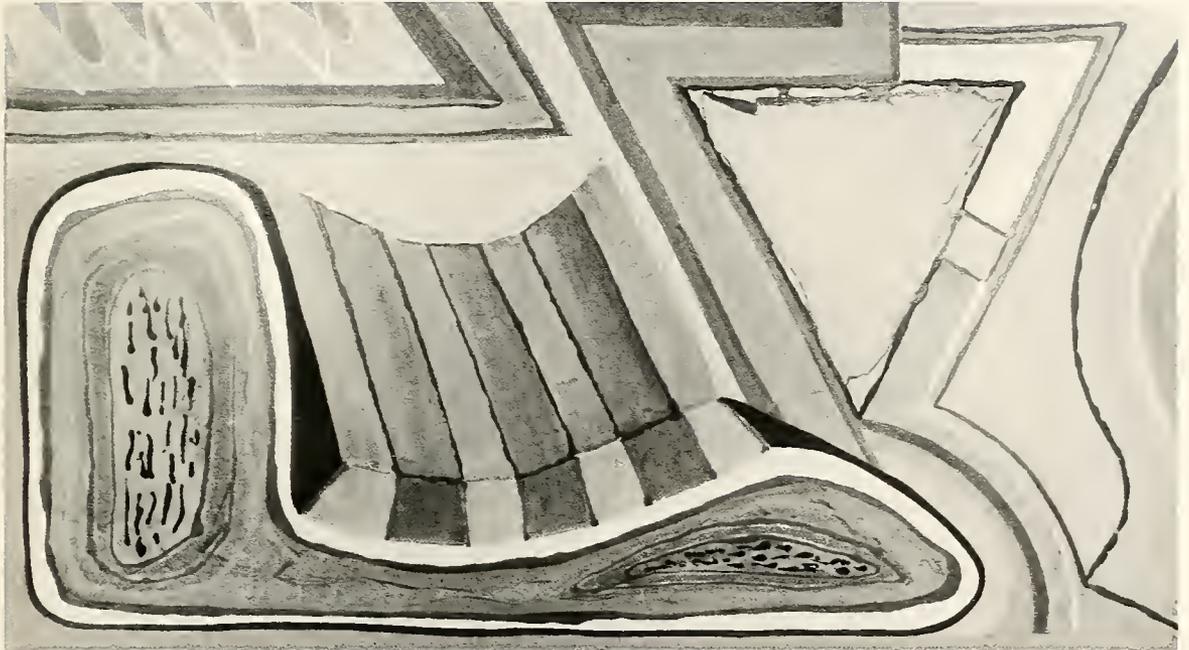
SW: Right now I'm concentrating on using both biomorphic and somewhat geometric shapes, playing one off against the other. I'm interested in juxtaposing the two and trying to create an overall field where they can work with each other, without losing the kind of energy and motion that I want. In the same way, I'm using browns and black as counterpoints to the bright colors.

LS: You refer to a personal vocabulary of shapes. Are you also trying to establish a personal vocabulary of color, or are your choices less deliberate?

SW: I didn't mean to imply by the word vocabulary something rigid, particularly in terms of color. I find I rely on my intuitive sense of color when it comes to making decisions. I first made paintings that were either primarily bright colors or earth tones with black, but then I started to use both kinds of colors together in the same work. Even when I was making sculpture in the early seventies, color played an important role: I did a number of pieces using powdered dyes; I sifted the dye into fresh plaster and poured molten wax over it. I blew dyes into special chambers and experimented in other ways too.

LS: You say you rely on your intuitive sense of color—but does planning play a role in your process?

SW: I hardly ever plan a painting, even though I may have a certain idea of some element—a shape, a form, a mood—before I start. I



59. *Untitled*. 1977



57 *Untitled*. 1977



58. *Untitled*. 1977

trust my intuition. My structure develops through chance and even errors. I've always liked working with materials in a way that encouraged or allowed a lot of chance to come into play

LS: Are your paintings based on any kind of references to the external world?

SW: No, not really, but nature has always been a strong influence on me; I don't work directly from it, but I do find it's something that recharges me. I'd say I'm much more oriented towards landscape than cityscape, yet I feel there's also a type of city energy in my work. I did a lot of drawings this past summer on Cape Cod. They were essentially abstract, but I think the type of light and the flatness of the ocean and the beach—all horizontals—were felt in the drawings.

LS: Do you try to resolve your ideas in a series of paintings, or does each one function as an isolated and complete statement?

SW: I see my individual paintings as unique although they're all related by some sort of organic development and it seems as if one grows out of the one before. Some are better than others, but they all represent a very personal investigation of what I want to say visually—with color, with form and shape. I'm constantly trying to extend the limits of what I've done before, so I can't worry about destroying the painting in the process. I question all the other areas of my life, but when I'm painting I feel very confident that I can totally trust my intuition and make the right decisions. And even when I don't, it no longer bothers me. I don't worry if it makes sense or not, or whether it's too lyrical or decorative. I've simply done what I felt I should.

Photographic Credits

Black and White

Tom Arndt: cat. no. 3

Courtesy Blum-Helman Gallery, New York: cat. nos. 20, 21

Bevan Davies: cat. no. 7

Bob Goodman: cat. nos. 52, 53

Andy Grundberg: cat. nos. 15, 16

Robert Hemsleigh: cat. no. 11

Brad Iverson: cat. nos. 37, 38

Stuart Klipper: cat. no. 1

Bill Lapham: cat. nos. 12, 25

Aida and Robert Mates: cat. no. 8

Robert E. Mates and Mary Donlon: cat. nos. 45, 46, 47

Nachume Miller: cat. nos. 35, 36

Eric Pollitzer: cat. nos. 57, 59; fig in text, p. 32

Harry Shunk: cat. no. 28

Gwenn Thomas: cat. nos. 30, 32

Sarah Wells: cat. no. 42

Color

Dallas Museum of Fine Arts: cat. no. 51

Bevan Davies: cat. no. 34

Andy Grundberg: cat. no. 17

Robert Hemsleigh: cat. no. 13

Brad Iverson: cat. no. 41

Bill Lapham: cat. no. 27

Stuart Klipper: cat. no. 5

Robert E. Mates and Mary Donlon: cat. no. 48

Eric Pollitzer: cat. nos. 9, 58

Gwenn Thomas: cat. nos. 19, 31

Sarah Wells: cat. no. 43

Exhibition 78/3

3000 copies of this catalogue, designed by Malcolm Grear Designers, have been typeset and printed by Eastern Press in March and April 1978 for the Trustees of The Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation on the occasion of the exhibition *Young American Artists. 1978 Exxon National Exhibition.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York