NEW OBSERVATIONS

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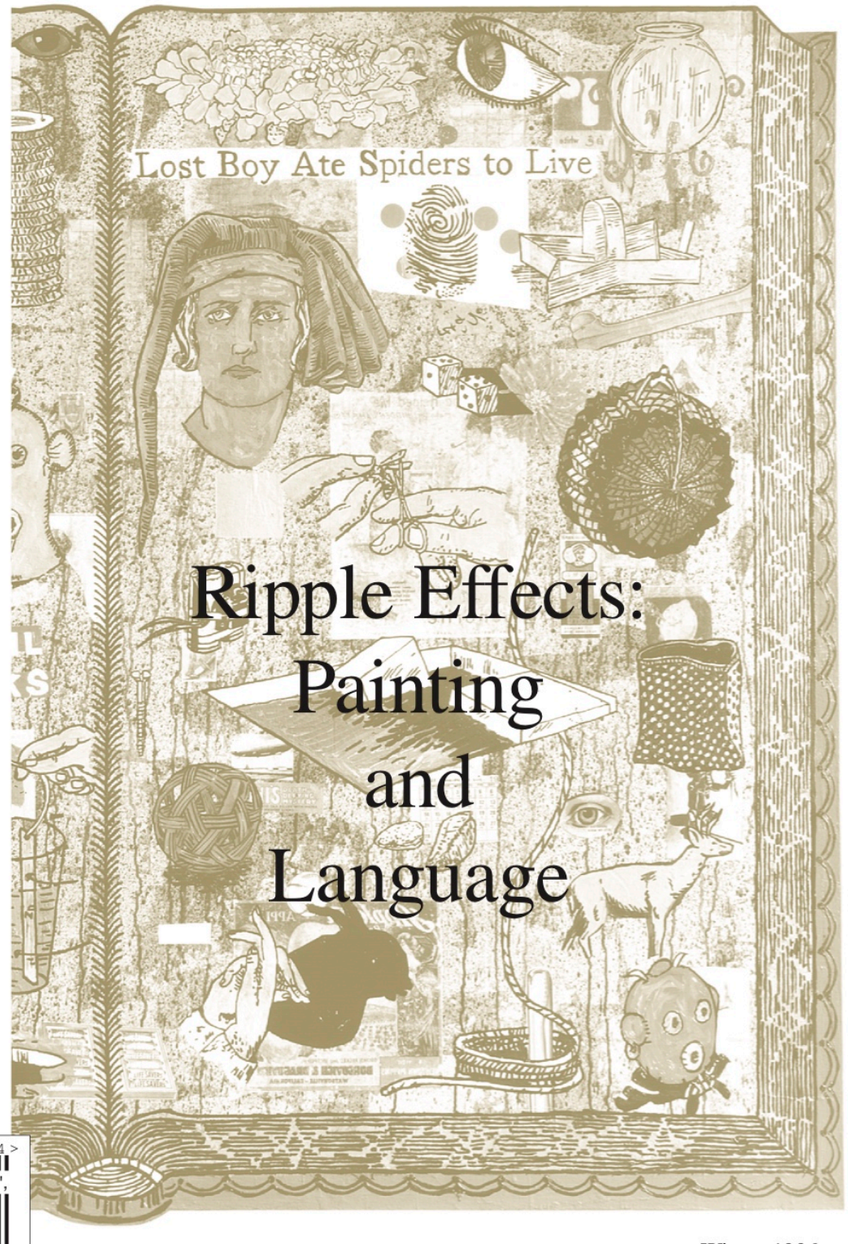
GUEST EDITORS:
Susan Bee
Mira Schor

CONTRIBUTORS:
Christian Schumann
Amy Sillman
David Reed
Jane Hammond
Rochelle Feinstein
Mira Schor
Julia Jacquette
Kay Rosen
Pamela Wye
Susan Bee
David Humphrey
Kenneth Goldsmith
Faith Wilding
Lucio Pozzi
Richard Tuttle
Tom Knechtel



Ripple Effects: Painting and Language

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Ripple Effects: Painting and Language

THIS ISSUE OF *NEW OBSERVATIONS:* "Ripple Effects," examines the relationship of painters with language and other primarily linguistic source materials. Painting was traditionally an art form privileged for its purely visual qualities, although for much of its history it found its themes in linguistic sources such as biblical narrative, mythology, allegory, and history. In fact, painting and language exist in a field of interactive ripple effects that productively enrich rather than disrupt the surface of contemporary painting. Today many painters rely on linguistically based sources for their work, increasingly bringing images of these sources and of language into their paintings; also, some painters write about art or collaborate with writers, thereby engaging in a complex, multilayered practice, where art and language intersect. This is similar to the practices of some of the most prominent members of the New York School of painting.

As former co-editors of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* as well as practicing artists, we have been committed to engaging in such a dual practice ourselves: we have often invited artists to write about issues and art of concern and relevance to their work. "Ripple Effects" is in a way a ripple effect of that involvement. We have invited some of the artists who first wrote for *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* to participate in this issue of *New Observations* as well as several other artists whose art practice involves language and writing as either subject or image of their artwork or as a parallel practice, or significant source of inspiration. We have encouraged them to extend the basic premise of the discussion in any direction of particular present relevance to their work.

In the past, dictates of modernism—"Greenbergian" modernism, at least—have distanced painting from language. Even though the appearance of language through the use of collage was an important turning point in the development of modernist painting, as Brian O'Doherty observed in *Inside the White Cube,* "Without going into the attractive complexities of the letter and the word in modernism, they are disruptive." Certainly much avant-garde art, other than painting, has benefitted from that "disruption," and for a while painting seemed to lose ground to these openly linguistic forms. However, in recent years we have seen the infusion of popular culture and multiple sources into the once sacred realm of the fine arts.

The artists who are included in this issue have a variety of approaches to the subject of art and language. Some of these artists represent language directly in their work: Julia Jacquette writes of her first experience of viewing paintings which represented writing and how that influenced her subsequent work. Kay Rosen emphasizes the way typography and language structure interpretation and discusses her desire to exercise the science of linguistics in what for her is the more suitable field of visual art. Amy Sillman distinguishes the importance of language as speech and her paintings as figures of speech; Christian Schumann describes his sources, from comics to concrete poetry; Mira Schor notes her initial political goals in depicting language as a sign for female thought and her concerns for imbricating writing language and painting language. Kenneth Goldsmith tells how the purchase of a used copy of Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book* inspired his subsequent artworks. Rochelle Feinstein discusses her use of words in painting and the grammar of painting. Jane Hammond explores painting itself, including the construction of painting as a language. Tom Knechtel and David Reed note the formative, constitutive importance of film, literature, and opera to their work. Faith Wilding writes of her interdisciplinary practice, where traditional painting language is but one of many languages used to communicate political and theoretical concerns. David Humphrey zeroes in on the relation of the concept of beauty to his paintings. Susan Bee writes about her relationship to writing and editing and about her collaborations with writers and how it has influenced her artwork. Lucio Pozzi discusses the distinction between art and words and the development of his Word Works. Pamela Wye narrates a parable about writing and art, while Richard Tuttle contributes a manifesto-like list of sentences and a poem.

Together, we think that these artists give some idea of the breadth and depth of the contemporary artist's preoccupation and possible obsession with language and how it changed and influenced their visual work.

Susan Bee is an artist living in NYC. From 1986-1996 she was co-editor of M/E/A/N/I/N/G. *Her artist's book,* Little Orphan Anagram*, with poems by Charles Bernstein will be forthcoming in 1997 from Granary Books.*

Mira Schor is a painter and writer living in New York City. A collection of her essays on art, Wet: On Painting, Feminism, and Art Culture*, will be published by Duke University Press in early 1997. She is on the faculty of Parsons School of Design.*

Christian Schumann

CHRISTIAN SCHUMANN *Meanwhile Pops Busted His Gears...,* 1993. Acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 60 x 72 inches.
Courtesy: Postmasters Gallery

MY INITIAL use of language within a visual context has to have occurred with some really bad attempts at drawing comics. The language within comic panels consists mainly of highly dramatic exclamations and soap opera-like dialogue. Being too young to understand the potential of this, I dropped the comics thing and moved on to plain old drawing and stuff, keeping writing as an entity separate but equal to the visual world.

Later on, I discovered concrete poetry. A typical example of that would be a page of typed lowercase e's in neat little symmetrical rows commanding some sort of annihilation of language and purpose of meaning/existence in general. Not being too interested in this although intrigued by the use of words and letters as a visual object I began to install words in my painting, sometimes going as far as putting a little comic book style MEANWHILE...at the top left hand corner of a piece. As time progressed, this got a bit more sophisticated, sometimes turning into a parody of field painting (a yellow block of words on half of a canvas, a plain color field on the other with one tiny allusive image stuck in the middle of the emptiness).

I've never been able to write a lengthy story, for some reason my writing skills only last for about a page before things get boring. As a result of this, I condense everything into a block of words; a paragraph-long tale of some twisted event or a toxic rant. Nowadays this will end up on a painting surface, a clot of words amongst a bunch of scribbles and drawings. This references the idea of words as abstraction.

Language in the form of words on the page is abstraction, and to someone who can't read whatever it is on the canvas, it really is abstraction; nothing more than a bunch of tiny marks. To someone who can read it, the words reference something, in my case something highly evocative (hopefully). When I use a single word, I try to use one which retains some sort of poetic depth. For example: 'octopus' or 'Burma,' perplexing mysterious words. This holds a slight kinship to the wordplay of Frank Stella's earlier painting titles like "Coney Island." The texts I create are either complicated rants or dramatic and simplistically psycho-sexual stories whose plots are derived from 1950's science fiction movies. The rants' construction is stream of consciousness blurbs influenced initially by Burroughs, Bataille and the ramblings of schizophrenics. Also in the midst of all the chicken-scratching and random imagery I write whatever comes to mind down as well, sometimes a song lyric or something a friend says to me while I'm working, other times a list of obscurities or whatnot.

The use of words and texts for me is an act concurrent with painting images and even scribbling on paper. It is all a form of abstract language. They are all communications.

There is also an issue of texts creating another dimension to a painting, one of the imagination of the viewer/reader being utilized. Reading a story on a painting creates a sort of dimensional hole, the viewer/reader's mind is forced to act and the text is replaced by their memory of what they imagine the story to look like. So when they move on with their freshly activated minds to looking at a couple of concurrent scribbles, where does that take them? The field of the painting becomes one of imaginary dimensional depths varying in quality depending on each viewer's comprehension and personal interest in the work. In this way a poetic depth becomes a tool to create an actual formal depth within the painting.

Christian Schumann is a painter whose work is shown at the Postmasters Gallery and other fine venues. He is available for weddings and Bar Mitzvahs.

Imagine a use of the word writing which might be thinking or looking.

— Richard Foreman

Among the most interesting and complex versions of this ... is what might be called the relationship of subversion, in which language or imagery looks into its own heart and finds lurking there its opposite...

— WJT Mitchell, *Picture Theory*

I BEGAN WRITING THIS STATEMENT BY THINKING about the language of casual speech rather than that of text, and my paintings as a concrete form of raconteurism or literal figures of speech. It struck me that speaking and painting are both daily acts of improvisation that I perform; they are both intuitive and deeply reasoned processes that I use to summon and transform the anarchic, fragmented, repressed, and marginal. I make an optical poem out of this stuff, the visual and the verbal refract and extend each other. In practice, none of the models of polarity between body and mind, between thinking and doing, between reason and the irrational make sense to me. I'm playing in the street, at the intersection between word and image, form and content, and I look forward to their collision. In fact, recently more than ever before, I've left words intact in the paintings exactly as they float through my mind while I'm working, acting like catalysts for the visual and vice versa.

