

Possibilities

Extreme Possibilities

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—K.W.

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Extreme Possibilities

New Modernist Paradigms

Recent Paintings by Frances Barth, Clay Ellis,
John Gibson, Joseph Marioni, Marjorie Minkin,
Jill Nathanson, Thomas Nozkowski, Susan Roth

Curator: Karen Wilkin

April 2- April 25, 2009

THE PAINTING CENTER

52 Greene Street New York, NY 10013 www.thepaintingcenter.com

Frances Barth

grey edi, 2008

Acrylic, colored pencil, pastel on canvas, 24 x 78 inches

red plateau, 2008

Acrylic, colored pencil, pastel on canvas, 24 x 78 inches

Clay Ellis

Un drapeau pour un petit pays (central), 2008-09

Acrylic and polyester, 52 x 52 inches

Un drapeau pour un petit pays (nord), 2008-09

Acrylic and polyester, 49 x 49 inches

John Gibson

Madison, 2009

Oil on panel, 40 x 38 inches

High, 2009

Oil on panel, 40 x 38 inches

Joseph Marioni

Yellow Painting, 2008

Acrylic and linen on stretcher, 39 x 37 inches

Yellow Painting, 2008

Acrylic and linen on stretcher, 39 x 37 inches

Marjorie Minkin

Silk Road, 2008

Acrylic and Lexan, 57 x 31 x 12 inches

Terra Firma, 2008

Acrylic and Lexan, 37 x 26 x 11 inches

Jill Nathanson

Wayside, 2008

Acrylic mediums and pigment on paper, 30½ x 30½ inches

Wayward, 2008

Acrylic mediums and pigment on paper, 31 x 30¾ inches

Thomas Nozkowski

Untitled, 2007

Oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches

Untitled, 2008

Oil on linen on panel, 22"x 28 inches, No. 47352

Susan Roth

Tales of Genji, 2007

Acrylic, acrylic skin, and canvas on canvas, 79 x 33 inches

Gericault, 2008

Acrylic, acrylic skin and canvas on canvas, 57½ x 30 inches

EXTREME POSSIBILITIES: New Modernist Paradigms

According to one definition, the course of modernism was a process of self-criticism, as each discipline gradually purged itself of everything not intrinsic to its medium until it arrived at its irreducible quality. By this account, the intrinsic, irreducible quality of painting was flatness. Traditional painting dissembled its material means—paint and the support—to create illusions of fictive space in which fictive forms were arranged, often in order to tell stories. Modernist painting celebrated the fact of paint and the literal expanse of the surface without relying on illusionism or narrative—or at least that’s how the story has frequently been told.

In recent years, many inventive, thoughtful artists who declare themselves to be part of the modernist tradition—or at least, have not repudiated it—have simultaneously affirmed and challenged these assumptions, without resorting to post-modernist irony or cynicism and without adopting the mass culture references or the mass culture materials rife among self-consciously “contemporary” practitioners. The eight extremely various painters in this exhibition, Frances Barth, Clay Ellis, John Gibson, Joseph Marioni, Marjorie Minkin, Jill Nathanson, Thomas Nozkowski, and Susan Roth, can all be described in this way. In terms of the rather modish oppositions widely used in present-day discussion, these artists are committed to a “process-based” rather than a “concept-based” approach. They remain dedicated to making objects, wholeheartedly embracing modernism’s emphasis on physical manifestations. Convinced that meaning must be embodied by their chosen materials, they are hostile to the notion that the ideas expressed by works of art can exist independently of forms. Yet there’s nothing retardataire or backward looking about these artists. Quite the contrary. Barth, Ellis, Gibson, Marioni, Minkin, Nathanson, Nozkowski, and Roth create new possibilities.

