

6. Articles written by Malott for:  
ART VOICES/SOUTH, ARTWEEK, 1978

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## ALBERTO GIACOMETTI — EVOLUTION OF DRAWING

Austin

Mary McIntyre

Before the new current of out-front realism, artists whose sensibilities were tied up with depicting human beings had to transform, brutalize, do anything but show man the way we see him. So, Alberto Giacometti's emaciated bronze sculptures of men and women were "message" pieces: that man has suffered and endured. And Giacometti made a very substantial career on this idea through his art, until death ended it in 1966.

Now a circulating exhibit of his drawings, lithographs, small sculptures and photographs of some large sculptures is at the University of Texas in Austin. The predominance of drawings, which are the most personal and spontaneous expressions, gives us a somewhat different measure of the artist, showing his dependence on cubism in early years. The 1922 pencil analysis of *Caroline* is not far removed from what Cezanne started, and Braque pushed further. Within it are casually cubistic divisions of face, dress, light patterns; but there is a wholeness, and it definitely depicts a particular person.

Later, in the 1940s, Giacometti's scribbled line becomes developed as a stylistic device. It is a nervous, repetitious line, as if formed by the command of a highly strung nervous system within the artist. Faces and bodies become generalized to an archaic stiffness. This is his mature drawing style, used to depict people, but also rooms and landscapes. Heightening the removal from ordinary reality, the drawings frequently include a line defining a rectangular frame around the image. In some works struggle and hard thought appear to be Giacometti's approach to his subject. But frequently a lyrical quality — a dancing, looping pencil line — makes some of the drawings a joyous celebration of the ability to draw masterfully. The 1951 *Head*, in crayon, and the late 1960's images have this loosely flowing ease of a mature style.

Giacometti was known primarily as a sculptor who worked in clay cast into bronze. The few small sculptures in the exhibit, in combination with the large photographs of large sculptures, trace a similar development from cubistic origins to his three-dimensional equivalent of the scribbled line.

The five-foot-tall bronze *Leg* is encrusted with small blobs applied to a skinny elongated leg shape. It's part of Giacometti's whole idea — that twentieth century man is battered physically and emotionally, yet survives, possessing some upright qualities, something ennobling. Conveying this even better, the huge photograph of *Chariot* shows a female figure in the encrusted style, standing frontally on the bar connecting two wheels of a chariot. The chariot is best-known as something the Greeks and their gods used. Thus, *Chariot* has a primordial character, something that connects the Greek origins of our culture to our own battered endurance.

It is strange to see photographs in place of real pieces and find the photographs more powerful than the sculpture in the exhibit. The photographs are bigger than anything else on view, and they isolate the sculpture against a contrasting and uninterrupted background. The print of *The Palace at 4 A.M.* has greater impact than an original piece, *Three Figures Outdoors*, even though they are otherwise related in scale and period.

The exhibition comes in largest part from the private collection of Dr. Milton D. Ratner. It was organized and is being circulated by the American Federation of Arts for a two-year tour of the United States. The introductory panel to the show says more about the collector than about Giacometti, which in itself is a comment on power versus art. □

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the American Statesman and a painter.



ALBERTO GIACOMETTI: HEAD OF DIEGO, 1961, painted bronze, 10-5/8" h., at the University of Texas, Austin, on loan from Dr. Milton D. Ratner.

## Color and Intuition

Austin, Texas

Mary McIntyre

Color in full blast and its optical implications of depth are the content of British artist Patrick Heron's abstract paintings on view in his first major exhibition in the United States since 1965. His sixty-nine large oil paintings on canvas, gouaches and screenprints on paper, at the Michener Gallery on the University of Texas campus, stand as his visual declaration of what perception and art are all about. Heron was also here to articulate about them.

Painting, to Heron, is only about color, and should be purely abstract, totally separated from references of symbols, storytelling or realism. And it should be both created by and responded to through intuition. Another premise: color applied in shapes on a flat surface always sets up an illusion of depth.

Heron's paintings are an effective primer on color and shape interaction. Their vocabulary of forms includes large versus small areas, some interlocking like jigsaw puzzles, some lopsided ovals, others having the illusion of overlapping. Colors are straight out of the tube and are applied in one layer only, with a small hairbrush, to make a moderately squiggled texture.

Heron's color-forms do set up spatial illusions of shallow depth, vibrations, afterimages, auras and all those rhetorical factors declaimed during op art's heyday. But his works differ from characteristic op art in that the shapes are irregular, and both forms and colors are intuitively selected within Heron's consciously chosen limits.

Patrick Heron, the critic, delivered three lectures to be published for the E.W. Doty Lecture Series which, in effect, stated the historical position of his art vis-a-vis both British painting and American painting of the 1950s. In postwar England, Heron, the painter, was fascinated by French art, notably Braque and Matisse. His work went through a phase of stylistic similarity to that of Braque, and he found Matisse's *Red Studio* (which was in London for thirty years) the greatest single influence on his own work.

As a critic in the late 1940s, Heron was a highly influential proponent of French and American contemporary art. In 1955-58 he served as the London correspondent to *Arts* (New York). It was during this period that he began nonfigurative work, initiating vertical stripe paintings in 1957 and horizontal stripe paintings soon after. In short order he fused horizontal and vertical stripes, which resulted in areas floating on a ground. In the mid-1960s he combined ovals and casual jigsaw interlocks, which make up the imagery in this show.

In the cultural context of postwar England, Heron was extremely important as a dedicated critic and artist maturing into the then contemporary idiom of international painting. But as to his claim of being the originator of vertical stripe painting in 1957, in relation to American painting, yes, he preceded the stripe paintings of Morris Louis (not his "veils"); but, no, not Ellsworth Kelly, whose earliest stripes in various media are visibly dated 1951 and 1952, as documented in major books and catalogs. Also, Kelly's use of lopsided ovals took precedence.

It all has to do with culture lag, desolation created by war, the dominance of English literature and narrative attitudes carrying over into the visual arts, combined inhibitors in the transmission of ideas. Maybe there is a moral to this: that what artists verbalize about their own work should be put through a sieve, keeping some of it and dropping the rest. □

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April 22, 1978

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PATRICK HERON: BIG COBALT VIOLET: MAY 1972, oil on canvas, 82" x 180", at the University of Texas, Austin. Photo: John Webb.

## Cowboy Commentaries

Austin

Mary McIntyre

Updated ideas about what the cowboy "look" means today are the conceptual source of Richard Thompson's figurative painting/constructions on exhibit in the Laguna Gloria space at First Federal Savings through June 29.