Every day I welcome the raw, the goofy, the urgent, the eccentric, the disrupting, the associative and dissociative, the distracted, the embarrassing, the transient, the interesting, and the fearsome into my life, and language is the welcome mat, the first translation device from the body of sensate cues I intuit. Painting is a physical thinking process to continue an interior dialogue, a way to engage in a kind of

AMY SILLMAN *Flowerface,* 1994. Gouache on paper.

AMY SILLMAN *Measles,* 1994. Gouache on paper.

internal discourse, or sub-language—mumbling, rambling, stream of thought, murmuring, thinking out loud, naming, uttering, a voice in your head. So language is not just a cognitive device, a ground of critique, a pedagogical mechanism, a negotiable social structure.

Here's the big difference, for me: while language is a chronological system going only forward in time, like the voice-over to your home movie, painting allows for a revision of time itself through editing, erasure, compression, simultaneity. In painting you can wipe out, cover up, remake your body, re-envision your dream, imagine and then protect yourself—in fact, painting is a protective, tender gesture in a way that language as I practice it is not—j'accuse! (I always hated girls who wouldn't *say* anything.) Language is also a way to critique, hate, refuse. Language is a weapon for me to use as much as to be used by. In this way, I've always trusted and liked language—I find it reassuring. Sometimes I feel like an out-of-control, monstrous satellite with only a little nose-cone of inner language to guide me. How do I know that I'm not monstrous? Because you can *tell* me I'm not. I understand its function to suppress and control, but language can be familiar, intimate and available, the one trustworthy thing you have, sometimes the only sibling you've got. I say this as an only child.

Amy Sillman is a painter who lives in Brooklyn. She is currently on the faculty of Bard College.

DAVID REED *Installation,* 1996. Mirror Room, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum, Joanneum, Graz, Austria. Painting #*350,* Oil and alkyd on linen. Photo credit: Johann Koinegg

David Reed

Vampire Journal Excerpt

In this matter dates are everything, and I think that if we get all our material ready, and have every item put in chronological order, we shall have done much.

NOVEMBER 6, 1995 — OVER AND OVER, IN A dream, I found myself outlining complex gestures. I cut them out until they became distinct, isolated forms. I was obsessed with watching myself repeat this process which I couldn't stop. Opening my eyes, I realized that the brushmarks in the small painting by my bed were the same as the gestures within my dream. Unnerved and unable to sleep, I've started this journal.

The repeated motifs in vampire movies isolate themselves from the rest of the narrative, giving the objects used (wooden stakes, garlic, mirrors, hypnotic stares, bloody teeth, self-opening doors, crosses, high collars and capes) a particular kind of significance. Looking up Tod Browning's *Dracula* in Gilles Deleuze's books on the cinema, I've just read about "crystalline narration" and remembered the points of spectral light which flash from the chandeliers of the Mirror Room in Graz. Full color is everywhere, but unseen. While walking under the chandeliers in Graz, why did I think of the vampire's inability to cast a reflection in a mirror?

November 7 — Without a "likeness" reflected in a painting, does the onlooker become, in some way, a vampire?

November 14 — I have mixed colors for the horizontal bands that will be under the brushmarks of the paintings for the Mirror Room. The color sequence from top to bottom is: rose/paler red/white/pale green/blue. These colors will be barely visible when the brushmarks are cut out and surrounded by white. They will cause a subliminal suffusion, like the sparkling, prismatic flash of the chandeliers.

November 21 — *The Hunger* by Tony Scott, 1983.

November 22 — *Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Dan Curtis, 1973.

November 24 — *Near Dark* by Kathryn Bigelow, 1987.

November 25 — *Queen of Blood* by Curtis Harrington, 1966.

November 26 — *Planet of the Vampires* by Mario Bava, 1965.

November 27 — *The Horror of Dracula* by Terence Fisher, 1958. Great color; No mirrors.

November 28 — *Kiss of the Vampire* by Don Sharp, 1962. Again, no mirrors, but a wonderful color effect: at the end of each scene, just before the cut to the next, the values of the bright, lurid colors compress and shift darker.

November 29 — Mondrian's "New York Paintings"(no background)/non-site (Robert Smithson)/Vampires.

November 30 — In a Gulf War documentary, technicians call unidentified incoming images on their radar screens "vampires."

December 1 — In the seven movies I've seen, I've yet to see a vampire not be reflected in a mirror. Why did I remember this motif as being so significant? Is it in the classic films?

December 3 — Robert Smithson made a mirror device that reflected a human like a vampire, *The Enantiomorphic Chambers*, 1966: "The chambers cancel out one's reflected image, when one is directly between the two mirrors."

December 6 — *Bela Lugosi* and *Dracula: a Cinematic Scrapbook*. Two documentaries.

December 7 — *Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror* by F.W. Murnau, 1922. In the first scene Hutter, the hero, knots his necktie and primps in front of a mirror. Later, in the Count's castle, he checks his neck in a mirror held in his hand. This image somehow confuses what is internal and what is external. His reflections seem to float, autonomous from their cause.

December 8 — *Vampyr* by Carl Dreyer, 1931. This is still my all-time favorite film. Perhaps the motif of the shadow moving separately from the figure replaces the mirror motif.

December 11 — *Dracula* by Tod Browning, 1931. Mina and Lucy discuss Lucy's infatuation with Dracula in front of a mirror. Then, the scene that I'm looking for: a mirror in the top of a cigarette case shows that the Count (Bela Lugosi) has no reflection and proves that he's a vampire. When he is tricked into looking into the mirror, Dracula starts, and knocks the cigarette case to the floor. What causes his reaction? The common assumption is that he does not see his own image in the mirror; is upset to be discovered and reminded that he has no soul. But my intuition is that there is another reason. Mortals can't see his reflection in the mirror, but what does Dracula see? Do vampires see something that we can't see? Do vampires see in a different way than humans?

December 12— Why does one need a soul to be reflected in a mirror? Mirrors reflect only surfaces, animate and inanimate.

December 13— Do I remember the vampire's trait of non-reflection from seeing just this one movie as a child? And if so, why would it resonate for so long in my consciousness? Did I use it as a test on strangers, to see if they were vampires? Did I use it as a test on myself?

December 18 — *Mark of the Vampire* by Tod Browning, 1935.

December 19 — *Dracula's Daughter* by Lambert Hillyer, 1936. "This is the first woman's flat that I've been in that didn't have at least 20 mirrors," says the unsuspecting hero in the vampire's flat. Very interesting scenes of the hero before a mirror and of his secretary knotting his necktie as if she were replacing the mirror. Does one look in a mirror to determine or confirm one's gender?

December 20 — *Son of Dracula* by Robert Siodmak, 1943.

December 21 — *The Vampire Bat* by Frank Strayer, 1933. Contains a hypnosis machine similar to the one in *Dracula's Daughter*.

December 22 — *The Return of the Vampire* by Lew Landers, 1943. A good scene with a hand mirror. This time, unlike the mirror reflections in Browning's film, the clothes of the vampire are reflected: Only the vampire's head is missing. Dr. Tesla is suspected of being a vampire when the mirror in his hotel room is found turned to the wall. Exactly the same cigarette case and model of a ship which stand out incongruously in the mirror non-reflection scene in *Dracula* also appear in this film. These objects are in a scene in which the vampire is defeated by another coded object: the cross. I'm glad that someone decided to have these objects return. Then they proliferate like the vampire, the cross and the other devices.

December 24 — I have now seen 17 vampire films, including most of the classics, and have found only two scenes in which the vampire is not reflected in a mirror. Why did I remember this device as being so significant? This project is crazy. How many of these films will I have to see?

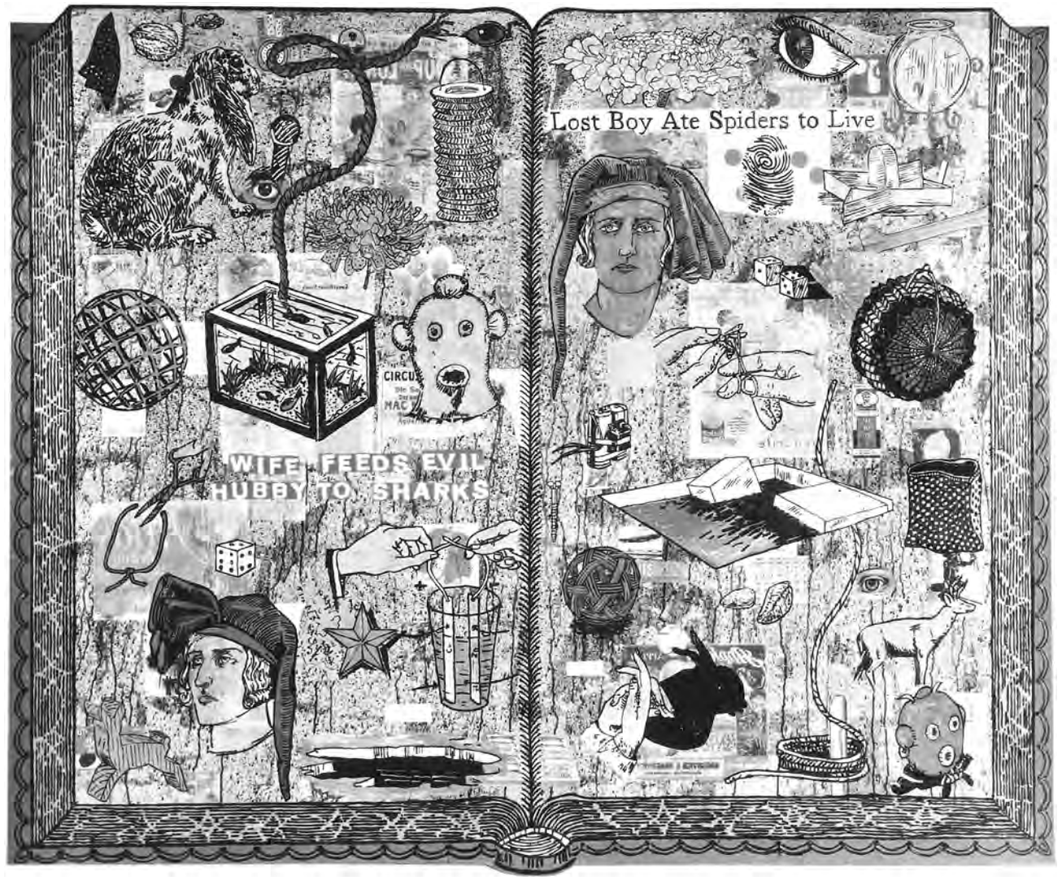
January 2, 1996— As I rented a tape at Kim's, the girl at the counter said that I should go to their store in the East Village: there were a lot of real vampires over there.

Journal entries until July 26, 1996 have been published in a catalogue, *"I started, for it amazed me that I had not seen him, since the reflection of the glass covered the whole room behind me.," New Paintings for the Mirror Room and Studio/Archive off the Courtyard*, from a show at the Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz, organized by Günther Holler-Schuster and Peter Weibel.

David Reed is a painter who lives in New York. He has now seen over 75 vampire movies.