They may make their provocative work with time-honored materials, used in more or less traditional ways, or they may combine unexpected media and methods, ignoring conventional ideas about the physical nature of painting—even such basic ones as its confinement to the rectangle. The work of these eight artists, ranging from declarative flatness to near-sculptural articulation of surface, from apparent lack of incident to rich illusionism—and a good deal in between—can blur the boundaries

between disciplines, at once asserting and disrupting aesthetic certainties. While they share many modernist aspirations, these artists reject others, no less than they reject the academic definition of a painting as a faithful depiction of things seen or imagined. Cumulatively, their work broadens the definition of what painting can be and ultimately, it creates new paradigms that make inherited categories not only unhelpful, but also irrelevant to their individual aspirations.

While the eight artists in this exhibition have different formations and histories, as well as different approaches, there are important things that link them. All of them are inventive colorists. All see themselves as part of the continuum of the history of art. All are indebted to the modernist tradition and all seem determined to enlarge its domain. (Obviously, they are not the only ones who could be characterized in this way or who share similar ambitions.) Yet despite these commonalities, the artists included here do not form a coherent group. Some know each other, some know *of* each other, or know each other’s work; some don’t. None is under forty five, but otherwise they come from diverse backgrounds and live in places that include upstate New York, Western Canada, and Massachusetts, as well New York City and its immediate environs. In a very real sense, this exhibition represents a rather willful selection. It might have been titled, perhaps more accurately, “eight artists whose work I have followed for many years, and who continue to surprise, move, puzzle, and—that much abused word—challenge me.”

At one end of the aesthetic spectrum are Marioni’s aggressively disciplined monochrome paintings. But how to characterize the opposite end? Is the antithesis of Marioni’s layered sheets of color on stretched linen to be found in Ellis’s riotously colored, intricately patterned acrylic “skins”? Or is it manifest most clearly in Gibson’s potent illusions of the wholly invented and frequently impossible? What about Minkin’s physically substantial, optically elusive “reliefs” or Barth’s delicately wrought, confrontational images with their multiple spatial references and unstable scales? An equally convincing case could be made for Roth’s irregularly shaped palimpsests of painting events and manipulated canvas or Nathanson’s collisions and layerings of surprising surfaces and hues. Or

it may be that the clearest opposition to Marioni's radiant, deadpan presentations of single hues is to be found in Thomas Nozkowski's ambiguous suggestions of mysterious narratives enacted in places that exist only in terms of the language of paint.

Marioni's monochrome expanses posit the notion that color, not flatness, is the irreducible quality of painting. His layered, translucent sheets of color are, paradoxically, documents of the effort to un-make painting, to dissolve a material presence of particular dimensions into a purely visual experience of light and hue, while at the same time asserting the existence of the painting as an eloquent physical thing. The proportions and extent of Marioni's paintings are dictated by what he calls the "personality" of color—its initial allegiance to the basic hues of red, blue, yellow, or green and the accumulated associations inherent in each. The subtle shaping of his canvasses—which are not rectangles—intensifies the character of each work as an autonomous object, yet the sense that light emanates from his paintings—apparently from different depths, depending on the quality of the surface and the chroma—plays havoc with our awareness of their physicality; the fragile evidence of the edges of sheets of color that sometimes announce the limits of the expanse add to this sense of dislocation.

Gibson's "portraits" of imagined spheres seem at first sight to state very different conceptions of a painting might be from Marioni's. They apparently explore familiar notions of illusionism, employing perspectival rendering, subverted by aggressive surfaces, to create images that appear completely convincing. Yet the illusion of truthfulness is itself an illusion. Gibson's elegant disquisitions on the way bulk and mass can carve out space on the surface of the canvas prove to be anything but conventional or faithful to perceived actuality. His spheres exist in impossible spaces, under impossible light conditions. Once we begin to concentrate on the deliberate peculiarities of these deceptively forthright pictures, we become increasingly aware of the fictive nature of what is before us. Shadows and highlights resist logic; patterns and color relationships begin to declare their autonomy from quotidian rules. The more we look at these enigmatic paintings, the more abstract they become. Despite an apparent attachment to visible phenomena and an appreciation of illusionistic heft worthy of a quattrocento master drunk on the pleasures of perspective, Gibson turns out to be no less preoccupied than Marioni

with the intangible, evocative, purely optical effect of color and surface density.