Thompson was here from New Mexico for the opening events, and commented: "There is a residue of Southwestern myths in the cowboy, and people continue to live in that myth. Even Europeans see America in terms of the cowboy." While recognizing the significance of that nineteenth century myth today, Thompson's work has no trace of nostalgic Western art styles. Instead, his cowboys appear doll-like and neutered, with a glossy finish. They don't ride horses; they walk, while smoking cigars. They wear stylishly dented hats with curled brims, tinted sunglasses, bandannas or stiff collars, straight polyester pants or chaps with a wavy back edge and high-heeled boots with platform soles.

All this describes a Los Angeles used car salesman or a Western businessman still trying to live out the Marlboro ad myth of glamour and power over territory. So the used car salesman is big on his scene, just as Thompson's cowboy is. Land, buildings, signs and cactus are smaller than his self-image of importance. But strange is his slow-paced mobility; so are his high heels with their suggestion of restricted "feminine" walking. Thompson is saying that as man loses actual power, he gets duded up to resemble his myth of power.

In style, Thompson is both modern in the figurative vein of Robert Gordy and Richard Lindner and as old as the Egyptians. He uses a shallow space and has simplified his cowboy to a kind of sign for man rather than a representation. As Egyptians did, he uses the frontally seen eye on a head in profile, adding a frontal mouth with teeth signifying emission of the noise of power. It is from such stylizations that his title, *Geometric Cowboy*, derives. Edges are straight or in curves that are closer to geometric arcs than real body forms.

At the bottom of the oil paintings are shallow wooden shelves from which word signs and telephone poles rise. These resemble a mini-stage set, increasing the idea of artificiality. The telephone poles frame either one painting or a sequence of images put together. The sequential format recalls comic strips, and enhances the sense of movement: the cowboy is in a walking position; he walks from telephone pole to telephone pole, past signs and mesas.

Thompson's ink and watercolor drawings are more densely packed with cacti and with scribbles suggesting pollution of the atmosphere. They are the one indication of the abstract expressionist element he used in earlier periods of painting.

Thompson lives in New Mexico and from his region has derived both the imagery and the ideas in his art. Cartoonlike as his forms appear, they are distilled from a sophisticated art historical awareness that belies their simplicity. □

June 17, 1978

ARTWEEK



RICHARD THOMPSON: REAL ESTATE, 1977, oil on masonite with wood construction, 45" x 36" x 2", at Laguna Gloria, Austin.

ARTWEEK  
9-23-78

## Max Gimblett's Emblems of Perception

Austin, Texas / Mary McIntyre

Max Gimblett's eighty-inch square painting is a universe, a symbol, the basis of a mature artist's esthetic. It and what is within it are the elements of a language, so distilled that one vertical bar five inches wide and sixty-six inches high is all. All, that is, but for the brilliant color, the markings of the brush dragging oil paint in the upward and downward movement of script. The rest is due to the cultural notions of viewers and to their optical powers.

Gimblett's seven related paintings on canvas and six small works on paper are in the Laguna Gloria space at First Federal Savings. They are luminous and vibrant and simple. They are not op art, involved in only the effects of color and placement on the retina; they are more. The subtle nature of binary vision, of the different wavelengths of basic colors focusing on the retina at different spots, of the tiring of rods and cones from exposure to contrasting hues, is what makes his magic work.

In the magic of a bar painted cadmium red light in a square of cerulean blue which has been applied in the gesture of script, there is a set of ambivalences. The red bar floats; it is embedded. The red bar moves sidewise; it is still. The edge of the bar is dark on one side and light on the other; it is the reverse. The blue, too: it is satin; it is velvet; it is paint. It is infinitely deep; it is shallow. It is square; it has a circular aura.

And cultural notions become apparent. From a psychological perspective, the bar is an "I," an upright human, suspended in the components of the universe. It is a stimulus for contemplation. That so much can come from so little is amazing. Yet, it is not only waiting to be perceived; most of it is the artist's intent.

Gimblett has been a full-time painter for fourteen years. Originally from New Zealand, he annually returns there to exhibit and occasionally to teach. He was a potter in Canada before becoming a painter. He lived and exhibited in Austin, Texas, from 1970 to 1972, and has continued as a painter in New York since then. Gimblett said that he spent ten years just formulating the ideas of painting. He talks about choosing the limits of his art forms, within which there is the possibility of freedom, of real responsibility for the elements. He welcomes associations by the viewer in response to his paintings: "Painting is really only here to be tripped on. I encourage it totally. My major interests are such that we could all agree we were seeing the same thing (a red bar in a blue area). As soon as we describe it, we are all different. Everybody projects all points of view and hints about themselves and their culture."

Three of his paintings on view have bars of cadmium red light, but the colors of the fields vary, causing drastically different perceptions of the red in value and saturation. All of the bars are centered, seven inches from top to bottom, but the widths vary slightly. There is high chroma in the paintings, even the one of a black bar on a satiny white field. Most colors are unmixed from the tube. The painting is made in one application with the script style of the field beginning in the upper right across to the left and proceeding top to bottom. Seen from an oblique position, the course of the brushstrokes shows. Viewed centrally, they do not.

Gimblett's art is about seeing and about perception. As well as being optically stimulating, it has mystery in a simple, emblematic form. □



MAX GIMBLETT: ORANGE/BLUE, 1977, oil on canvas, at First Federal Savings, Austin. Photo: Bevan Davies.

ART WEEK 10-21-78

## THINKING AND PAINTING ABSTRACT

Austin / **Mary McIntyre**

Contradictory terms, static and lyrical, apply to Barbara Sturgill's large abstract collage-paintings-on-canvas at the St. Edward's University Moody Hall Atrium Gallery. In the three-year span this series covers, there is continuity and development. Earlier works have a somber gray surface which holds in restraint underlying rich colors, visible only in gaps or in scratched-through markings. Since the under-paint is applied with abandon and in brilliant colors, and the gray surface is only somewhat more controlled, form is effected by stabilizing devices. Form is developed through horizontal or vertical lines, and through pieces of torn, shaped paper that have been saturated in the paint while it was still wet on the canvas. Central positioning of the applied shapes predominates, giving the images an iconic character. Several paintings in this series are aptly titled *Meditation*.