Jane Hammond

JANE HAMMOND *Wonderful You II,* 1996. Two panels, oil and mixed media on canvas, 82 x 86 inches. Courtesy Luhring Augustine & Claudia Gian Ferrari Arte Contemporanea



JANE HAMMOND *Irregular Plural III,* 1995. Oil and mixed media on canvas, 61 x 73 inches. Courtesy: Galerie Barbara Farber

THIS SUMMER I'VE BEEN SPENDING TIME WITH COMIC BOOKS IN LANGUAGES I don't speak. You weave your own stories between the images. It's kind of the opposite of those magnetic poetry kits they sell now. With them you take these language fragments and build pictures.

At some point in evolution there was something we now call man and not yet what we now call language—but with the full apparatus we call vision. What would it be like to see as we do but not have language for it. Is it like dogs dreaming?

When I first began these paintings, in 1988, I wanted something that was a surrogate for style. Something that was fixed in some respects and open in others and that wouldn't place visual limits on the work. So I took these found pieces of information and let myself use them in all different ways. It was a kind of language in that the bit components were inherited, not invented, and the expression came in the combinations and contexts and manipulations (literally, from the hand).

But, there are times when language is not inherited. You do invent language. With children. When you fall in love.

And painting is not a language where, typography nuts aside, a word on the page means the same whoever writes it. Perhaps computers are making language even more bodiless. As elastic and contingent as language is, it seems much more codifiable than painting, e.g., the dictionary. Painting is dirty, bodied, particular.

You can look through a word. A picture calls you to itself, and with all its imprecision, idiosyncrasy and stain, it can leave you somewhere else.

Jane Hammond was born in 1950. She is an artist who resides in New York City.

ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN *Something For Everyone*, 1993. Oil, xerox on linen, 42 x 42 inches.

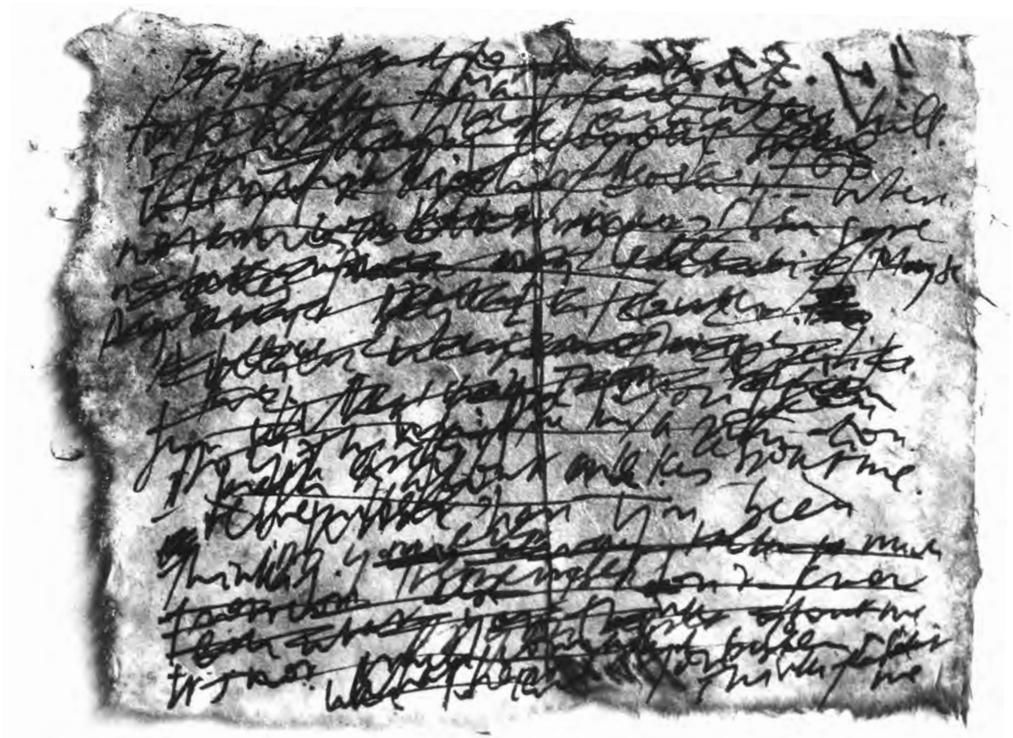
I HAVE USED WORDS IN MY PAINTINGS ON A FEW occasions. They are always names of people or places, words used by other artists, and, more recently, phrases taken from cartoon captions. In other "words," I don't invent language but rather, generate paintings through these other scraps. These words are fragmentary features of common speech, and while they can be spoken, they are not quite yet a language. In and of themselves, they are not adequately sensible. The grammar, string, or context needed to glue them into a coherent whole is absent.

I use them in this way so that my paintings can be urged, even coerced, into providing the grammar. My understanding of abstract painting is as a generous language, reconstructing and accommodating itself (slowly, perhaps) to interferences from outside its own presumed structure—much like English. Words have the speed of comprehension and visual urgency that is absent in painting, or at least the kind of painting convention that I am interested in working with. The gap between the visual language is probably what initially drew me to pair them.

ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN *A Wonderful Place to Live,* 1994. Oil, xerox on linen.

A dangerous attraction, I find my dialogue, in practice, vacillating between yes, you can...no, you can't. Of course, I want to win the dare. The challenge is to fuse the word into a completely visual and material experience of a painting, and, hopefully, create the equivalent of Franglish, in my case, Paintglish. I do believe that painting language has soft boundaries. I am intrigued by the possibilities of using words as elastically as paint, while employing their demotic power to be concrete, metaphoric, and swift.

Rochelle Feinstein lives and works in New York City. She is represented by the Max Protech Gallery and is on the faculty of the School of Art, Yale University.



MIRA SCHOR *Postcard - August 29, 1976,* 1976. Ink and mixed media on rice paper, 5 x 6 1/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Mira Schor

WRITING AS A VISUAL IMAGE was first an important subject of my artwork during the seventies. I was committed to infusing art with autobiographical content as a political act, to bring female experience into art. My first method of constructing a visual autobiography had been self-portraiture in a narrative context. A couple of years later my figured image left the picture, in favor of my handwriting on layers of page- or dress-shaped translucent rice paper. I began to use writing as an image at the point when I realized that my handwriting was no longer the site for adolescent rehearsals of different identities but had finally stabilized into a system of elegantly undecipherable marks that seemed a more flexible, more metaphorical surrogate for myself.

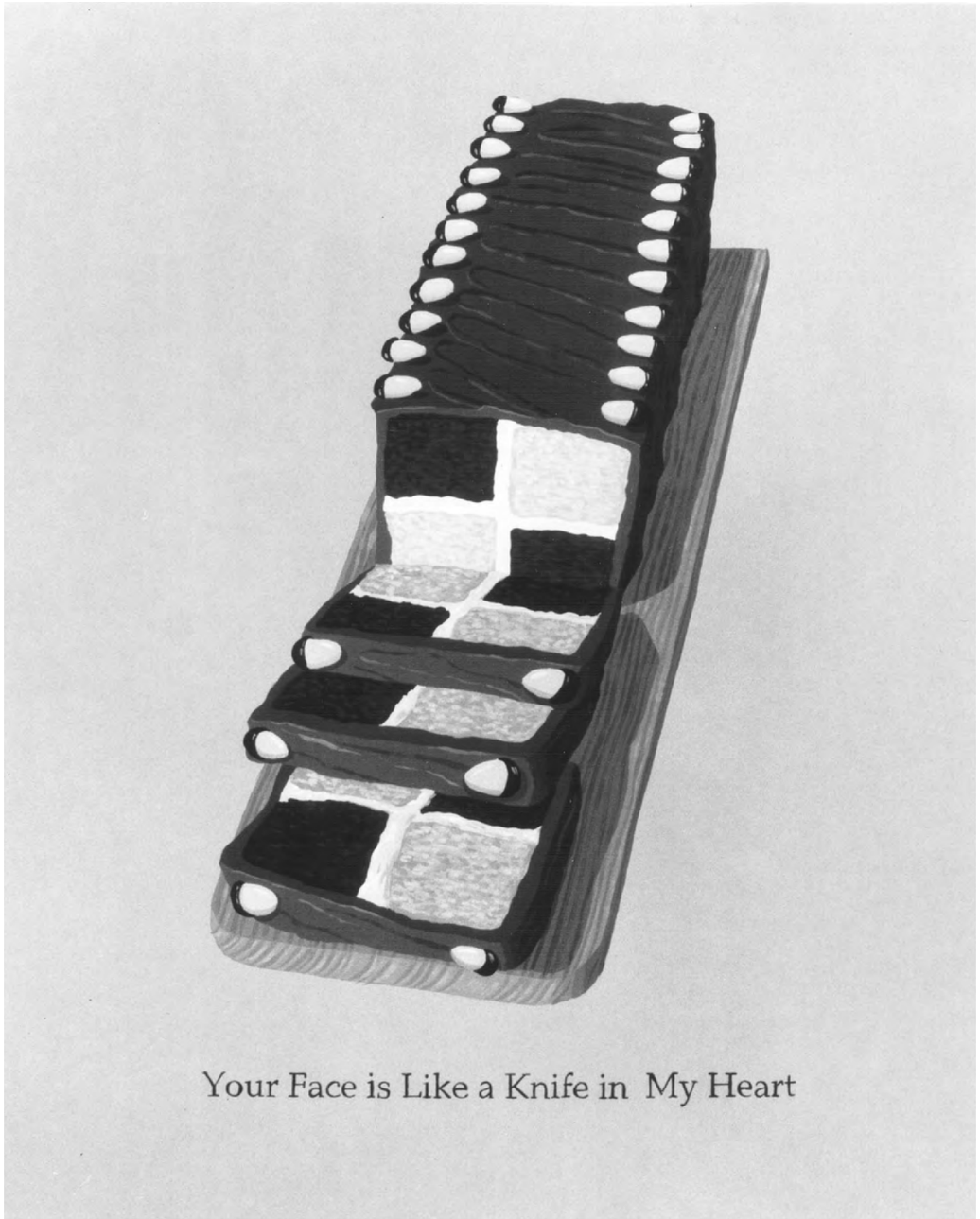
In all my usages of writing as image, my hope is that the writing is visually interesting as graphic mark and as it occurs within the materiality of the work. This should be totally connected to what the words may say—the language of dreams, diary, and quotidian inner thought, of political rhetoric, or color—and also completely independent from the verbal meaning if not from the *idea* of language as sign and emblem of thought, so that the work can give pleasure, and, I hope, convey its meaning through visual cues alone, not linguistic ones. This was in fact the nature of my earliest experience with letters as images in art: many of the works of Judaica made by my artist parents included engraved and incised Hebrew letters that I could *only* appreciate as images because I don't read Hebrew.

I do also write critical prose about art, and in order to do so, I read, and certainly the look of a certain kind of theory text has at times become a still-life element for my painting: all those parentheses and virgules that reveal the phallic undercurrents of language. Recently I've also somewhat ruefully been brought to consider some similarities in the way one uses painting and verbal languages: in each case one can get carried away. Excess in painting is valued by many as "painterliness," decried by others as narcissistic virtuosity, or worse. In critical, non-fiction writing, you can only hope that the places where you grabbed hold of some words and galloped away with them will be called "poetic" and will have taken your reader someplace that approximates what you wanted to say in the first place. But "poetic" can also mean lacking intellectual rigor. Paint marks that are not self-aware but just there to show off, words that are in love with themselves, these are ever present parallel dangers inherent to a dual practice.