Other alternatives to both Marioni's and Gibson's theses are provided by Minkin's shaped paintings on Lexan, Ellis's equivocal explorations of pattern and discontinuity, and Roth's aggressively inflected collaged paintings. Minkin's transparent, rippling shapes detach stroke and gesture from the flat surface and launch them into space, as if she were deconstructing painting by making its components both more tangible and less substantial. The contradiction is strengthened by transient effects of shadow and projected color, which alter according to our viewpoint and the lighting conditions. The wall plane behind Minkin's paintings can play an active part in the way we read her work, both as the carrier of these transient effects and as a foil to the articulations of the Lexan. Minkin's concerns seem to be those of an artist dedicated to abstraction, yet because of their human proportions and their swelling forms, many of her Lexan "reliefs" conjure up potent associations with the body. The tension between the transparency and the substantial presence of the Lexan, the assured brushmarks and disembodied color is intensified by these echoes of the torso and its insistent presence.

Ellis's sleek expanses can create potent illusions of three-dimensionality, turning flat surfaces into metaphorical sculptures while asserting their painting-like character. On occasion, real projections, sometimes reinforcing the illusory swells and bulges, sometimes at odds with them, demand that we reevaluate our sense of form, mass, and categories, while abrupt shifts in color or disjunctions in pattern suggest collage construction in what are, in fact, continuous surfaces. The chromatic shifts and the disjunctions are made more dramatic by the real depth of Ellis's layered color; the intensity of his chroma is the result of overlays of translucent hues that fuse into light-diffusing layers that can serve as background for evocative patterns, mask them, or trap them at various depths. The multiple associations provoked by Ellis's patterns—which can range from domestic comfort to expedient construction, from textiles to lumber, from the photographic to the handcrafted, and more—both reinforce the drama of his works and make them more disquieting.

Roth's intensely physical abstractions depend on a kind of solemn battle between real spatial articulations, created by manipulating sheets of cloth or plastic, collaged onto the surface of the canvas, and painterly color incidents that either heighten or cancel the three-dimensionality

of the projecting rucks and folds; her occasional inclusion of what appear to be fragments of other paintings, with often violently different scales, rhythms, and textures, along with the audacious shaping of the supporting plane in response to internal pictorial incidents makes the battle even more fierce. (Roth's paintings are shaped from the inside out; far from being composed to the rectangle, they achieve their final, often irregular contour in response to the pressures of the shapes, forms, and colors within.) Roth plays, too, with allusions to the past. She can invoke the illusionistic material richness of High Baroque painting and the literal physicality of American post-war Modernism, with a nod at the disorder and brashness of vernacular culture.

Barth has said that she wants her paintings to tell stories that cannot be expressed verbally. She does so, in part, by forcing a variety of spatial and graphic languages into an uneasy compatibility—aerial views that suggest mapping, suggestions of perspectival rendering, unequivocal flatness, schematic diagrams that seem to have escaped from science texts, and more—destabilizing our orientation. At the same time, Barth questions the very pictorial conventions she deploys, using them to provoke a multiplicity of readings rather than to create coherent structures. Elongated formats test our perceptions, forcing us to back away to see the paintings whole, and then pulling us close to read delicate details. Barth's fragile, pristine surfaces and tender, radiant color often seem at odds with the toughness of the images, making her inchoate narratives even more absorbing and more ominous.