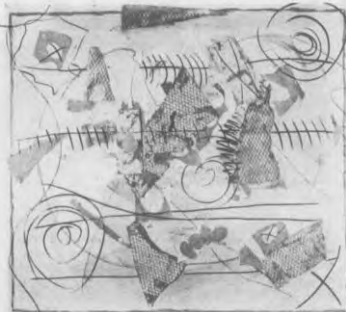
In Sturgill's more recent paintings, bright color replaces the overall gray, and the markings look freer, as if applied by a full gesture of the arm. The collaged papers are more varied in shape and include some taken from a game box and having a chicken wire imprint.

The freest work of all is *Travelin Thru*, which is also the most recent. It has a sunny yellow surface with structural horizontals and a perimeter drawn around the outer edge, but on top of all that is a wonderful play of spirals, short rhythmic slashes, egg-shaped papers and papers with the chicken wire pattern. The title is also appropriate here, as the whole suggests the play of a child dancing across a sunny field.

I see Sturgill's paintings as a pure expression of mental processes which are essentially abstract. There is both emotional abandon and control. What has happened in the development of her work over

the three years this show encompasses is that the emotional character appears hidden to a greater degree in the earlier paintings, and is released to activate the surface in the later. The change to strong colors also indicates this.

Sturgill describes her painting as "a physical/philosophical journey...Each painting is a risk, an exciting adventure with no arbitrary end." No arbitrary end for each, I agree, but the continuity of her work indicates a primary choice of forms and methods of working that are the mark of a mature esthetic. □



**BARBARA STURGILL: TRAVELIN THRU, 1978,** acrylic and collage, 4½' x 5', at the Moody Hall Atrium Gallery, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas.

Artweek 10-28-78

## Jean Dubuffet — Textures for Existence

Austin / Mary McIntyre

Of Jean Dubuffet's wonderfully "mad" images such as the childlike forms of people and crazy cows and the paintings of city buildings and traffic all jammed together, only a few are in the current exhibition surveying his work of 1953 to 1962, displayed at the University of Texas Huntington Gallery. Selected from this prolific artist's *oeuvre* as a theme are his predominantly abstract works on paper and canvas, most of which have an allover texture. The spatter paintings on canvas and the spatter lithographs of 1958-59 suggest a period of Jules Olitski's paintings in the 1960s, which brings up the chronology game or simply Dubuffet's absorption of ideas in the air. The paintings are in dull grays applied with a flit gun device over a ground painted gray, and have little in the way of incident to direct the eye. There are some collages in spatter, with the pattern fairly uniform in both the ground and the applied sections, so that the edges of the pieces are what contributes incident.

There is a lengthy set of notes by Dubuffet on his experimentation with the lithographic process during the 1950s. He used both stone and zinc plates, and ways of producing images from transfer, sometimes by cutting up the transfer paper. He took pride in applying ink with a roller only, not brush or crayon, but chose various means to mottle, crack or print ink imperfectly so as to produce texture. He also strewed objects such as leaves, threads and crumbs on plates already spread with ink. "I wished to use equally unorganized, flat surfaces," he said, "leaving full play to disorder and chance." He found the resulting images to resemble "a fragment of some sort detached from a continuous element, substances belonging to the realm of geography, geology, descriptive physics, biochemistry and so forth. The images resulting from this procedure, in addition to the muted earth colors used, inspired his title for the group, *Materiologies and Texturologies*.

The twenty years that have passed since most of these works were done create a perspective that places them into an academic category as a certain kind of experimentation produced at a certain time in modern art. Instead of finding the lithographs interesting in themselves, I felt curiosity in the traditional framing of some, even to the gilded and carved frames and silk mats. The relation of framing design to prints either distracted, because it was too compelling, or made the prints more desirable as objects for viewing.

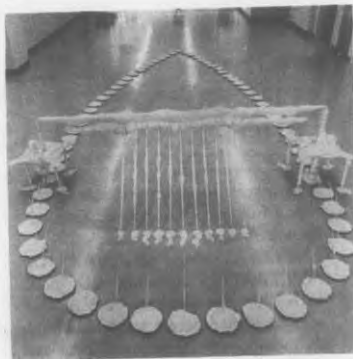
Included in the exhibit are a sufficient number of prints with Dubuffet's schematic humans stuck helplessly in quicksand of texture, asserting his



JEAN DUBUFFET: LE NOCTAMBULE, 1961, lithograph, at the University Art Museum, Austin.

thesis that modern man is ineffective in the world, and nearly mindless as well as godless. There are a few of Dubuffet's grotesque heads or torsos isolated against plain paper, but filled with texture within their outline, as if to say that man is not much more than a garbage can of matter. All this is to state that Dubuffet's identity is still present, even though his abstract experiments don't have his usual punch.

Since the environment in which we see art affects perception of the art, the placement of another traveling exhibit, sculpture by Jean Arp, in the same uninterrupted space has a rather strange effect. Commonalities between the exhibits are similar dates of execution for most of the works and the abstraction of the image of man. The form invented by Arp is much more positive. Though numb-looking in the sense that his humanoid sculptures have no sensory means such as features or extremities or skin, they are not trapped in an environment that makes them totally ineffective. Dubuffet says we exist and wiggle; Arp says our essence is beautiful and monumental. So which speaks the loudest today? Neither. That was twenty years ago. □



THANA LAUHAKAIKUL: BLUE INK, wood and plaster, 14'x 10'x 2½', at First Federal Savings, Austin. Photo: Jim Richardson.



BECKY WILLIAMS: CYCLE SLINGS, from the Shoes For Getting Away Series, mixed media, at First Federal Savings, Austin. Photo: Jim Richardson.



JOHN HUKU: RHODE ISLAND RED, neon, cedar and stuffed chicken, at First Federal Savings, Austin. Photo: Jim Richardson.

## A VIEW OF TEXAS SCULPTURE

Austin / Mary McIntyre

Texas Sculpture is a spirit-freeing exhibit, chiefly because sculpture created by Texans from the full wavelengths of contemporary ideas offered in this show has rarely been surveyed. The display is also representative, presenting works from a range of general attitudes that include "down-home Texas," funk, ritual, international style abstraction and feminism, and even traditional bronze portraiture and gift shop Western. Most of the pieces are at Laguna Gloria's space at First Federal Savings; four outdoor sculptures are on the grounds of Laguna Gloria Museum, both continuing through November 16.