Like many artists who write, I am skittish about prejudices against intellectual artists and bilingual people in general. I feel compelled to assure others that my painting comes first and matters more to me. In fact these are separate disciplines I am interested in. Each answers specific needs, has specific purposes and audiences, and each must answer to the rules of their discipline. They are not exchangeable, although the concerns of my painting color the direction of my writing, and the textual research for my writing often enriches my painting.

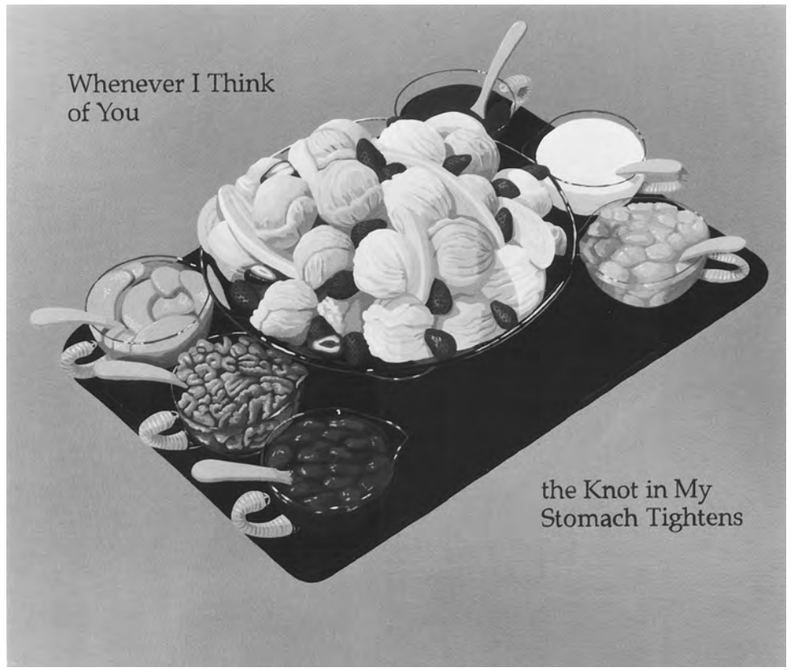
In current paintings I combine the abstract scrawls of my handwriting with the careful script in which I was taught to write. I had cathected to the physical and aesthetic pleasure of writing out a letter as I was instructed to do, putting my weight into a thicker downstroke, lifting my wrist for a delicate upstroke. In the beginning, there was the beauty of the letter *a*. Now there is the *Joy* of embedding the gap between visual and verbal languages within each other's materiality. Language is almost a vestigial subject, just a place to hang my engagement with paint, yet the more I am interested in painting paint, the more language as image seems an essential conceptual anchor.

MIRA SCHOR *Joy,* (detail of *War Frieze XVI - Men Are the Essence of Joy*), 1994. Oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Ken Pelka.



JULIA JACQUETTE *Knife in my Heart,* 1996. Enamel on wood, 24 1/2 x 20 inches. Courtesy: Holly Solomon Gallery

JULIA JACQUETTE



JULIA JACQUETTE *Knot in My Stomach,* 1996. Enamel on wood, 25 x 29 inches. Courtesy: Holly Solomon Gallery

WHEN I WAS ABOUT TEN YEARS OLD, MY mother gave me a book on women artists that included a reproduction of Frida Kahlo's painting, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*. It made a deep impression on me. In it, Kahlo depicts herself sitting in a chair, dressed in a man's suit, with a short haircut and scissors in hand. Locks of long hair are strewn over her lap, the chair, and the strange surrealist field she sits in. At the top of the painting are written two sentences, both in Spanish, and one line of music. The caption for this painting in my book informed me that the lines in Spanish were from a popular Mexican song of the time (1940) which, when translated, said, "If you loved me, it was for my hair, now that I have cut it off, you will no longer love me." I was riveted. Who was this woman? Who was it that stopped loving her? Was it truly only because she no longer had long beautiful hair? The painting also scared me (as did the other Kahlo painting reproduced in the book, the gruesome *Henry Ford Hospital*). The space she sat in was so empty and weird. But I was fascinated by how it looked, and I loved (even as a kid) that there was writing put directly on the image.

Later on, as a teen-ager, and as a young painter in my early 20s growing up in New York City, I started to get very interested in the contemporary art scene. This was the early to mid eighties and the reigning queens of visual-art-incorporating-language were Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger. I think I felt discomfort with work like theirs, work that used text as social critique. My reaction at that time was to avoid words in my paintings at all costs. I found their work to be as alienating as their text was saying society and culture was. This may have been intentional on the part of the artists but it certainly put me off as a viewer.

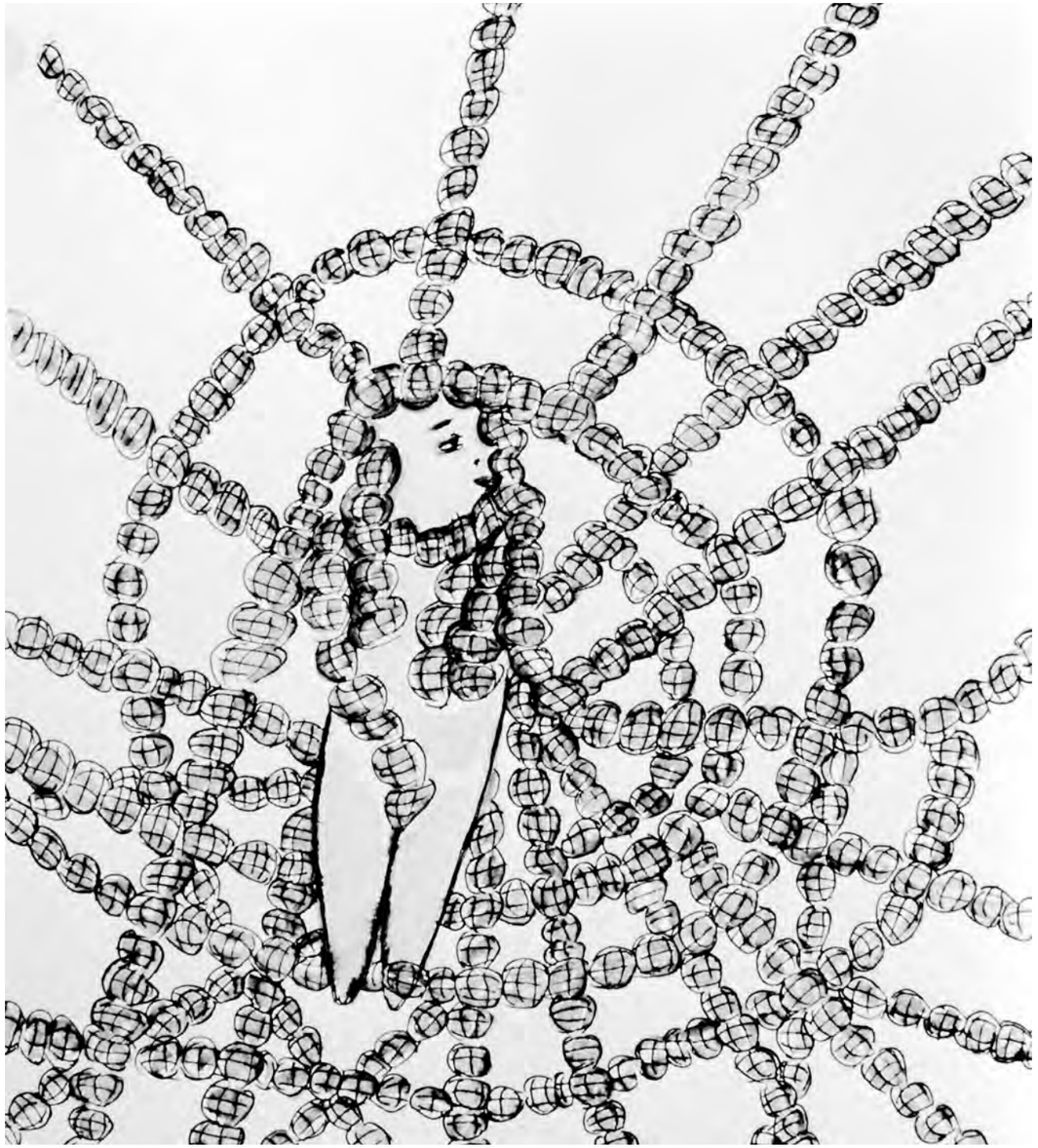
I started to make paintings that attempted to describe personal anguish (my own) using visual metaphors (usually some object sitting in some sort of undefined space). At some point I realized that to make this work as clear in intention and yet as rich in meaning as possible, having text in the paintings was going to help. Text could be my ally. And much to my surprise, I became a painter who uses language in her work.

Besides Kahlo's use of song lyrics in her self-portrait, I think the other influential use of language in painting was that of Magritte, especially in his well-known painting *The Treason of Images*, or in *The Key of Dreams*, where four objects are labeled "incorrectly" (a clock is labeled 'the window'). These works too seemed incredibly strange yet intriguing to me when I first saw them as an adolescent. The way the images were painted, and the way the words were painted on (handwritten script) were incredibly appealing in their loving yet awkward rendering, seemingly right off a cigar shop sign. His paintings may be about a feeling of disjunction and the slipperiness of reality, but this didn't make the paintings off-putting to the pre-pubescent me. Their execution was, and is, too pleasing. Realizing this was important to me in the age of letraset, heat-transfers, off-set printing, and computer generated images and text.

Julia Jacquette is an artist living and working in New York City. Her most recent one person show was at the Holly Solomon Gallery.

Pamela Wye

ONCE UPON A TIME A GIRL WHO MADE PICtures needed a ladder out. Out of what? you might ask. Out of the muteness of her pictures, perhaps. Or out of the cage of her own waking. I'm not sure. That's why the ladder is so important. In fact, it's a ladder spun from within. The girl's head, possibly. It's not a stiff wooden ladder, it's more like a knotted rope or chain ladder, made of pods, one after the other. I can't say for certain whether it accretes from the girl's head or some other part of her body. Divine sources have been ruled out. The pods hold words that the girl diligently and meticulously ties together, after changing the order several times. It's hard work. But the ladder allows thoughts to climb out of the girl that otherwise would not. Sometimes in her labors, she loses control, and the ladder branches out wildly and becomes a web in which she gets caught, entangled and frustrated. But if she finds a sense of direction for this strange ladder, she can climb out on it to places she's never visited, both faraway and within her very self. You can see, then, that there is a payoff for her work. So she continues to rearrange, spin, and tie and knot. Pulling other people in to her handiwork as well.



PAMELA WYE *Day Life Series: Web,* 1993. Acrylic, collage on paper, 8 x 7 inches.

PAMELA WYE *Day Life Series: Word Strangulation,* 1993. Ink on paper, 8 x 7 inches.

Pamela Wye is represented by Luise Ross Gallery in New York City.