Nathanson's paintings similarly ring changes on the conventions of perspectival illusions, exploiting our almost involuntary ability to infer the illusion of enterable space from particular shapes and arrangements of planes, and the subverting the resulting tenuous suggestions of three-dimensionality by means of unexpected color relationships and richly inflected surfaces. In her most recent works, those chromatic improvisations and inflections have become so varied that they threaten to subsume completely the memory of a warped grid that haunts her compositions. I suspect that rather than being a pictorial device, opposition may serve as a metaphor—given Nathanson's serious, scholarly interest in certain forms of mysticism—for the conflict between divine intention and the imperfections of reality. The modulated hues call to each other across the picture, fluctuating between opacity and transparency, ultimately ignoring the limits of the confines of the rectangle. Projecting edges move records

of hand gestures into an ambiguous zone beyond the nominal boundaries of the picture, reiterating the spatial ambiguities of the interior spaces. Paradoxically, while these projections read as disembodied flourishes, they are in fact, real, tangible pieces of paint.

In his modestly sized but frequently monumental paintings, Nozkowski pits a staggeringly inventive lexicon of enigmatic imagery against surface-asserting or surface-warping grids, patterns, and diaphanous fields. In addition, he explores a wide range of painting languages, employing specific types of touch, shapes, and, on occasion, color harmonies that seem to reverberate as commentaries on the history of modernist art, at the same time that they seem newly invented to embody potent but incomprehensible narratives. These small, resonant images are always unmistakably "Nozkowskis" yet they are perhaps most notable for their apparently inexhaustible variety. We recognize particular configurations and events—clusters of spots, multi-lobed forms, checkerboards, stripings, bleeds, and more—yet these "signature" inventions always seem surprising and unprecedented, as well as to encapsulate different meanings with each use. Nozkowski's mysterious paintings are always abstract, yet the artist asserts, always provoked by real experience: visual, non-visual, literary, colloquial—apparently, just about anything. The emotional resonance of these triggers survives, utterly transformed into eloquent, puzzling shapes, lines, and spaces that retain an aura of weird specificity. We are drawn into Nozkowski's universe, compelled to believe in the potency of his implicit narratives, and then dared to unravel their significance.

If, as I suggested earlier, Marioni's cerebral, disciplined monochromes represent one extreme of possibility for what painting can be in the first part of the 21st century, then Nozkowski's inclusive, richly allusive paintings represent an opposite extreme. Yet it is impossible to arrange the other painters neatly in relation to these defining statements. Each of them stakes out an individual territory. The sheer pictorial intelligence and variety of their work resists categorization. All we can safely say is that these diverse artists are united in their belief paintings are real things in the world with insistent properties. They are united, too, in their audacious reinventions, even redefinitions, of the modernist picture. They give us a lot to look at and a lot to think about.

Karen Wilkin, New York, February 2009

FRANCES BARTH

Born in New York, Frances Barth received her B.F.A. and M.A. in painting from Hunter College. Early in her career, she performed with Yvonne Rainer and Joan Jonas in New York City. Barth has exhibited widely and her work is represented in numerous corporate and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts.

Barth has received National Endowment for the Arts grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant, an Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation grant, two American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase awards, and an Anonymous Was a Woman grant. For the past four years she has also been working with animation. "End of the Day, End of the Day" is her first completed animation/video with dialogue. Her recent paintings will be seen September/October 2009 at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, New York. Barth is the Director of the Mt. Royal School of Art, Maryland Institute College of Art



grey edi, 2008

Acrylic, colored pencil, pastel on canvas, 24 x 78 inches

BEGINNING IN THE EARLY 1970'S I started investigating ideas in my painting to create a pictorial space with multiple perspective points of view. I wanted to introduce a non-specific narrative to abstraction. The complex space had attributes of both volume and flatness. The color was "non-determinable," made from layers of colors that were perceived as optically mixed. The interaction of this shifting space, color and scale, as well as the large horizontal format, made the paintings have a "slow time," a breathing presence, and the large horizontality forced the viewer to "read" the paintings from left to right and back again.

