

Summer Show, White Museum – 1970

A.D. White Museum of Art – Cornell University
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Art

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Summer art at Cornell takes the form of a show of the nine vigorously individual men who comprise the summer art faculty. The exhibit, painless and cheap for the gallery, neither being a negative criticism, runs through Aug. 30 at the White Museum.

The absurd and the ridiculous, much of it intentional, some not, highlight the show in the one case and lowlight it in the other. Joseph Scala's machines are jokes and visual puns in the finest dadaist traditions. "Gyrokinetic White on White," a silly fertility-good-looking thing encased in a clear box, just up and spins of its own volition. Then unexpectedly, amidst a clanking and whirring and changing of colors, it slows and stops. And there the viewer stands, the inane performance over, feeling just a trifle foolish and yet waiting for more of the ritual dance.

Scala's earlier "Gyrokinetic Eye" is a bit too easy to figure; one soon deduces where the electric eye is and what it does and how to make the figure dance. Predictability and order have never been the hallmark of the best dadaism.

"Portrait of the Artist" involves an 8mm projector and screen showing a movie of the artist building the very object upon which the screen and projector are set. The movie is not likely to carry away honors from Cannes but the basic idea of the thing, its unabashed egocentricity as well as the fine design of the object are delightful and intriguing.

Combining Marcel Duchamp's "found object" aspect of dada with its intrinsic humor of the irrational, Norman Daly gives us "Votive Figure," a smug Afro-American Gothic god. Made apparently from old barn scavengings, the figure is resplendent in beads and capped with a ludicrous icing of fur; equally ludicrous in a D.H. Lawrence sense is the remarkable potency the figure



JEFFREY POKLEN,
Untitled, 1968-69

hand, Mangold's four or six triangles per work are nicely put together...

Of the works remaining only those of Jeffrey Poklen contain any element of the ridiculous and this is solely because the suggestion was made to this writer that the paintings greatly resemble germs-through-a-microscope-before-Listerine.

And this writer cannot eradicate that suggestion. And apologizes for passing it on.

Nevertheless, the highly evocative organic quality of the works as well as their unusual technical achievements make them visually exciting pieces (of interest to even the most foul-breathed of us).

Friedel Dzubas' enormous, really enormous, untitled canvas overwhelms the viewer and surrounds him in itself. All is haze and fuzz and almostness but for one corner of brightly colored rectangles and stripes and it is to this we are drawn. No story, no moral, no message, but a highly involving canvas. Much of what Arnold Singer and Steve Poleskie have in the show has been shown elsewhere. Singer has been discussed and applauded in this column earlier. Suffice it to say that some of his

exhibits.

Daly's two other contributions to the show, especially "Temple Door," are also excellent.

Some of the other jokes and absurdities of the show were not premeditated. Jack Bosson's contributions, three huge untitled acrylics which resemble nothing so much as the gentle flowing and interplay of delightfully colored ... um, er... vomit, are vastly amusing to me. This sort of thing is, I am assured, very big in New York.

Robert Mangold's work, a series of solid color triangular masonite boards fitting together are ridiculously simple and, for one viewer at any rate, singularly uninvolved. The theories of Manimalism center on confrontation of the void and contemplation of the ultimate but such an approach necessitates, in a Minimalist aesthetic, the elimination of most of the subtleties and

better works are to be seen in this exhibit.

Four of Poleskie's five contributions are two-dimensional abstracted landscapes whose solid colors foreground goes three quarters or more up the face of the work. The summary hills, clouds and sky of the compacted middle and background are treated almost exclusively as design elements. The harmonies of fulfilled design and of a benign and well-ordered nature come across. His "Big Patchogue Bent," a surrealist exercise in folded fences and landscapes, also works exceedingly well.

Thomas Burton is represented by seven untitled photographs and one photo-silkscreen of moody, desolate things. He chooses to portray an out-of-kilter doorlatch, an old, old window, a grainy room and radiator, a car and a train; all are highly composed, highly evocative and uniformly excellent.

An unheralded contributor to the show is Lynda Thompson, a graphic artist in Cornell publications, who designed the show's invitation-catagoeue, an ingeniously-conceived, often-folded rectangle. One doesn't commonly go overboard about this sort of thing but this is an uncommonly good piece of work that deserves credit and recognition.

— JACK SHERMAN



NORMAN DALY,
Votive Figure, 1968

niceties of 5,000 years of art and history and leave the viewer open to huge bouts of boredom.

Further, any extended study of a minimal work leaves me fidgety and uncomfortable and with the feeling that I've wasted a good deal of time. What there is to be gotten has been gotten at first or second glance and any time spent beyond that is spent merely because that is what one does in museums or galleries.

But to get back to the case at