Kay Rosen

LANGUAGE HAS ACCOUNTED FOR THE image, the subject and the source of my work for a long time. An academic background in comparative linguistics, applied linguistics, and Spanish and French provided a rigorous method and discipline for scrutinizing the smallest mechanisms by which language operates and for dissecting and analyzing almost invisible components of language. But academia did not furnish a sympathetic framework or audience for investigating and presenting alternative ideas about language which came from digging around in it and excavating unorthodox and previously unnoticed sub-systems which operate independently of authorized rules. Because many of the incidental and unintentional linguistic 'events' which interested me were most effectively revealed and understood through seeing and reading, rather than through speaking and hearing, it became useful for my purposes to present information visually: through painting, drawing or the visual page. Grammar and the visual strategies of typography and layout are critical to interpretation, but improper academic issues. They can contribute significantly to the way that information is received and processed, as can such formal properties of art as color, surface, composition and scale. These visual concerns may not have much to do with linguistic structure, but they are capable of structuring and affecting meaning. They function as much like signs and directives for reading and interpretation as do phonemes. Because my interests did not comply with all of the requirements and expectations of a formal academic linguistic system, my work found a way to combine the paradigm of the classroom and the research lab with that of the studio through short concise verbal constructions which were painted, drawn, and printed and which drew their inspiration from a vast number of cultural, personal and historical sources, including language itself. In the abbreviated micro space of the art work, language hopes to exceed and outperform its normal representational function and its obligation to be processed through the intentional and subjective consciousness of an author/speaker. Through the deployment of strategies which have as much to do with design, advertising, fine art, and stand-up comedy, as with linguistics, language is capable of doing very surprising things which it didn't know it could do.

Kay Rosen is an artist who was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, and who lives most of the time in Gary, Indiana. She teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and exhibits nationally and internationally.

KAY ROSEN *Forward and Reverse,* 1994. Enamel sign paint on canvas, 13 5/8 x 40 1/2 inches. Opposite page: KAY ROSEN *Sp-spit it Out*, from the *Ed Paintings*, 1988. Enamel sign paint on canvas. 30 x 22 inches.

SUSAN BEE *Red, Black, & White*, 1995. Mixed media & collage on wood, 14 x 18 inches.

t o

Susan Bee

As co-editor and designer of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*—from 1986 to 1996—I had the opportunity to publish writing by many artists. Editing the writing of other artists, art historians, critics, and poets gave me a chance to confront opinions other than my own and to open myself up to their aesthetic and ideological concerns. This constant input of new ideas challenged me to push my artwork into new directions. At the same time, I have been involved with writing at a technical level in my commercial work as a copy editor, proofreader, editor, typographer, and designer for every type of publication from poetry to fiction, medical journals, university press books, and art catalogs.

But, of course, my relationship with writing goes much further back—from my avid reading in childhood to studying art history in college. More particularly, after college, I became personally involved with writers and poets working on the magazine *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*—as its designer and as an occasional contributor. And my involvement with the work of poets and prose writers extended to attending numerous readings and participating in many discussions of writing. (I also married a poet.)

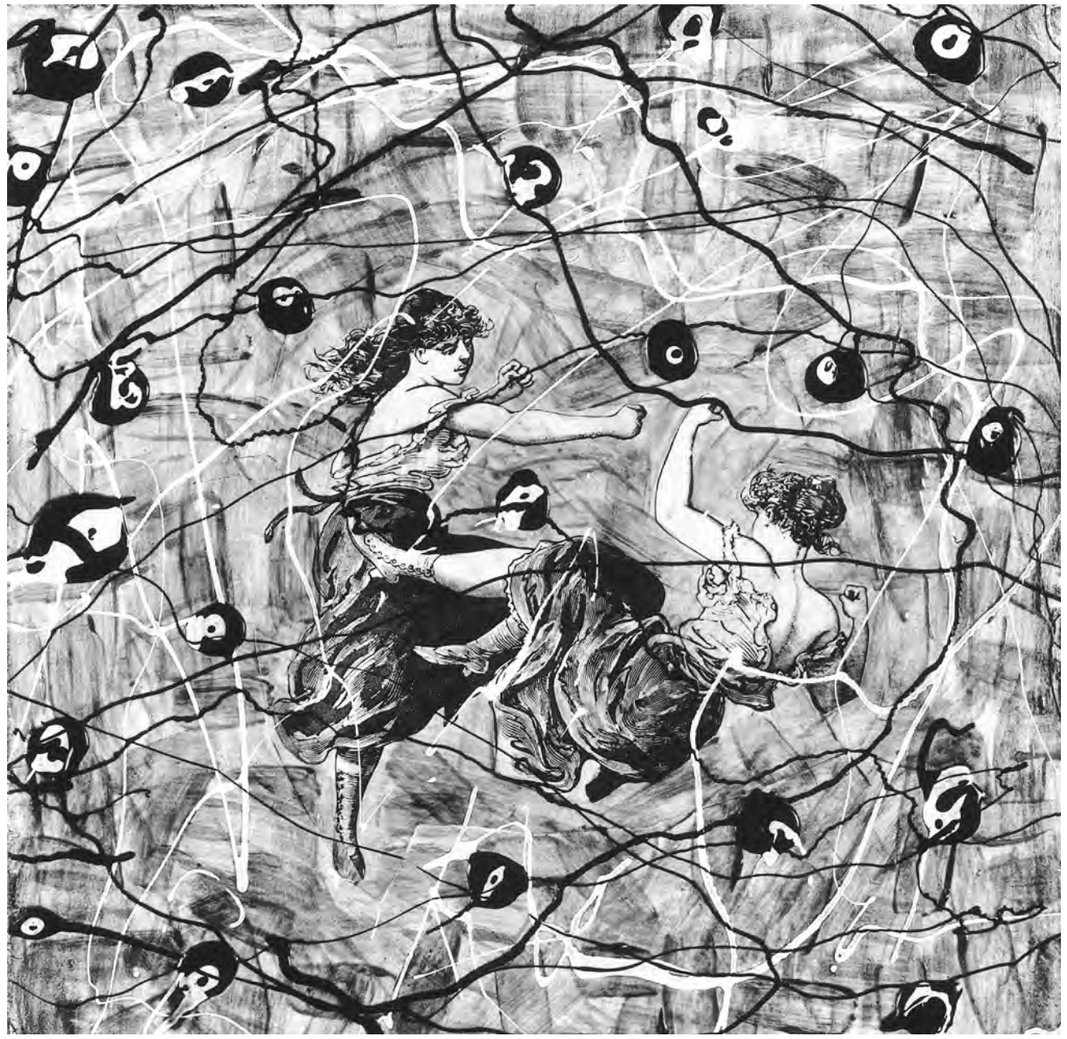
Writing has always fascinated me—because its use of language is so different from the language of visual art. However, I actually hate write—to me it has as much pleasure as a trip to the dentist. I've gradually built up my vocabulary as a painter—as my paintings became a space for a layering of images, marks, textures, and colors. My paintings are a fusion of disparate elements—an uneasy marriage of abstraction, surrealism, and popular imagery. In the work of the poets that have surrounded me—I have seen the same mixtures of collage elements such as the use of quoted material, advertising jingles, or business letters juxtaposed with lyrical passages and children's rhymes.

Currently, I'm working on an artist's book to be published by Granary Books in 1997 called *Little Orphan Anagram*. In it I incorporate Charles Bernstein's poetry within my collages. This proved to be very challenging, though we had collaborated before on several books. It is difficult not to be too illustrative, to allude to the poems visually but not to overwhelm them with my own interpretations of their content. I hope the result of this collaboration will be an echoing expansion of the language into the visual so that both are expanded and allowed to breathe.

In painting I adhere to the surface, to the tangibility of paint, the drips, the spatters, the thickness and materiality of the pigment. I seek the visual pleasure afforded by the painting process. Each of my paintings is a blank to be mined, layered, and filled—a battleground of contested contents, a sphere for artistic imagining.

My collage paintings are fueled by a desire to include the ordinary and extraordinary within the painting, to alter the space and context of the painting, to set up a disturbance or disbalance, to encode the marginal without eliminating its utility as margin. The paintings become like a stew of many ingredients cooked for a long time until all the flavors mingle. The paintings play out dramas and gender roles, psychic states, and visions. To narrate a story, set a mood, to break out of a role—I see painting styles as swatches of possibility creating permutations of scale and surfaces.

In *Fighting Women,* I layered over the 19th-century imagery to bring the background into the foreground. I cast a net of spun and dripped enamel paint over the surface to reflect the conflict of the two women. In *Red, Black, and White,* the expressions and actions of the characters collaged into this space set up a dramatic and comedic contrast with the playfulness of the enamel paint abstraction surrounding them. I believe painting is an inclusive totality. Rather than narrowing my focus, I want to expand and encompass more. I want to be overwhelmed by the force of paint and the images.



SUSAN BEE *Fighting Women I*, 1994. Mixed media & collage on wood, 12 x 12 inches.

David Humphrey

Describable Beauty

ONE OF THE INGLORIOUS REASONS I BECAME an artist was to avoid writing, which, thanks to my parents and public school, I associated with odious authoritarian demands. I found the language of painting, in spite of all its accumulated historical and institutional status, happily able to speak outside those constraints. Of course language and writing shade even mute acts of looking. The longer and more developed my involvement with painting became, the more reading and writing freed themselves from a stupid super-ego. Writing about art could be an extension of making it. But there persists in me a lingering desire to make paintings that resist description; that play with what has trouble being named. I was recently asked to speak on a panel about beauty in contemporary art and found myself in the analogous position of speaking about something that I would prefer to resist description. Describing beauty is like the humorlessness of explaining a joke. It kills the intensity and surprise intrinsic to the experience. I found, however, descriptions can have more importance than I originally thought.

The rhetorical demands of defining beauty often lead to ingenious contradictions or sly paradoxes. It's amazing how adaptable the word is to whatever adjective you put before it; radiant, narcotic, poisonous, tasteless, scandalous; shameless, fortuitous, necessary, forgetful or stupid beauty. I think artists have the power to make those proliferating adjectives convincing based on what Henry James called the viewer's "conscious and cultivated credulity." A description can have the power to prospectively modify experience. To describe or name a previously unacknowledged beauty can amplify its possibility in the future for others; it can dilate the horizon of beauty and hopefully of the imaginable. To assume that experience is shaped by the evolution of our ingenious and unlikely metaphors is also helpful to artists; it can enhance our motivation and cultivate enabling operational fictions; like freedom and power. We are provided another reason to thicken the dark privacy of feeling into art.

DAVID HUMPHREY *Physique*, 1995. Oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches.

Loving claims are frequently made for beauty's irreducibility, its untranslatability or its radical incoherence. André Breton ardently said that "convulsive beauty will be veiled erotic, fixed explosive, magical circumstantial or will not be." Henry James defined the beautiful less rapturously as "the close, the curious, the deep." I think that to consider beauty as the history of its descriptions is to infuse it with a dynamic plastic life; it is to understand beauty as something that is reinvented over and over, that *needs* to be invented within each person and group.

Beauty's problem is usually the uses to which it is put. Conservatives use beauty as a club to beat contemporary art with. Its so-called indescribability and position at a hierarchical zenith makes beauty an unassailable standard to which nothing ever measures up. This indescribability, however, is underwritten by a rich tangle of ambiguities and paradoxes. For critics more to the left, beauty is a word deemed wet with the salesman's saliva. They see it used to flatter complacency and reinforce the existing order of things. Beauty is here described as distracting people from their alienated and exploited condition and encouraging a withdrawal from engagement. This account ignores the disturbing potential of beauty. Even familiar forms of beauty can remind us of the fallen existence we have come to accept. When beauty stops us in our tracks, the aftershock triggers reevaluations of everything we have labored to attain.