The question of the existence of a specifically Texan art is answered in the affirmative by down-home Texas imagery which suggests the state's character either by recognizable subjects such as bluebonnets and the Alamo or by the tough, gutsy way materials are used. Usually it's both, as in David McElroy's three-part wall piece called *Home is Where the Heart is; Parts for an Ideal Privy*. McElroy has made art from a wooden facility that hasn't gone out of use in Texas or been altogether supplanted by molded plastic. His rough-cut boards are rhythmically joined at wavy edges and are held together by strips hammered with a silver border of galvanized nails and hinges. Hearts appear in the round window of the door and in a shutter. Another wooden wall piece in the same vein is *Catfish* by David Bates. Made of small pieces of plywood, layered, painted and arranged in varying depths, it depicts the head and arms of a black figure holding a catfish, and has a humorous folk art look, though it is sophisticated.

John Huke's *Rhode Island Red*, a stuffed chicken on a pedestal perched within a neon arch, bridges aspects of down-home Texas and funk. Becky Williams removes the ordinary from its habitual context, redesigns it and makes it humorous. Her four pairs of *Shoes for Getting Away* are highly imaginative apparel made of bright plastic, chrome, brass and leather. Most have toes of painted plastic resembling bare feet, and all have features capable of motion such as spring bases, wheels, wings and jet spurts.

*Swat Box* by Nancy Chambers is a fascinating study in visual discomfort. It is a small box mounted on the wall and surfaced with an ugly flesh-colored substance that holds twigs. Tiny feathers are attached to the twigs, and two sticks protrude horizontally with painted blobs, thorns and feathers on the ends. The sticks are motorized so that one swats the other. Though not electrically hooked up in this exhibit, the box evokes, in materials and composition alone, the irritating persistence of horseflies.



STEPHAN HOOVER: SCULPTURED CABINET, wood, at First Federal Savings, Austin. Photo: Jim Richardson.

The most dramatic piece in the show is Thana Lauhakaikul's *Blue Ink*, which sets up the visual conditions of ritual and also reverberates deeply into the subconscious to fundamental male-female and life-death principles. The totally white arrangement on the floor, in the shape of a pointed egg, is composed, around one half, of shallow plaster dishes containing darts placed at 45° angles and, around the other, empty dishes. Two large wavy horizontal rods are suspended across the point of greatest width in the egg shape and are held by poles that pierce through the centers of small tables. Eleven long darts lean on the horizontal rods and on the floor at a 45° angle. All darts, poles and table legs are sharply pointed, and each rests on a thick pile of poured plaster. The dishes are receptacles and thereby female, as is the pointed egg shape. The darts and poles are male, and evoke potential mutilation, especially in their sharp terminals touching blobs of frozen fluidity. This is a complex and highly refined sculpture and deserves the first prize it received.

A large rusted steel tripod by David Deming received second prize. Although allusions are not apparent, it is a beautifully composed set of tensions made by the thrust and counterthrust of rectangular boxes that have been slavishly refined. Each long edge is sculpted to lifelike irregularity relating to the entasis of Greek columns.

Feminist concerns appear in Claudia Reese's ceramic scissors cutting fabric placed at the tops of two squares that frame threads, fabric bits and a thimble encased in resin. Also feminist, but not with literal references, are Tita Bowman's numerous sets of wrapped twigs laid on a tablecloth. The twigs are bunched and protrude from egg-shaped balls of cotton, fabric or paper wrapped with twine or plastic food wrapper. They remind me of the work of Eva Hesse and are part of a developing abstract feminist iconography. □

Artweek 12-2-78

## THREE GRAPHIC VIEWS

Austin / Mary McIntyre

Lithography, intaglio and serigraphy are the media employed, respectively, by Kenneth Hale, Lee Chesney and Timothy High, members of the University of Texas art faculty who are showing at Galerie Ravel through December. Each print method is used with a high degree of technical competence and with the content varying not only in character but in effectiveness.

In Kenneth Hale's lithographs, a resonance in both form and idea engages the viewer on several levels. All his prints are from 1978 and are done on aluminum plates, with rich tones, some in color, and a variety of methods of marking. There is evidence of scratching into tusche, scraping, drawing and roller application for smoothness. But it is in the way method serves content that his images excel. Hale's subject is the artist as creator and the nature of the creative process. Imagery is organized around a central rectangle that contains a roughly drawn frontal head with a set of symbols for features. As primary symbols, an oval with a dark zigzag band in the center serves as mouth, a spiral as one eye and an X as the other. In a suite of monoprints titled *Autoportraits* these symbols, along with a variety of scratch marks and thin borders of dashes in contrasting colors, convey great distress. The spiraled eye stands for creativity, the Xed eye for blockage and the mouth opens to scream through jagged teeth.

Carrying further this metaphor for the anxieties of the creative process are three horizontal images from the suite *European Notes*, 1978. The heads appear in the central rectangles, but are surrounded by smaller rectangles containing drawings that refer to Goya's *Maya Desnuda* within a cage, St. Sebastian, the Deposition, a dragon and a tower and other symbols of imprisonment and aggression. A narrow border on the outer edge bears heads, stick figures, crosses, breasts, shaded balls and triangles. A similar print, *Altar I*, is vertical and evokes through somewhat different devices the traditional form of an altarpiece. The central rectangle is made into an arch, within which Hale's characteristic head and shoulders are isolated against a brilliantly colored and smoothly modulated sky. Surrounding this artist-Christ head are rectangles containing versions of Rouault's kings, Ingres' odalisques, Watteau's *Gilles*, a Picasso bull and a Van Gogh chair. *Altar II* has similarities, but

with less direct art historical references.

Lee Chesney's intaglio prints are rich in tonal range and have a very wide variety of effects, distinguishing Chesney as a master technician. Textures are created from methods involving fabric pressed on a coated plate, the resist effect of incompatible chemicals, wiping, scraping and flowing liquid. Chesney reworks old plates for an altered image of greater textural range. However, few prints on view crystallize content or have an effectiveness beyond the ordinary design aspects of light to dark contrast and compositional balance. *Mahjong*, *A Game of Chance* is titled appropriately to describe Chesney's apparent process. "Mahjong, A Game"

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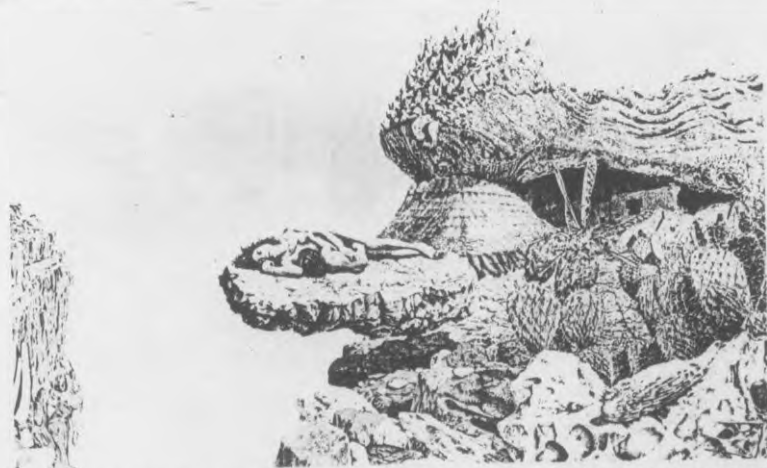
KENNETH J. HALE: ALTAR II, from *European Notes*, 1978, color lithograph, 31" x 22½", at the Galerie Ravel, Austin.