In the 1980's I began incorporating other forms and images that pushed my paintings into a realm that existed between landscape, mapping, and abstraction—ideas that have been present in my painting ever since . I want to chart a different time-based geologic story in each



painting that could only exist in deep time. I incorporate methods of modeling, diagramming, mapping symbols and charting into the work. For example, in relation to geological structures, in one part of a painting a shift or fault would alter the landscape, and in another area water that had been there millions of years earlier would have left a deep canyon. These elements appearing coherently in the same painting create a new landscape, a narrative creation story, an image that looks experientially like a place, and color and light that feel like an actual phenomenon, sometimes even representing a time of day. I want to make natural light as a phenomenon, and abstract color act as light and location in the same painting, creating a believable space and experience that could never have existed in any other way.

—Frances Barth

CLAY ELLIS

Clay Ellis was born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, in 1955. He currently resides in Edmonton, where he has maintained a studio since 1981. Ellis has been included in numerous exhibitions in England, France, Spain, Botswana, the USA, and Canada. He has been a participant in many international workshops. In 1995, while living in France, co-organized Triangle France, an international artists' workshop held at l'Ecole d'Art de Marseille-Luminy. In 2003 he was the guest artist at the Emma Lake Workshop, Saskatchewan, Canada. In 2006, he was invited to be an artist in residence and construct an installation in the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.. He has given lectures at the University of Lethbridge, the University of Saskatchewan, Georgian College, the Emily Carr School of Art and Design, and the New York Studio School. His work is represented in numerous private and public collections including the Mendel Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Canada Council, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona.

Ellis has recently completed commissions for the City of Vancouver and the City of Edmonton. An exhibition of a major multimedia work "Eight Miles of Barbed Wire" will open at the APT Gallery, London, April 2009.

SOME TIME AGO I BEGAN TO GRASP the value of being able to write my own job description, and with that, came the understanding of how absurd it would be not to be fully engaged. Work habits changed, and over the years the range of work that I was interested in doing broadened, as well as the work I wanted to see. I was more of an omnivore than I had imagined.

Being omnivorous does not necessarily mean that I feel the need to implement all that comes my way. Although the urge to experiment with new processes and materials persists, I've made the decision to maintain what has long been my studio practice, which is to allow work to come from work—a daisy chain of images and objects shaped by circumstance. Each new project or series of works is linked to the one preceding it, blending the refinement of process with changes in circumstance. The artifacts produced by this work method are linked through my response to the materials and process. They are distinguished by the moment in which they are made.

—Clay Ellis

Un drapeau pour un petit pays (nord), 2008–09

Acrylic and polyester, 49 x 49 inches



JOHN GIBSON

John Gibson, born 1958 in Northampton Massachusetts, received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1980 and an MFA from Yale in 1982. Since 1989 he has taught drawing and painting at Smith College in Northampton. During that same period he has shown regularly at Gerald Peters Gallery, New York, Miller Block Gallery, Boston, and Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, as well as in Chicago and Paris.

Gibson is represented in many private and public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

ALL THROUGH GRADUATE SCHOOL I MADE abstract paintings. After graduating, I found myself drawn to a different kind of painting and pictorial idea. I decided that I had to have space and volume in the work. I began to paint still lifes. The problem was that so much figurative painting struck me as Arcadian—like a paean to a more simple and more perfect world. I wanted to use pictorial space in a different way. I am not interested in a window into another reality. For me pictorial space is just another tool to describe the surface of a painting.

For the last twenty years I have been painting pictures of balls. They are really simple and really complicated things to paint. I don't work from observation; everything I paint is invented. I wrap the balls in designs that I feel complement the volumetric swell of the ball. I am not a contemporary artist. I understand and respect the difference. The subject of contemporary art is contemporary culture and media and its boundaries are clearly marked; I am on the other side. I think this distinction is important.