Finding beauty where one didn't expect it, as if it had been waiting to be discovered, is another common description. Beauty's sense of otherness demands, for some, that it be understood as universal or transcendent; something more than subjective. Periodic attempts are made to isolate a deep structural component of beauty; articulated by representations of golden sections, Fibonacci series, and other images of proportion, harmony and measure; a boiled down beauty. Even in the most unexpected encounters with the beautiful, however, there coexists some component of déjà vu or strange familiarity. To call that experience universal or transcendent performs a ritual act of devotion. It protects the preciousness one's beauty experience in a shell of coherence. I think there are strong arguments for beauty's historical and cultural breadth based in our neural and biologically evolved relation to the world, but arguments for artistic practices built on that foundation often flatten the peculiar and specific details that give artworks their life. The universalizing description also overlooks the work's character as a rhetorical object,

DAVID HUMPHREY *Blond Again*, 1995. Oil on canvas, 108 x 80 inches.

subject to unanticipated uses within the culture. It draws people toward clichés and reductive stereotypes which are then rationalized as truths and archetypes.

If I have any use for the idea of beauty, it would be in its troubling aspect. I was describing to a friend my mother's occasional fits of oceanic rage during my childhood, and she told me I should approach beauty from that angle. Like mothers, I suppose, beauty can be both a promise and a threat. All roads eventually lead back to family matters. Perhaps this path to beauty begins to slant towards the sublime; to that earliest state of relatively blurred boundaries between one's barely constituted self and the tenuously attentive environment. Attendant experiences of misrecognition, identification, alienation and aggressivity during early ego development become components of the beauty experience. The dissolving of identity, the discovery of unconscious material in the real, a thralldom of the senses underwritten by anxiety, are a few of my favorite things.

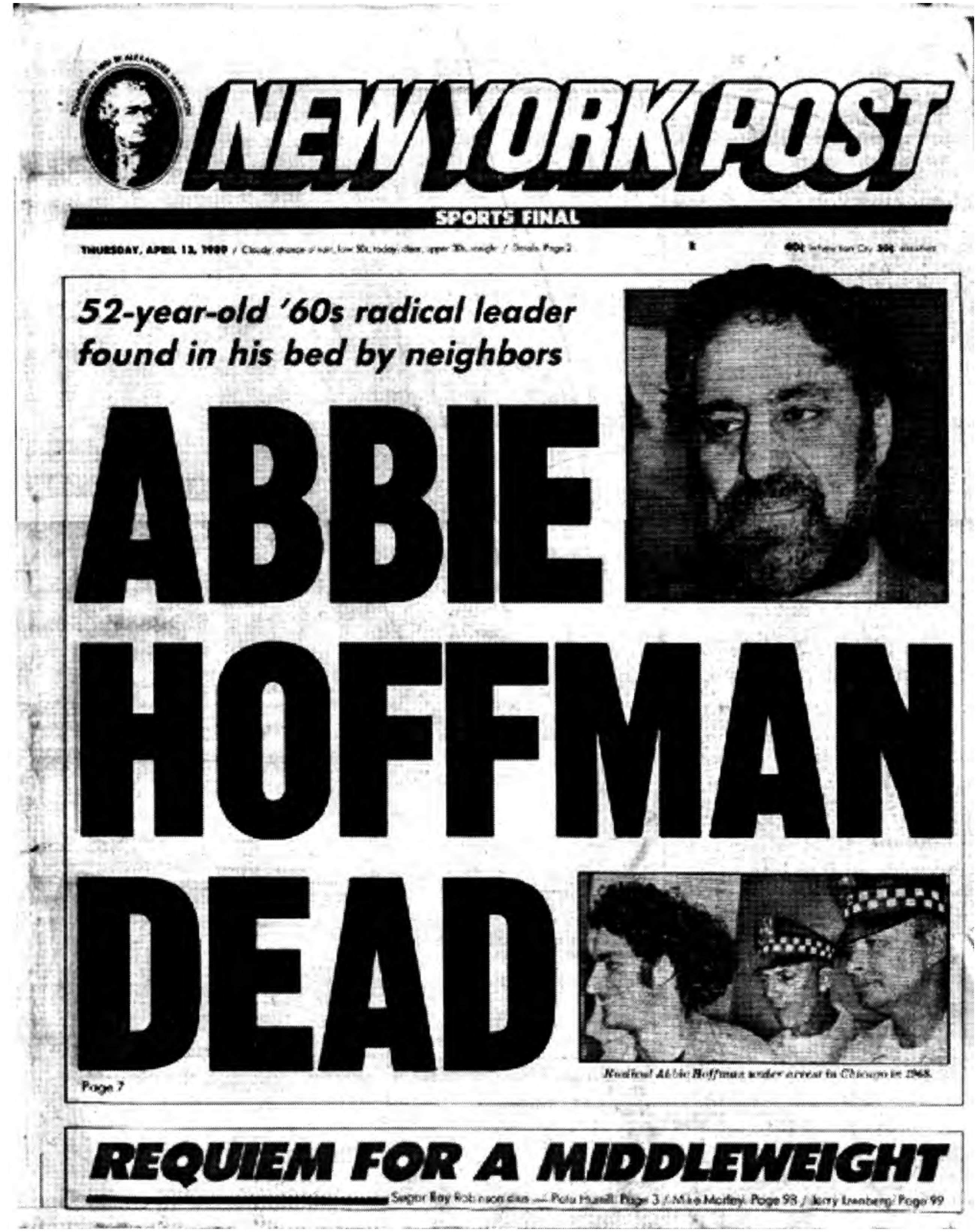
If there is a useful rehabilitation of beauty in contemporary art, I think it would be to understand it as an activity, a making and unmaking according to associative or inventive processes. Beauty would reflect the marvelous plasticity and adaptability of the brain. I'm tempted to go against the artist in me that argues against words and throw a definition into the black hole of beauty definitions; that beauty is psychedelic, a derangement of recognition, a flash of insight or pulse of laughter out of a tangle of sensation; analogic or magical thinking embedded in the ranging iconography of desire. But any definition of beauty risks killing the thing it loves.

David Humphrey is a painter who shows at McKee Gallery and publishes writing regularly in the journal Art Issues.

KENNETH GOLDSMITH

HOW I NEVER GOT TO MEET ABBIE HOFFMAN

How I never got to meet Abbie Hoffman: It was 1988 and I was making sculptures of books. While browsing through a used bookstore I came across a used edition of Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*. I bought it, took it home and read it thoroughly enjoying its high-jinx revolutionary tone. About this time Jerry Rubin was holding yuppie networking parties at the Palladium and Abbie had recently emerged from hiding. I decided to make two sculptures dealing with Abbie's book. The first was a giant 8'x4'x2' wooden book with "Steal This Book" (reproducing the original cover design) painted on the front. It could not be removed from my loft—it was too big to fit out any of the doors or windows. The other work was a 300 lb. dictionary sized book made of solid cast lead with the slogan "Steal This Book" inscribed into its cover. It was extremely heavy and could not be lifted, never mind stolen. I titled these works *Impossibilities,* a commentary on a revolution that never quite got off the ground. Around this same time I got a call from Danny Simon, publisher of *4 Walls 8 Windows* who was about to publish Abbie's collected writings. Danny had heard about these sculptures and told Abbie about them. Abbie was very excited and asked if we could throw the book release party in my loft. I of course said yes and envisioned a photograph of Abbie and I with our arms around each other in front of my sculptures grinning broadly (twin sons of different mothers). A date was set for the party when we received word that Abbie had killed himself. He had been reduced to doing stand-up comedy at Carolines in the '80s and evidently the degradation was too much for him to take; he was finally reduced to the clown that the culture had long wanted him to be.


NEW YORK POST

SPORTS FINAL

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1989

52-year-old '60s radical leader found in his bed by neighbors

ABBIE HOFFMAN DEAD

Page 7

Radical Abbie Hoffman under arrest in Chicago in 1968.

REQUIEM FOR A MIDDLEWEIGHT

Sugar Ray Robinson dies — Pete Hamill: Page 3 / Mike McAlary: Page 98 / Jerry Izenberg: Page 99

Kenneth Goldsmith is distantly related to Abbie Hoffman, Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, and Julian Schnabel. His great-grandmother was Gertrude Stein.

FAITH WILDING *Untitled,* 1995. Watercolor & xerox collage on paper, 12 x 9 inches.

Faith Wilding

MY BEGINNINGS AS A practicing young artist were concurrent with my wholehearted participation in the "second wave" feminist movement in the USA, beginning in the late 60s. It was an activist movement based heavily in radical socialist and liberatory political theories. For me—as for many of my sisters—the model of the concurrence of theory and practice has never become obsolete.

My art practice is complex and interdisciplinary. Twenty-five years ago I worked in environments (installations), performance, radio and audio art, writing, collaborations, drawing, painting and sculpture. Today, I still do, as this kind of multi-disciplinary practice best accommodates the subject matter, content, and purposes of my work. My recent mixed media collage words on paper, and my painted "wounds" represent a cherished and long-standing commitment to drawing/painting, as a way of exploring visually psychological and philosophical ideas based in language. I think of these works as "recombinants," for they recombine not only traditional media such as watercolor painting and meticulous ink drawing with the much newer methods of collage and montage, but they also speak of the psychic state of the body today—the recombined war body, which has been violently cobbled together from nomadic social, cultural and political fragments. The recombinant body is an uneasy, monstrous depository of melancholic historical fragments expressed as animal, human, organic and machine parts. It is a body both beautiful and strange in its monstrous (im)possibilities. Feminist art likewise is a recombinant practice and philosophy, an attempt at practicing (im)possibilities.

I like to think of my visual work as a kind of "applied theory" based in research about contemporary social and cultural phenomena and ideas. My latest project, *Wall of Wounds,* is an example of such "applied theory." "Show your wound!" is an imperative which seems to be the motivation fueling TV and radio's talk-show entertainment all across America today. We have revised Descartes: I hurt, therefore I am. Victimhood is the new privileged status for consumers. It gives everyone an edge. Wounds as entertainment: pain as pastime and spectacle; a perfect foil for genuine economic, social and personal trauma.

Wall of Wounds seeks to comment on this situation using the medium of painting to restore affect in opposition to the spectacle of pain. At the same time it draws attention to the *consumption* aspect of the talk-show phenomenon, by inviting the viewer to acquire a personalized wound—a unique, original, hand-painted wound, signed by the artist. Get your wound here cheap, only $15! What a bargain! The fluid, repulsive beauty of the small vulnerable paintings is irresistible. Imagine! your own wallet-sized wound.

Each wound has a title drawn from a seemingly inexhaustible list of categories: patriotic wound, political wound, infectious wound, deep wound, phallic wound, flesh wound, soul wound, heart wound, false wound, faith wound, bullet wound, knife wound, urban wound, tropical wound, unhealable wound, perpetual wound, jagged wound, self-inflicted wound, family wound, congenital wound, nomadic wound, love wound. Believe your wound. Choose your wound. Pick your wound. Lick your wound. Bless your wound. Curse your wound. Feed a wound. Starve a wound. Embrace your wound, etc. etc.

FAITH WILDING *Heroic Wound,* 1996. Watercolor on paper, 4 x 6 inches.

The wound paintings start as random "Rorschach" paint-blot images on skin-like transparent tissue paper. Each one is then further manipulated with brush and pen. I am currently very interested in random and involuntary processes and in the ideas they give me for consciously manipulated and developed images. My next move will be to scan these images into the computer and to subject them to electronic manipulation. I will then be able to combine the hand-made and the machine made in book-works, WWWEB pages, and other formats.

Addendum (Fall 1996): The ripple effect of *painted wounds* is a new project: *embryoworld*, in which I am commenting on the new "assisted conception" technologies. This project has everything to do with the languages of science and art which encode our deepest fears, desires, and longings in narratives of evolution, choice, idealization, immortality and perfectibility. An installation of mixed media embryo paintings is accompanied by a textual pedigree which detours the narratives of the reproductive technologies.