### THREE GRAPHIC VIEWS *Continued from preceding page*

implies an activity within certain rules which relates to the intaglio method itself. 'Of Chance' represents the experimental character of the image produced by Chesney's methods.

Timothy High's exquisitely colored and detailed serigraphs are visions of arid canyons with references to mythic Indian beliefs. A superb craftsman, High makes from sixty to eighty-five color runs in a reductive sequence to create nuance for the purpose of effecting the illusion of deep space. Over these, one screen of tiny dark stippling is run to create the detail of High's magic reality. Most of his images have a sky of beautifully controlled modulation in the colors of a light haze at dawn or dusk above a canyon of stark, cracked rock with sparse desert vegetation.

In some, images of death and life float in space. In *Family Portrait/Canon Del Muerto* a naked woman and an infant recline on a dangerously precipitous rock over a void. The woman sleeps as if in resignation to impending death, while the child reaches out to her breast. *The Visitor / Canon De Los Muertos* has a human rib cage floating on a rock in the sky, accompanied by dry Indian corn. Seashells placed adjacent to flowering peyote cacti and the mouth of a skull form a still life on the foreground edge of a cliff, while in the distance the ruins of an adobe village nestle in a sheltering mountain recess. High's prints are seductively beautiful, with the eerie stillness of an environment once hospitable to humans, but no more. □



TIMOTHY HIGH: FAMILY PORTRAIT/CANON DEL MUERTO, 1976, serigraph, 26" x 40", at the Galerie Ravel, Austin.

## CRAFTS THAT EMPHASIZE FUNCTION



ANN MATLOCK: DARK MOON, fiber, at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.



PAULINA VAN BAVEL-KEARNEY: BODY VASE, ceramic, 13"x 6", at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum.

Austin / Mary McIntyre

The invitational exhibition, *Texas Fine Crafts*, deserves its title, but the insertion of "functional" or "from traditional roots" would clarify what this show is about. The objects have restrained beauty within the limited categories of furniture, weapons, woven blankets, robes and baskets, vessels of silver, clay and porcelain, and iron utensils. Yet any crafts shop today has articles of more exuberance and craziness. Maybe this exhibition, which will tour Texas extensively, is signaling a new wave of the finely crafted object being valued regardless of whether it has blatant newness or is traditional in method and design.

A robe becomes a wall hanging when it is hung on the wall, but Ann Matlock's two caftans, *Dark Moon* and *Light Moon*, become, when hung, expressive sculptural shapes with mystic content. Matlock uses only natural dyes from plants and insects in central Texas, spins her own wool and works slowly, with great subtlety. These garments suggest the character of moonlight both by using a circular yoke worked in wavelike designs and by changing gradations of hue from shoulder to hem. A greater degree of order in Matlock's design than that in ordinary garments gives her pieces a ceremonial appearance.

An interlocking of beauty and meaning with function also occurs in the pottery of Paulina van Bavel-Kearney. Her *Body Vase* is vertical with a muscular swelling and incised lines in the upper portion which suggest the cleavage of buttocks. The finish is satiny, like young flesh, with the color a creamy pink at the top that changes to a smoky dark tone below. Her wheel-thrown pots are sensitively manipulated by hand and fired with a control that produces a distinctive finish with muted flesh and earth tones. An unavoidable reference to organic forms in her alteration of the wheel-thrown shapes gives her objects life.

Among the frankly traditional designs with little original variation are some intricately engraved silver panels on guns by Frank Hendricks, well-wrought hunting knives by Clyde Fischer and a coverlet by Margaret Sheppard in an abstract design evoking the title, *Snowballs and Window Sashes with a Pine Tree Border*.

The furniture is all clearly functional, but is made by two craftsmen with very different attitudes toward use of materials. Carlton Cook's galvanized metal chest is topped with a simple wooden box laminated with white plastic and containing a drawer faced with a cast concrete slab. Its coldness results from the direct use of industrial materials, but this honesty pleases. Roger Deatherage's seven-drawer cabinet in cherrywood stands in contrast to Cook's by its obvious sensual references. Each drawer front is faced with two horizontal boards chosen for their whorled grain near the center, where the wood has been worked into a subtle protuberance that gapes like muscles around a human orifice. This is the place to insert fingers for opening the drawer.

The exhibit is at Laguna Gloria Art Museum through January 7. It originated at the Blaffer Gallery of the University of Houston and is funded partially by the Texas Commission on the Arts and Humanities. □



ROGER DEATHERAGE: ROCKING CHAIR, wood, at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin.



CHARLOTTE ALLISON: CONSERVATORY POND V, 1978, acrylic on canvas, 36"x 36", at El Paso Museum of Art, Texas.

California artist Charlotte Allison and Texas artist Stephan Berry won purchase awards for their acrylic paintings in the Twentieth Annual Sun Carnival Show competition. Allison's *Conservatory Pond V* and Berry's *Water Lilies* will become part of the San Diego Museum of Art's permanent collection. The large exhibit, including paintings by sixty-four artists from twenty states, selected by Henry Gardner, director of the SDMA, is at the El Paso Museum of Art through January 28.

**Robert Indiana  
at the Neuberger Museum**



The Small Diamond  
Demuth Five, 1963

It takes a finely-honed mind to arrive at a simple idea which is both irreducible and evokes a universal response. Several such ideas are embodied in the paintings, sculpture, and graphic art of Robert Indiana's first major retrospective in ten years currently at the Neuberger Museum, SUNY Purchase.