—John Gibson

Madison, 2009

Oil on panel, 40 x 38 inches



JOSEPH MARIONI

Born 1943 in Cincinnati, Ohio, Joseph Marioni was educated at the Cincinnati Art Academy and San Francisco Art Institute. He has lived and painted in New York City since 1972. Marioni exhibits widely in the U.S. and internationally. He has had numerous solo gallery and museum exhibitions in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and Australia, as well as at the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, and the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas. In 2000, his work was included in the Whitney Biennial. He has also been featured in group exhibitions in museums in France, Germany, Spain, Austria, and Switzerland.

Marioni's paintings are included in a large number of private collections internationally and in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Basel Kunst Museum, the Fogg Art Museum; the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna; the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Marioni has lectured on three continents and written many catalogue essays.

I AM WORKING WITHIN THE GENERAL CONCEPT that there is some form of archetype to the colors of the painter's palette, some structure that corresponds to our feeling response to color. Green, yellow, red, and blue form structures that are characteristically distinct from one another and somehow intrinsic to each. That we perceive four distinct color groups is precisely because they are archetypes, - like earth, air, fire and water. If the creation of a painting is determined by our feeling response to the color and not just a concept of its cultural context, then the gestalt of the painting as an object should have some structural parallel to the archetype of its color. .

Color is a phenomenon of light. My practice of painting involves the placement of the light within the gestalt of the color. I do this with transparent and translucent layers of acrylic paint to build a volume of color. I am a glaze painter like Vermeer—not Rembrandt – and my practice of painting comes out of the portrait tradition. I am looking for the personality of the color and that involves all aspects of the materials of the object—the types of linen, shape of wooden support, transparency of paint. To be modern is to be a materialist, but when we have achieved the presentation of paintings' intrinsic identity, what we see emanating from its form is dematerialized light. The material reveals the immaterial. In the architecture of painting, function follows light.

—Joseph Marioni

Yellow Painting, 2008

Acrylic and linen on stretcher, 39 x 37 inches



MARJORIE MINKIN

Born in Cambridge Massachusetts, Marjorie Minkin received her BA from Skidmore College in philosophy and studio art, her MA in philosophy from Boston University, and degrees in painting from The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Minkin exhibits in Boston and New York, most recently at Jason Rulnick Gallery, New York, 2007. Since 1991 she has shown with the artists' group the New New Painters in the US and in Europe, at such venues as the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, the Stadtsche Gallery, Goppingen, Germany, the Musée des Beaux Arts, Charleroi, Belgium, and the National Gallery, Prague.

Minkin has created Lexan theater sets for the rock band, *Phish* and a collaborative interactive installation with her musician son incorporating Lexan reliefs, custom designed sounds, and proximity sensors to be featured in the Boston Cyberarts Festival, 2009. She is represented in many private and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan, Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, FL and National Gallery of Prague.

MY RELIEF PAINTINGS ARE ABOUT the contextual nature of color and its dependence on movement and variations of light. Constructed of heat formed sheets of clear polycarbonate painted with thinned mediums and reflective pigments, the works reveal perceptual shifts of color as the viewer's vantage point changes. The interplay of color, reflections and shadows within the layers with those projected on the wall behind the paintings suggest the appearance of multi-dimensional space. In my intent to increase the illusion of pictorial space in my recent work, I have focused on a more volumetric shaping of the plastic and a greater translucency in the painted layers. While my paintings are abstract, they are informed by my personal connection to the biomorphic shapes and changing effects of color and light in nature.

—Marjorie Minkin

Terra Firma, 2008

Acrylic and Lexan, 37 x 26 x 11 inches



JILL NATHANSON

Jill Nathanson was born in New York City and received her BA from Bennington College and her MFA from Hunter College. She has been exhibiting in solo and group shows since 1981. She has been represented by Ethan Cohen Gallery, June Kelly Galley and Elizabeth Harris Gallery, in New York, and has recently been in a number of group shows at Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, and at The Painting Center.