Faith Wilding is a multi-disciplinary artist. She is represented by Bronwyn Keenan Gallery in New York; and is Visiting Faculty at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and at the MEA in Visual Art Program at Vermont College.

Lucio Pozzi

Word Works

LUCIO POZZI *The Up and Down Braid*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 inches.

RATHER THAN LAMENTING THE END OF CIVilization and projecting my attention towards a utopian future or a nostalgic past, my response to the fragmentation and discontinuity of my culture is to be in the present moment as much as I can. This implies an understanding of myself and of the circumstances around me. Art has become for me a good way to do this because I feel it as an activity without specific goals. In my practice, art happens in a sequence of now and now and now. It does not happen in the fulfilling of any program. The field of visuality fascinates me most. In it I put together ideas, materials and processes that let my mind generate results I can not foresee.

So as to be in the present, I wish to re-visualize the visual arts and to separate them from the word. This is not to say that the word is ineffective in the realm of visuality. On the contrary, not only can the spoken or written word be a material for visual art but if visuality becomes re-instituted in its own the word also becomes more itself. They share the culture and do not depend on one another in forming it.

The invention of art, in my bias, does not presuppose explanations, while, on the other hand, interpretations of it dialogue with the art as creative acts in their own right. I hope that interpretations of art are always to a degree besides the point, i.e., so intensely within themselves that they correspond with the art more than they respond to it.

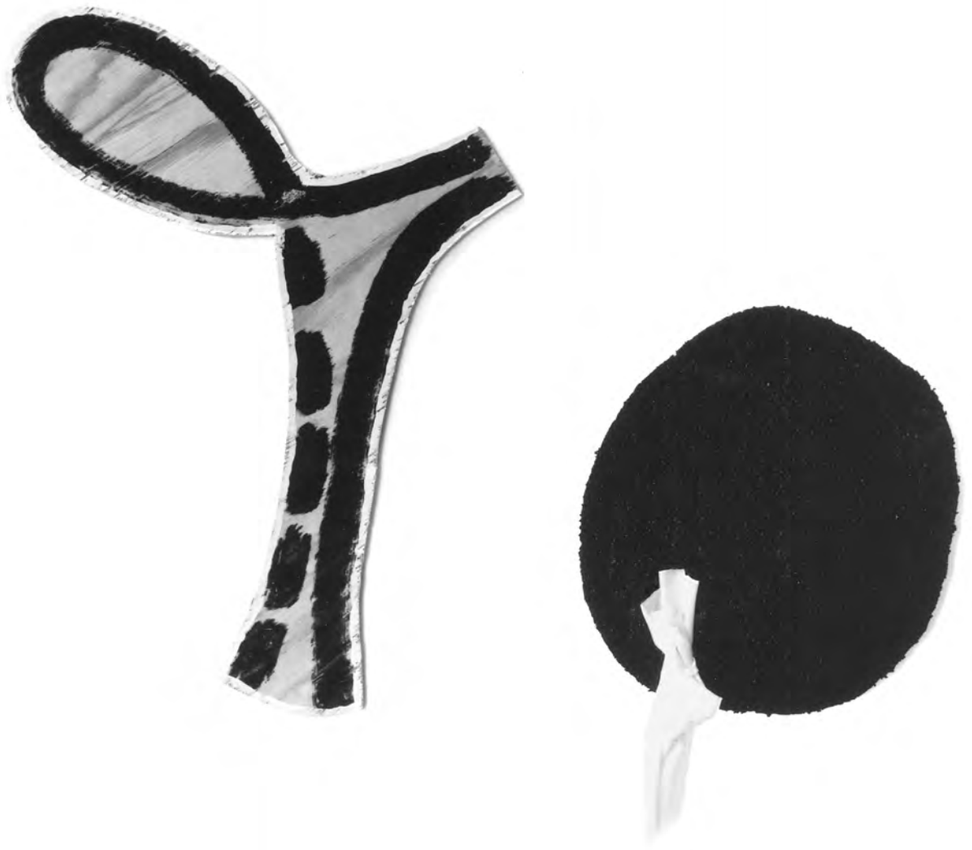
Ideal a lot with words, especially in my Word Works (to be distinguished from my Paint Works, Photo Works, Action Works, Installation Works and others). The Word Works are works of art in which I concern myself with the great shifting power of words. In them, I imitate the structures of my paintings and enjoy games of translation and substitution.
An example of my early experience in words took place when I translated the twin panels of the Level Group paintings into the book *Five Stories*, originally published by John Weber, New York, in 1974. (It is going to be written in all the languages of the world and has already been published in German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, French, Japanese.) The Level Group consisted of small canvases mounted on wood, painted in dark gray paint and coupled next to each other, like open pages of a book, on a wall. *Five Stories* contains ten stories. The five on the left are horrible; the five on the right are wonderful.

Other Word Works are, for instance, the speeches I deliver in the imaginary gibberish my little brother named Patchameena when we were kids. Like the chromemes of painting, the recognizability of phonemes varies infinitely.

I see my art as a weaving web of interconnected but independent specific universes. The web's end is unknown. Words are in some of these universes and in some others they are not.

Lucio Pozzi is a painter living in New York.

LUCIO POZZI *Wife Handi Man*, 1996. Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches.



RICHARD TUTTLE *Whiteness 15*, 1994. Wood, styrofoam, paint and cloth, 29 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches. Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York Photo: J.P. Kuhn, Zurich

Richard Tuttle

September 21, 1989

for Karl Hikade

1. Art is temporary in the mind of the viewer—like the vision in the past, it holds the viewer.
2. Anywhere art stands in being relation, art stands alone, "being relation" being solvent upon matter.
3. Whichever way counts like others, is like others. In art the same effort always precedes.
4. Being necessitates givens. Acquiring givens, like art, is past procedurism pluraled.
5. Time threatens back to time-ic wondering, transforms, adjusts, falls, like art, orange on a landscape.
6. Storyline coursing laterally, doomed to submission in sand, springs back, clearly echoing art's values.
7. Height frequency zeroes backward to rocks—can I say "purpled"?—purpled, like rocks in art's sister spokesman, here.
8. The range might carry scratched earth, which way the sun decides, touching in shadows as it goes. Art decides whenever it goes.
9. The touch that generates pure space is forward. Can we see it written about? Parallelism, art, come back into your own.
10. Over there, it listens. Art possesses. A rainbow would tell us not art—the edge of issues. In the dryness, I am thinking.

RICHARD TUTTLE *Whiteness 16*, 1994, Wood, nails, string and styrofoam, 32 1/4 x 36 1/4 inches. Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York Photo: J.P. Kuhn, Zurich.

Poem

Totality be aunt

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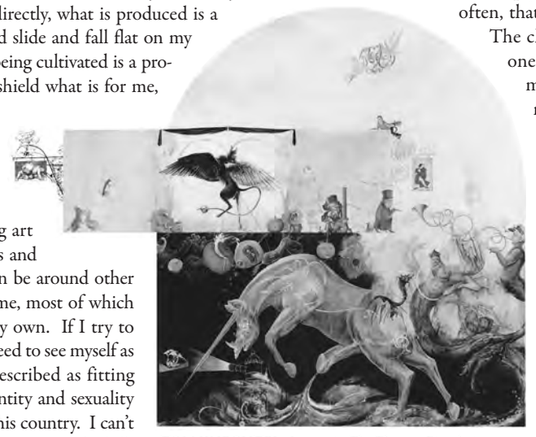
he will as always wash the will

you.

Richard Tuttle is an artist living in New Mexico. He is represented by Sperone Westwater in New York.

Tom Knechtel

AS I THINK ABOUT MYSELF AS A PAINTER AND about my relationship to painting and to language, I keep returning to the tension between my public life as an artist and my private life in the studio. Though the two things are woven together, they're not necessarily congruent, and it seems impossible to chart that territory—it's so elusive, so subjective. I think of my painting as being filled with the stuff of literature and language: metaphor, rhymes, narrative, character. And yet, as I try to describe that relationship directly, what is produced is a slapstick routine: I slip and slide and fall flat on my ass. I suspect that what is being cultivated is a protective naiveté in order to shield what is for me, essentially, a very private practice. Ignorance of the world can't be used as an excuse: I went to Cal Arts in the early seventies, teach in two of the leading art schools here in Los Angeles and live in this city so that I can be around other artists whose work excites me, most of which work looks nothing like my own. If I try to step a little aside from the need to see myself as unique, my work can be described as fitting into an investigation of identity and sexuality which is very prevalent in this country. I can't claim to be crawling out of my cave in the hillside, blinking my eyes at all this far-fetched art stuff. And yet I find myself grappling with an extraordinary protectiveness about my life in the studio, a protectiveness which ties up my tongue, makes my mind go blank, makes me feel like a dope or an innocent.



TOM KNECHTEL *Lessons in The Theatre: Ejaculations,* 1992. Oil on panel, 41 x 50 1/2 inches.

I think this ersatz innocence is mixed with very specific pleasures, and perhaps those pleasures are more germane—certainly more interesting—than my claims to naiveté. Let me tell you about one of my favorite fantasies, so delicious to me that it nudges up next to my erotic fantasies. I live in a second-floor apartment, and what would be the bedroom is the studio, with a window overlooking the entrance to the apartment. When I'm gone, my cat sits in this window, waiting for me, watching the sidewalk. Sometimes as I come home I look up and fully expect to see, beside her silhouette, a great mass of faces looking down, eyes shining expectantly, waiting for me to get indoors, back into the studio with them. Huge wrestlers, elephants, water buffalo, Indian gods and dancers, commedia figures, monkeys, trained bears, geese — everyone stampeding from the window over to the door when they hear my key in the lock.

I often think of my painting as a kind of imaginary theatre company. I love theatre. My tastes are very specific, though. The theatre which draws me towards it is based on an interaction between the desire to suspend disbelief, the need to communicate and how temporal and impermanent that transaction is. I'm trying to articulate what is most private and pleasurable to me—let my try to do that instead by offering examples of what theatre thrills me: Ariane Mnouchkine and the Theatre du Soleil. Giorgio Strehler and the Piccolo Teatro. Charles Ludlam and the Theatre of the Ridiculous. Drag. Puppet theatres. Kabuki and bunraku from Japan, kathakail from India. Circuses. Commedia dell'arte.