Robert Indiana invented the "Love" image in 1964, which evoked such a response that it has been used on commissioned postage stamps and monumental sculpture. Because of his innocence of the need for copyright protection in the beginning, and the unforeseen popularity of his design, it surfaced on numerous items of common usage, before a belated attempt at protection was made.

But love isn't the only word elevated to an icon status by the artist's embodiment of letters with symbols in his brilliant paintings. Theologians as well as the common man respond to such images as *The Demuth American Dream 5* which has the words, "eat, hug, err, die" arranged with stars and circles in the shape of a crucifixion.

For the artist, the circle does have a religious context and his "love" is spiritual, "hug" is erotic, but "eat" derives originally from his mother's restaurants - "eateries" back in his Indiana childhood - and was the last word she spoke before she died. The numeral 5 in centers of this work refers to the five sections of the cruciform, the 5 on a fire engine near his studio in New York, and the 1928 painting by Charles Demuth, *I Saw the Figure Five in Gold*, to which Indiana pays homage.

ART VOICES/SOUTH  
JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1978

## Robert Indiana at Michener Gallery (U. of Texas, Austin)

Robert Indiana  
*The Demuth American Dream 5*, 1963  
Oil on canvas  
each panel 48" x 48"

Photo by Paul Blankenmeister

It takes a finely-honed mind to arrive at a simple idea which is both irreducible and evokes a universal response.

Several such ideas are embodied in the paintings, sculpture, and graphic art of Robert Indiana's first major retrospective in ten years at the Michener Gallery of the University of Texas, Austin. This is also the largest exhibition ever of Indiana's work, and began at U.T. Austin as the first on a five-stop tour of museums in Virginia, Indiana, and New York.

Robert Tobin, the international culture prince from San Antonio, was the guest curator, though Dr. Donald Goodall, Director of Museums at U.T. Austin, was the catalyst following up on his commitment to James A. Michener to organize exhibitions around paintings in the permanent Michener Collection of Twentieth Century Art.

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Though born as Robert Clark in rural Indiana in 1928, he considers himself born as an artist in 1958, the year he assumed the name Robert Indiana. By this time he was living in New York near Ellsworth



Kelly who impressed Indiana with being the only truly professional artist he had met; and Kelly eventually influenced him on the level of bright colors and sharp edges.

Some of his early works are the "herms", as he calls them—assemblages made from large old wooden beams found in the shipping district of lower Manhattan near his studio. Lacking money for canvas, these served as a vehicle for his interest in short painted

words with multiple associations, some humorous.

Indiana had literary interests, and at one point considered a writing career. References to Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, and the concise use of words with double meanings by Gertrude Stein are apparent influences in his paintings. These images, composed only of words, numerals, symbols, and color comprise the majority of works in the exhibition, including his very recent

series of *Autoportraits*. Too easily dismissed as sophisticated graphic design if known only in reproduction, the scale and brilliance made by a confrontation with the original paintings create an impact that demands serious contemplation.

A few marvelously amusing paintings also use human figures, and Indiana returns to this theme in his costume and set designs for the opera, *Mother of Us All*, in 1976. Two 1963 panels are imagined portraits of his mother and father each standing beside an elegant old Model-T with a 1927 license plate. Flat and cool as the execution is, the mother is yet bare-breasted and wearing a red cloak, and the father is all gray and without pants or shoes beneath his overcoat. Robert Indiana considers his father as a dull, bland person, and his mother flamboyant, and fancies this is the way they were shortly after his conception in the back seat of the Model-T.

There is also a poignant Pop Art version of Marilyn Monroe emblazoned in the center of a roulette wheel design in pastel shades containing the letters of both her real and stage names.

The brilliance and scale of this very large exhibition creates excitement for the viewer, and the verbal and visual puns sustain interest, even when all of the multi-layered meanings are not apparent. Robert Indiana is a great master at highly-refined symbolic games based on his own life, fused with mankind as a whole, and embodied in visual forms with impact.

—Mary McIntyre

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.

## Bill Wiman at Hansen Gallery (New York)

A Texan, Wiman's paintings unite elements from ordinary living, such as a deer head and cowboy hat, with a point of view that is both contemporary and reverberates through art history to Vermeer. He is an image maker using photographs as a base, rather than an image repeater in the sense of some photorealists.

Premeditated is his subject, and carefully composed against a clean, light-colored wall, before Wiman makes his slide. With a nine-step gray scale, he carefully paints in the image as projected on the canvas. Then, eliminating the slide, he adjusts and completes the painting in cool hues of rich oil paint.

Titles indicate the contemporary yet art historical attitude: *Texas Cubism* deals with frontality, volume, light, and depth made by the painting of boxes (cubes) in space, even though it's the Texas objects that hit the viewer with humor.

An assistant professor at the University of Texas in Austin, Bill Wiman is well known through one-man shows in the Southwest, and has an impressive record in competitive exhibitions regionally and nationally. This is his first one-man show in New York.

—Mary McIntyre

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.



Courtesy Hansen Gallery

Bill Wiman  
*Texas Cubism*  
Oil on Canvas  
58" x 56"

MARCH/APRIL 1978

## Carl Andre

### at Laguna Gloria Art Museum (Austin, Texas)

How and why does an unknown museum that is housed in a former dwelling of modest size put on a retrospective of Carl Andre, which will travel to the Art Institute of Chicago, The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, The Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo among other such institutions?

In addition, Andre came, created a new work on the grounds which he is loaning to the museum for six months, insisted on assuming his own expenses so there would be no confusion on the rights of ownership, and took evident pleasure in working with a novice, but professional, staff.

Such occurrences appear as miracles, in view of the furor reported at a major institution (the Whitney) over the matter of display and ownership of his work, and the more recent political games and fiscal issues played out at Hartford, from his creation of *Stone Field* there.

Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin, Texas, achieved this with apparent ease under the imaginative leadership of Lawrence Miller in his first post as a museum director.

How did Carl Andre come to agree to this exhibition? "You asked", he told Miller.

On a long shot, two-and-one-half years ago, Miller invited Andre to make works out of doors in the desire to expand the definition of the museum out of the constraining building itself, and to provide contemporary sculpture in an area of the state where little sculpture is seen. To transport, insure, and display sculpture is expensive. Andre had ceased to work in a studio; he could come and make an exhibition *in situ*.

When Miller got to New York the next year and met Carl Andre as well as Phyllis Tuchman, and Angela Westwater, his dealer, he found a desire on their part to do an exhibition they had talked about abstractly. There had been no retrospective since the major one at the Guggenheim in 1970. And, fortuitously, Miller and Andre liked each other.