Works exploring analogies between color and Kabbalah have been shown at the Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art and at Yale University. Nathanson recently received a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture for this work. She is on the Board of Triangle Arts Association. Her work is in numerous public and private collections.

COLORS SET TOGETHER HAVE THEIR OWN TENSIONS and necessities. We painters generally balance allowing color its life as light with subsuming color to other agendas. Color as paint is ethereal energy, liquid vehicle and sludge-like solid all at once, and color relationships are endlessly mutable. Color seeks to complete the light spectrum; flows, glows, and also is just stuff on a surface, in a structure. Paint as color, within the syntax of a painting, fascinates me still. Viewed in relation to energy, matter and structure, color can avoid the hedonistic and decorative, touching on the broader questions of seeing and knowing that painting can imply.

—Jill Nathanson

Wayward, 2008

Acrylic mediums and pigment on paper, 31 x 30¾ inches



THOMAS NOZKOWSKI

Thomas Nozkowski has had over sixty one-person shows of his paintings since 1979. His most recent exhibitions include an installation of new work at la Biennale di Venezia (2007), a mid-career survey at the Ludwig Museum in Koblenz, Germany (2007) and one-person exhibitions at PaceWildenstein, The Fisher-Landau Center, New York, and The Douglas Hyde Gallery of Trinity College, Dublin (all 2008). The New York Studio School presented a twenty-five year survey of his drawings in January 2003. A career retrospective is forthcoming at The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (June, 2009). His work is represented in the collections of the Addison Gallery of American Art, The Brooklyn Museum, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, The High Museum of Art, The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Irish Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and The Phillips Collection among many others. He is a Guggenheim Fellow and has received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Medal of Merit (2006). Nozkowski has just completed a year as the Bob and Happy Doran Visiting Artist at the Yale University Art Gallery. He is Professor of Painting at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and lives in the Hudson Valley of New York State.

I HAVE BEEN AN ABSTRACT ARTIST as long as I've been an artist. In 1975 something happened to my idea of what abstraction could be. I came to think it possible that abstraction could be a method of reporting on the structure and meaning of the visual world. Henry James says we make pictures because there are things we cannot say. For thirty years I have been finding images in my life—things I've seen or heard about, things I've experienced—that have no verbal equivalents or, at least, resist explication. That's not my only criterion but it is the one that brings forth the richest variety of shapes, colors and compositions.

Taught by abstract expressionists, I believe their method of improvisation followed by rigorous self-criticism is a good one. I never start a picture with a specific image in mind and as a painting grows I try to let it speak back to me. I think I can learn from my painting what is important and what is beautiful.

—Thomas Nozkowski

Untitled, 2007

Oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



SUSAN ROTH

Born in 1950, Susan Roth studied painting and sculpture at Syracuse University with Rodger Mack and Darryl Hughto. Her work was first presented in solo exhibitions at the William Edward O'Reilly Gallery in 1979 in NYC. She has been represented in many group exhibitions selected by many notable curators, Lawrence Alloway and Clement Greenberg among them. Her work has been discussed in print by such critics as Karen Wilkin, Donald Kuspit, Piri Halasz, John Link, and Dewey F. Mosby. Her work is represented in many prestigious public collections including the Basel Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Butler Art Institute, the Fogg Art Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Portland Art Museum.

Roth's work with Golden Artist Colors has added to the acrylic palette such products as colored gessoes (high loads) and pumice gel. Currently, she is expanding possibilities of the acrylic medium with new work in an experimental direct sculpture material shown first at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2006.

NIETZSCHE SAID, "The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude." I have thought on this for many years. As I approach sixty, and march daily to the studio I am mindful of how gratitude accompanies me on that trip. I love what I do, and that I am able to do it. The language I speak is abstraction, the tools are familiar, the inspiration my indebtedness to past masters. I give thanks..

—Susan Roth

Gericault, 2008

Acrylic, acrylic skin and canvas on canvas, 57½ x 30 inches



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