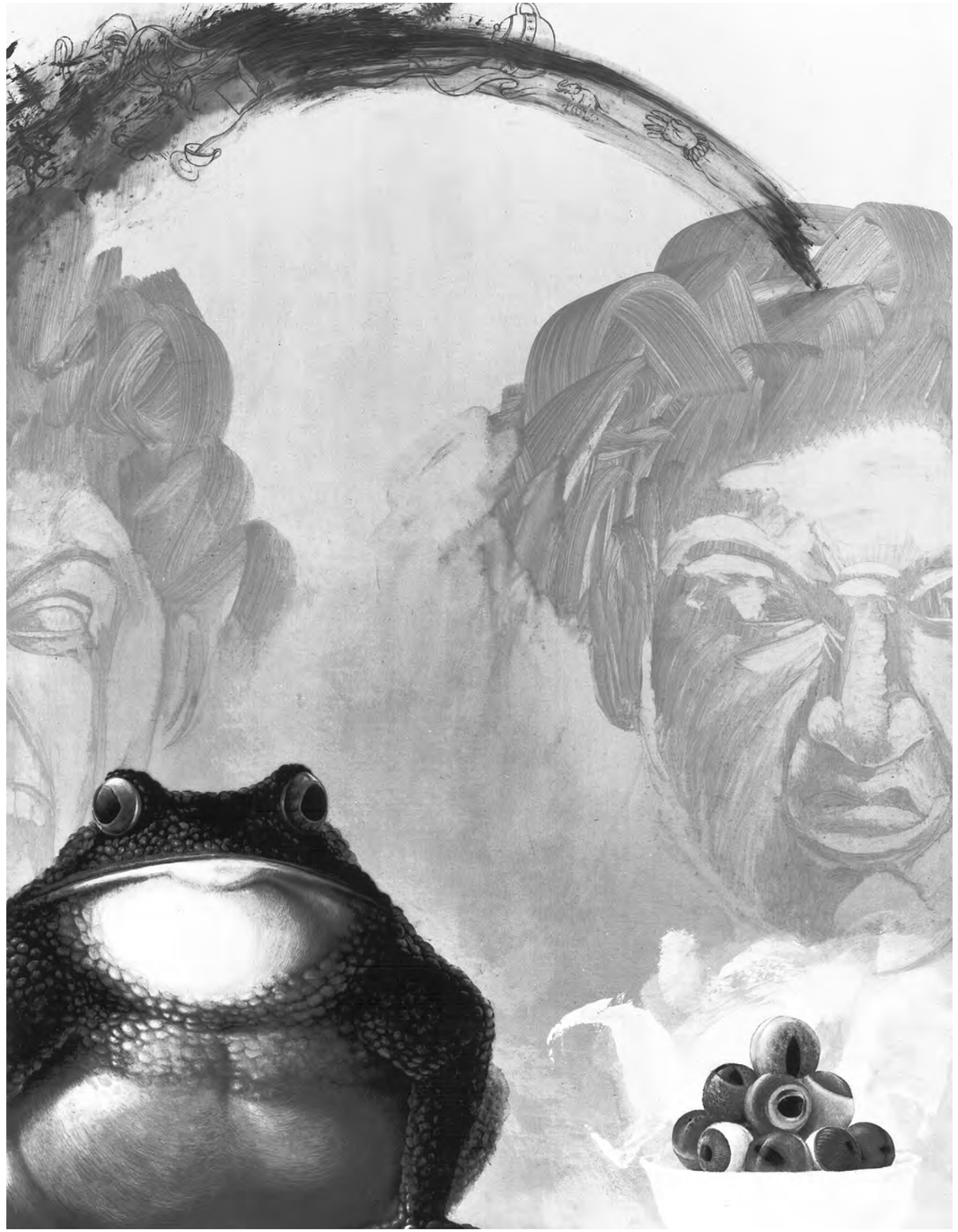
Los Angeles, while rich in artists, is impoverished in this kind of stylized theatre based on a love of the artificial and the spectacular. The city is simply too tied to the film and television industry, and theatre is secondary to those industries, serving their needs with an endless stream of showcases for actors needing employment. It's not their fault, but I don't like going to see it. Only in the theatres listed above does my love of allegory, artificiality, spectacle, wonder and narrative find itself amply gratified; and since I don't get to see them often, that appetite goes roaring into my painting.

The characters who inhabit my paintings (the ones who are all by the window waiting for me to finish typing this and come home to my studio) are not symbols but a repertory company of actors anxious to cram into the next tableau.

I mentioned narrative. That's one other element which feeds my life in the studio. I love the kinds of stories which spiral and meander, lost in the pleasures of narrative invention: fairy tales, *The 1001 Nights*, *Tristam Shandy*, nineteenth-century novels, pornographic fantasies. I suppose that I am not nervous about my love of literary content, the alleged bugbear of contemporary painting, because it's balanced by the intense pleasure I get from the physical language of paint, the visceral form of the material even when it's not engaged in representation. I get lost looking at paintings and drawings, my eyes gliding through them as if through a landscape. I get lost a lot in my studio: lost in pleasure, in doubt, in grief and expectation, in sex and other men's bodies, in an endless conversation with other artists and writers, in the surprise of my brush making the oily film do something I didn't expect, lost in the space between the paint being something that squirted out of a tube a minute ago and now it's a man doing his best to fit into an opulent ball gown.

How can I convince you of the primacy of my own pleasures and of my conviction that those pleasures are not merely onanistic but help to articulate the world?

Tom Knechtel is a painter living in Los Angeles. His next show will be at PPOW Gallery in New York in 1997.



TOM KNECHTEL *Bardo*, 1995. Oil on panel, 13 x 10 inches.

Grants, Competitions, Data and Deadlines

UPDATE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP for artists and art historians initiated by the College Art Association. For more information and to request applications for two categories, please call 212-691-1051, ext. 209; fax 212-627-2381; e-mail nyoffive@collegeart.org; or send a self addressed stamped envelope to: COLLEGE ART ASSOCIATION, Fellowship Program, 275 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001. Postmarked deadline no later than January 31, 1997.

MOMENTA ART is seeking artists for the 1996/97 season. Please submit up to 20 slides with a resume, slide list, and a SASE. An artists statement is preferred but optional. All video and film should be submitted in the VHS format. Please state the original format, length, director, producer, and writer. Contact: Momenta Art, 72 Berry St. Brooklyn, NY 11211. Tel/Fax 718-219-8058.

PAINTING SPACE 122 INC. is accepting artists' proposals in April/May for the following exhibition season beginning in September. Group or individual proposals OK. PS 122 Inc. maintains 3 studio spaces that rotate on a yearly basis. Artists wishing to apply for the project spaces will submit materials in late February/March. Send inquiries & SASE for Exhibitions or Project Spaces to: Painting Space 122 Inc., 150 First avenue, New York, NY 10009.

CREATIVE TIME City Wide sponsors projects by visual and performing artists and architects as part of its ongoing citywide series. There is no deadline for proposals. Proposals are reviewed every 3-4 months. For guidelines contact: Creative Time, 131 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011-1942. Tel: 212-206-6674, Fax: 212-255-8467.

BACA/THE BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL has a resource center adjacent to the BACA office at 195 Cadman Plaza West. The Art resource center contains up-to-date literature on grants, library materials on the arts, audio and video equipment and access to *ArtsWire* on-line system. The center is free and open to the public 10am to 5pm Monday through Friday by appointment only. BACA Arts resource Center includes the BACA Folk Arts Program archives and the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition (BWAC) slide registry. Call 718-625-0080.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE has a national resource guide listing Asian American performers and performance groups. Theater, Dance and Music. The Fall '96 edition is available now for $7.00, members send $6.00. Contact Asian American Arts Alliance, 74 Varick St. Ste. 302, New York, NY 10013, Tel. 212-941-9208.

ARTSWIRE On-line Communications for the Arts. For Information contact: Arts Wire Front Desk Coordinator, New York Foundation for the Arts, 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1507. (212) 366-6900 Ext. 247. artswire@artswire.org — http://www.artswire.org.

SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER offers a studio program which provides low-cost studio space on the Snug Harbor grounds. An Artist Access Gallery Program makes exhibition space available to community artists based on a peer review and selection process. An Artist-in-Residence Program is also available for national and international artists fro extended residencies. For further information, please contact the Visual Arts Department, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, New York 10301 (718) 448-2500 Ext.45.

THREAD WAXING SPACE accepts submissions throughout the year. Review time is approximately two months. artist submissions must include SASE, resume, one slide sheet and/or videotape- no originals and an artist's statement (optional). Curatorial proposals must include: SASE, list of artists, appropriate number of slides and resumes of artists, premise of the project (1-2 paragraphs) and budget. An Art in Education Program is also offered. For more info contact the Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway, 2nd floor (between Broome and Grand Streets) New York, NY 10012 Tel. (212) 966-9520, Fax. (212) 274-0792.

ART IN GENERAL Open call for Submissions. To be considered for inclusion in our 1996/97 program, Art in General's Advisory Committees will be reviewing submissions of works by individual artists as well as exhibition proposals every four months. Interested parties should contact Future Programs, Art in General, 70 Walker Street, New York, NY 10013. (212)219-0473.

ROTUNDA GALLERY has a slide registry. To be represented in the slide registry contact the gallery for an information sheet at: Rotunda Gallery, 33 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.
THE FIELD was created to help individual performing artists continue to make art. The field offers programs in the disciplines of dance, performance art, theater, writing, music, and video. For more information about program schedule, workstudy. internships, and other ways to get involved, please call (212) 691-6969 or e-mail us at thefield@aol.com.

SAUCE an alternative gallery occupying a 6000 sq. ft. loft in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, is currently accepting entries for its annual Film and Video Festival. Call for guidelines. Sauce is always willing to consider new and interesting proposals for future exhibitions and events. Sauce also welcomes submissions throughout the year from artists and performers whose work merits attention. Send slides with SASE to: Sauce, 173 N. 3rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11211 Fax/Tel (718) 486-8992.

WHITE COLUMNS views slides on a continuing basis between September and May. Please send 20-40 35mm slides in slide sheets, with a resume, an artist's statement (optional) and a SASE. Label slides with name, title, medium, size and date. Do not send original art work or prints. Labels slide sheets with name and number. All slides are reviewed by the Executive Director, Bill Arning. You will receive a written reply within 12 weeks. Slides submitted without return postage will be discarded. White Columns, 154 Christopher St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCY PROGRAM grants studio space and fellowships for 12 months to three emerging artists who further its mission of studying, preserving and collecting the artifacts of Black America. At the end of the residencies, artists' work is exhibited at the museum. For an application, contact: Director of Education, Studio Museum of Harlem. 144 W. 125th St., New York, N.Y. 10027. 212-864-4500.

THE LEEWAY FOUNDATION of Philadelphia announces the offering of grants of up to $20,000 each to outstanding women fiber artists who create wall-hangings, rugs and/or quilts and who live in the greater Phildelphia region. In addition to the Leeway Foundation Grants, Leeway is offering one Bessie Berman Grant in the amount of $20,000 and one Edna Andrade Emerging Artist Grant in the amount of $5,000. For more information, please contact: Nicole Greaves at (215) 545-4078. The application deadline is January 10, 1997.

ART DEADLINES LIST is a list of competitions, contests, call for entries/papers, grants, scholarships, fellowships, jobs, internships, etc., in the arts related areas (painting, drawing, animation, poetry, writing, sculpture, multimedia, reporting/journalism, cartooning, photography, video, film, music, dance, etc.). International scope. Contests & competitions for students, K-12 and college aged are included. Some events/items take place on the internet. You are invited to submit items. http://rtuh.com/adl

THE POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION, INC. offers grants to individual artists who have financial need. Grants provide support to artists for professional as well as personal expenses for one year, and often range from $1,000 to $30,000. Artists interested in obtaining application procedure must write or fax to: The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc., 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Attn. Request for application. Fax: (212) 288-2836 or (212) 396-1771.

MOVIES ON A SHOESTRING INC. is currently preparing for its 39th Annual Rochester International Film Festival. We are soliciting film, 35mm, 16mm and 8mm, as well as 3/4", and VHS video cassette entries from around the world. To take place Wed, April 30 - Sat., May 3, 1997 at the George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and film in Rochester, NY. Deadline March 1, 1997.

THE STANDBY PROGRAM allows artists and independent producers video access to the highest quality post production facilities available. For further information, seminar inquiries and an application to the program, call or write: The Standby Program, Inc., P.O. Box 184, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012. (212) 219-0951 (Tel & Fax).

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