This mini-retrospective, which ultimately evolved, was dictated entirely by the restricted space of the museum: a former

living room approximately 16' x 30', a dining room, a loggia, and one upstairs room—also of modest dimensions.

The importance for Laguna Gloria Art Museum in putting on the Andre exhibit lay in establishing itself as a fully professional institution with security, climate control, and installations in respect to the handling and positioning of objects. These were factors deficient until recent years, though the building had been used as a museum since 1941.

Delivered for the retrospective portion of the exhibition, shown through February 22, 1978, were the bricks of *Lever and Equivalent VII* (both 1966), the copper, lead, zinc, magnesium, steel and tin squares or near-squares of four of the *Plains Series* (1969), *Seventeenth Copper Cardinal* (1977), *Tau and Threshold* (1960 proposed, 1977 made), *Trabum* (1977), and the notched wood slats of *Pyramid* (1959 destroyed, 1977 remade), plus six other works; a total of 14,144 pounds.

At the museum, Andre declared himself not dismayed by the small spaces, contending that one of the difficult things about situating a work is restricting the options. He made sketches of where the sculpture should be placed, requested daylight in the rooms and left the installation up to the curator. Most of the plasters and French doors had long since been covered with a smooth surface of plywood painted white, and the cement tile floors stained and waxed black or carpeted in a dark neutral shade.

From this pristine environment select apertures were uncovered, and the works laid or stacked as indicated. Rather than seeming crowded, the effect is rich in variety of color, textures, design, and sound as the pieces are walked upon.

Contrary to the factors which read as dehumanizing elements in magazine and catalogue articles—use of machine processed materials, emphasis on unit, geometrical and mathematical components—the experience of confronting Andre's work grouped like this is a stimulating invitation to be a participant. The spectator enters, and becomes transformed into a

finisher of the works as he unavoidably moves on top of their spaces, contributing as he walks to their patina of age and time.

Outside, the new ground creation was placed and entitled *Cuts Terrane*. It is composed of 992 blocks of solid concrete with a gray aggregate, each unit measuring 4 x 8 x 16 inches. Andre's chosen limits were the ordering of 1,000 such blocks, which were laid in one rectangle 31 headers wide by 32 stretchers long.

With his usual courtesy for the environment, he had selected a slightly depressed area of clipped grassland, which is bordered naturally by a variety of trees on three sides and the entering drive on the fourth. He then proceeded to remove 30 blocks from each corner, varying in numbers of rows, and positioning the removed blocks on top of the remaining layer in four conformations, each equivalent to the rectangular corner vacated. Aside from the obvious positive/negative relationship, there is a decided element of design in the tension created by the positions of the rectangles on the top layer.

*Cuts Terrane* functions as an inviting courtyard, though as sculpture it is a didactic piece, relating to additive and subtractive processes in sculpture, and the traditional positive/negative relevants. In fact, the exhibition as a whole is a primer on sculpture as involving mass, weight, space and place in a direct relationship to man's scale and movement, both from the point of view of the creator who consistently used units one man can carry, and the spectator/participant.

—Mary McIntyre

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.



Carl Andre  
*Pyramid* (Triangular base)  
1959 begun/1977 made  
Pine  
69" x 31" x 31"  
Courtesy Laguna Gloria Art Museum

## Janis Provisor

at New Orleans Museum of Art  
(New Orleans, Louisiana)

A sophisticated vocabulary of symbols embedded in a thickly encrusted surface of paint is the substance of Janis Provisor's exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Both strangely feminine and powerful, Provisor's symbols make allusions to ritual objects in an arrangement that conveys obsession.

She describes her work as "diagrams of a neo-ritualistic presence . . . related to the trappings and 'language' of ritual and/or logical sequence in both a decorative and structural sense, rather than any precise notion of content."

Provisor exhibits in three basic modes: large unstretched canvases stiffened with layers of acrylic and Rhoplex, 84" x 86"; small stretched paintings, 22" x 23"; and works on paper in gouache and acrylic, 29" x 41". By utilizing the same basic shapes in the same size, but altering the scale and the surface treatment within each of the categories, the paintings have quite different effects within a consistent approach.

In choosing nearly square formats for the large and small paintings on canvas, and accentuating the center as well as the edge, the ritualistic aspect dominates. There is power in the tension created by the unconventional placement and choice of shapes, and in the texture and off-beat use of color.

The arrangement and strong treatment of the shapes defy a strictly decorative appearance such a style might suggest, and causes them to operate like symbols of a distinct visual language.

In the large paintings, a wide border is frequently used on three or four edges, with a surface treatment varying from raised, brilliantly-colored squiggles to only subtle color change from that of the center. There is no use of a grid in evidence, but the positioning of symbols implies an intuitively-felt geometrical substructure.

The works on paper are larger than the small paintings on canvas and of a more obviously rectangular format. Provisor responds to both this surface and proportion choice by using a matte gouache for the basic ground cover and arranging shapes in a more complex way.

Her recent exhibits include: the Watson/deNagy Gallery, Houston; David Mirvish Gallery, Toronto; Protetch-McIntosh Gallery, Washington, D.C. The New Orleans one-person exhibition is the result of a recommendation of the 1977 Artists Biennial juror, Jack Boulton, Associate Director of the American Federation of Arts' International Exhibitions Committee in Washington, D.C., who selected four artists from the 1256 who submitted work. (March 10-April 9). —Mary McIntyre

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.



Janis Provisor  
*Amberly, 1977*  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
22" x 23"  
Courtesy Watson-deNagy Gallery

## Pol Bury

at Michener Gallery, U. of Texas  
(Austin, Texas)

Standing in the middle of Pol Bury's slow motion sculptures is like being in a room with a lot of giant Mexican jumping beans on tables and walls.

As any Texan knows, Mexican jumping beans rarely move when you are looking at them, wobble unexpectedly when they do, and make a small crackling noise in the process.

Such also describes internationally-famous Belgian artist Pol Bury's sculptures, in a traveling exhibition that reached Austin midstream, April 21 through May 28. It came to Texas via Caracas, Mexico, Los Angeles, and goes on from here to Portland (Oregon), Athens (Georgia), and Montreal.

The earliest work in the exhibit is a 1953 layered wall construction of painted canvas boards, which have to be pushed slightly to move; and the most recent is a fountain made of suspended tubes which move constantly, largely by the pull of gravity on water from one tube to another, working against counterweights.

