

Three ways of seeing at Ariel Gallery

Claude LeSuer

Every artist works with visual metaphors to some extent, by the simple virtue of employing material means to express immaterial visions. In some cases, the artist uses direct observation to make a personal statement, while in others nonobjective forms emerge from the subconscious to create an object with its own autonomous material reality. All of these approaches combine, in varying degrees, to make a unified statement in three concurrent group shows at Ariel Gallery, 470 Broome Street, through September 23.

"Visual Metaphors"

The visual metaphors of **Maria E. Scheller** are lyrical, personal, and classically composed. Her serene figures inhabit idyllic landscapes or cosmic planes where they exist in perfect harmony with nature. In one large oil, a wistful woman and a large bird are seen under the spreading branches of a pink-blossomed tree. Here, the mood of thoughtful repose is enhanced by Scheller's strong, simplified forms and muted coloristic harmonies. In Scheller's equally remarkable large ink drawings, such as "Moments of Consciousness," visionary figures, gracefully Blakean, soar among stars, raindrops, and blazing suns, all combined in bold areas of black and white that create sinuous visual rhythms.

Surreal symbolism describes an evocative, sometimes alarming, inner world in the meticulous, atmospheric figure paintings of **James W. Henry**, an artist preoccupied with the theme of time. In "Harlequin Melting Pot," robotic figures and a huge rabbit in a harlequin's costume interact in strange dreamscape, while another work juxtaposes a rumples violinist, a baby emerging from a cracked egg, and an hourglass supported by a classical column. Like a contemporary Bosch, Henry creates a uniquely insular fantasy world.



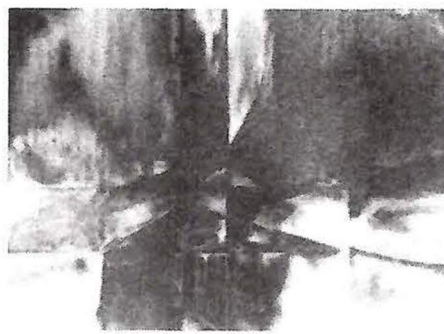
David Jeremias, "Lighthouse," collage, in "Visual Metaphor"

resembles a tomb.

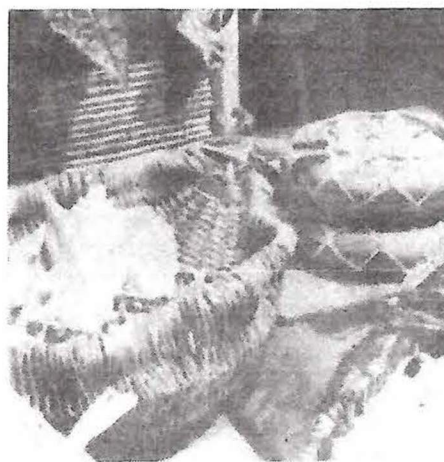
Magic occurs in broad daylight in the brilliantly precise figure paintings of **Diane La Raja**, who is well known as an illustrator, as well as a fine artist. In "Costume Party," a masked Fairy Godmother, a circus clown, a spikey-hair punk, and other fanciful personages are engulfed in bright confetti, while the single female figure in "Birthday" recoils from a green fire-breathing dragon that looms over a pink cake.

"Direct Observation"

Iwona Lassota focuses in microscopic detail on plant and floral forms in her large photorealist oils, which derive their power from dynamic compositional cropping and subtly modulated areas of color. This Pol-



Michael Yost, "A Mountain of Dreams," in "Emerging Forms"



Iwona Lassota, untitled, in "Direct Observation"

painter **Marcel Neveu D'Estois**, whose background in science and architecture shows in the geometric clarity of his compositions. In "Gambling," a single monumental dice emerges like a cubical skull from brilliant spirals, while a larger untitled canvas makes a strong metaphysical statement from such objects as a pink seashell and a gold picture frame, arranged within a complex structure of grid-like rectangles.

Harry W. Boone is a master of spatial

shadowplay and chiaroscuro in the powerful monochromatic paintings of **Leonard Ragouzeos**, who achieves a remarkable tonal density within a severely limited range of greys. In some of Ragouzeos's works, figures sit in chairs on dappled lawns; in others the chairs are empty, but the human presence is strongly felt. In "Adirondack Chair," a magnificent multi-panel work, a massive lawn chair has a stunning psychological power, as well as strong abstract impact.

"Emerging Forms"

A quiet and orderly spirituality comes across in the intimate watercolors of **Michael Yost**, with flowing washes of luminous color contained in roughly rectangular divisions. Although Yost's gem-like paintings allude to landscape space, they interiorize it in a manner that suggests the terrains glimpsed in dreams. Conversely, the frank materiality of exterior surfaces provides a strong counter-argument in the collage paintings of **Ned McBee**, which explore the metaphysics of the literal. Arranging bold forms fashioned from wood, tin, and other materials in tactile fields of pigment, McBee creates monumental spatial tensions on a modest scale. An uncompromising physicality accounts for the impressive integrity and formal sophistication that is immediately apparent in McBee's work. Also strongly physical, albeit in a more gestural manner, the sumptuously textured oils of **Len V. Mykiety** jump with jazzy organic rhythms, joyously brilliant colors, and an entire cosmos of enticing forms and symbols, figurative and abstract. Mykiety piles on thick impastos, building up his surfaces to create an explosive sense of energy whose cumulative energy suggests nothing less than the life force.

Neo-expressionism merges dynamically with surreal subject matter in the symbolic