Others are of highly polished metal balls laid on top of metal bases. They move because magnets attached to motors of 10-minute cycles are hidden in the bases, and set up the attraction and repulsion of magnetic fields through the base to the balls.

Some wall pieces twang like harps through the rubbing of taut wires against wooden nubs, also controlled by cords, magnets and motors.

Every sculpture has moveable parts, though some are so slow that the memory of where they were in the beginning is lost, like watching grass grow.

What is wonderful about it is that the movement is as unpredictable as Mexican jumping beans; yet this was planned by the artist and is a combination of engineering and art.

Bury plays with and against gravity, as he precariously permits a big steel disk sitting on the point of a triangle to move sideways

virtually to the falling point, and then sedately move back.

Once the fascination with the mechanics of the works lessens for the viewer, plant and human associations take over. In some, metal tongues or tendrils wag beckoningly toward each other, and in several wooden sculptures, thick round pegs move in and out of holes in an unavoidably human reference.

This is a major exhibition that travels the western hemisphere in a two-pronged manner, with a separate display of only prints placed at a private gallery; in Austin's case, Galerie Ravel.

Bury's prints are similar to stop-time multiple image photography, which also relates to motion. Both the etchings and woodprints are made by inking a few circles, rectangles

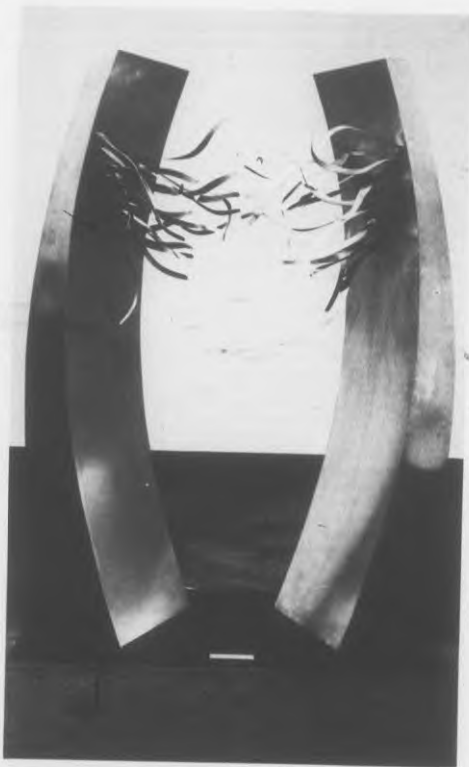
and triangles with transparent colors, printing, then moving them slightly, inking again, and printing on the same papers.

On the wood prints, motion and stillness are simultaneously effected by inking a large piece of wood so that the "static" grain pattern runs top to bottom, superimposed on the "falling" circles.

Some of these prints are also placed in the sculpture exhibition, along with drawings that can cause dizziness, providing a total glance into the range of the artist's engineering mind and his slow motion art.

— Mary McIntyre

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.



Pol Bury  
43 Elements Facing One Another, 1968  
Stainless steel  
200 cm x 50 cm x 60 cm

## Loren Mozley

(Austin, Texas)

By Mary McIntyre

Occasionally we have in our midst someone advanced in age who unites the past with the future by the evident acts of his life and by his memories.

The evidence of Loren Mozley is his retrospective exhibition of paintings spanning 40 years, and his historic effect on the thousands of artists who have sprung from the matrix of the Art Department of the University of Texas at Austin, which he developed in large part.

A fine painter, a fine mind, intense discipline within himself and required of others, yet humor . . . these characterize Mozley.

He grew up in New Mexico at a time when writers and artists were formulating the mystique of the American West, when their response was honest.

There weren't art schools within universities, and it was a conscious act of determination to leave the University of New Mexico in 1926 in order to become an artist, and learn directly from living among artists.

He knew great painters who came to discover the West and what it symbolized about the American character. John Marin was one, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Andrew Dasburg were others.

Part of his training came from living and painting in Paris in 1930 and 1931 where he met the art people and frequented the museums, even copying a Cezanne in the Louvre for a friend.

His art was formulated in the 20s and early 30s. He worked from nature, but impressed upon it the patterns of his mind, what he calls, "my liking for order" and "the general habits of a generation or a period."

Order, indeed. Mozley simultaneously imposes upon — and derives from — nature a structure so visible that it unites all his work in an admirable consistency. Verticals and horizontals stabilize the scene, while diagonals make connecting passages, and brushstrokes of a particular width embellish the surface.

Landscapes predominate. These are of Spain, Texas, Mexico and New Mexico, and contain a variety of scenes each richly complex, yet clear in their structure. It is as if the disorder of natural forms is needed to challenge him from a too rigid imposition of his will.

There are still lifes, carefully planned from objects he collected. One of the richest in color, and most revealing of the artist's mind at work is titled, *The Artist's Cupboard*. Mozley had a large box constructed with moveable horizontal and vertical divisions. Into the central rectangle he placed a skull wearing laurel leaves atop an old book. In other stalls he put shells, butterflies and dried twigs. Then he painted.



Loren Mozley  
*The Artist's Cupboard*, 1963-1964  
Oil on canvas  
42" x 32"  
Courtesy, University of Texas at Austin

The catalog has a photograph of this original set-up, next to a reproduction of the painting. The set-up is a work of art in itself, but Mozley's finished picture is art pushed once more, a further revision to fulfill a man's conception.

This painting was done in Texas, long after Mozley came with his friend, Ward Lockwood, at the invitation of the dean to set up an art department at the University of Texas at Austin, in 1938.

Lockwood and Mozley challenged each other with the question, "How the hell do you make an art school?" They began with a materials list and freshmen only. They put their jobs on the line for getting nude models; and endured the flack that created.

To relieve the relative insularity of the students, they made themselves known to the community, serving on juries and on the board of the Texas Fine Arts Association, and began hiring artists for the faculty from outside the state.

For viewing art they brought in exhibitions which were hung in the Regents' Room. When there was an objection over the amount of foot traffic on the Regents' carpet, Lockwood suggested, "Maybe we could put the carpet on the wall and walk on the paintings."

Mozley was chairman of the department in two different periods, and stubbornly held to certain basic standards and courses

for the students, life drawing being one of them.

At this point in his history and ours, it's hard to say which is the more engaging, the man or his art. They are both of a piece, of unfolding excellence.

Mary McIntyre is art critic for the *American Statesman*, Austin, Texas.



The Artist . . . Loren Mozley.