

ART20 Explores Cross-Currents In Art

By Regina Kolbe, Photos By David S. Smith Nov 25th, 2008

NEW YORK CITY: The high season for Manhattan's fall antiques and art shows hit its stride on November 6 with the gala opening of Sanford Smith's ART20 at the Seventh Regiment Armory. This



Pablo Picasso's oil on canvas "Tete de Femme," 1944, was offered at Simon Capstick-Dale, New York City.

four-day-long event showcasing the finest art of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries brought out several themes, not the least of which was a strong focus on the multicultural voices of contemporary and Modern artists.

Sundaram Tagore Gallery, making its first appearance at ART20, placed the emphasis on the exchange of ideas between Western and non-Western cultures. Its large booth included works by two artists about to embark on huge years. Natvar Bhavsar, a native of India now living in the United States, will be featured in "The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia 1860-1989" opening at the Guggenheim in January. Bhavsar is known for his precise process of applying dry granules of pigment to canvas in a controlled rhythm that produces color migrations pictorial in nature. Hiroshi Senju of Kyoto is being featured in a forthcoming book by Rizzoli. Senju's large "Day Falls/Night Falls VI," 2007, is typical of the monochromatic waterfalls he creates with heated azurite powder on rice paper.

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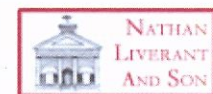
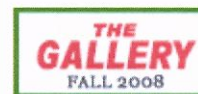
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Babcock Galleries showed work by Israeli ceramicist Varda Yatom. A group of sculptures titled "The Wedding Figures," were actually a series of terracotta men dressed in suits, with each of the figures measuring 20 inches tall. Providing an interesting backdrop was Alexander Calder's "Symbolic Landscape," a colorful gouache on paper from 1953

A lighter tone was ushered in by ART20's producer, Sanford Smith, who delighted the audience at the opening night gala, a benefit for Planned Parenthood of New York City, with a life-size figure of President-elect Barack Obama wearing an ART20 exhibitor badge.

Artistic reflections on the campaign appeared at Mark Borghi Fine Art, which displayed two new pieces by Robert Indiana titled "Hope." Similar in form to the stacked "Love" icons of the 1960s, they were from the series that culminated in the stainless steel sculpture that was displayed outside of the Pepsi Center in Denver during the Democratic National Convention.



Oils by Robert Indiana and sculpture by John Chamberlain were at Mark Borghi Fine Art, New York City.

For collectors who still felt the need for a superhero, Warhol's "Superman" was featured on the catalog cover, courtesy of Gary Bruder Fine Art. Bruder also saw fit to feature Lichtenstein's "Reflections on Minerva," a screen print image of Wonder Woman.

"The Green Table" by Jacob Lawrence, on view at Meredith Ward Fine Art, uncovered yet another aspect of American history. Ostensibly the portrayal of a card game, it also references aspects of the African American struggle.

North Carolina-based Jerald Melberg Gallery also held trumps with collages by Romare Bearden.

Artists whose feet are planted firmly in the morés of this century delivered the new realism. Arcadia Gallery of New York City showed several. Steven

J. Levin (b 1968), known for nocturnal scenes of intimate encounters, such as "Pool Players," also crafts stories through still lifes. "29 Hats," for instance, hints at script, but leaves the viewer to enhance the dialog. Jefferson Hayman, whose photographs play on universal themes, makes effective use of negative space, filtered light and grainy tones. Zhao Kailin, on the other hand, offered a complex portrait of a Chinese ingénue shadowed by details of remembered or imagined palace scenes.

Gallery Henoach, which also represents artists with distinctive voices, beckoned viewers with Daniel Greene's large "Green Light-Wall Street," 2008, a descriptive allusion from the artist's "Subway" series. Max Ferguson's "Tuxedo," 2007, proved the vivid portrayal of a fitting. Stephen Wright's "Trailer Girl," the unidealized portrait of a young woman curled up in a cane backed chair set against a sand ground, seemed fraught with psychological undertones, while Olga Antonova's still lifes of utilitarian objects, such as "Two Ladles On A Japanese Tablecloth," resonated with a sense of majesty not usually accorded such humble items.



"Spring Landscape," \$110,000, and "Tommy," \$60,000, were by Gershon Benjamin, the featured artist at Spanierman Gallery, New York City.

DFN Gallery pursued the universality of common sights with Tom Birkner's "Andrea at Blue Star," from his "Jersey Girls" series. "Cars at Dusk" by David Shevino used the geometrics of light to heighten images of an impatient city. David Mahler's 2007 landscape "Saranac," on the other hand, provided the relief of a day in the country.

Alpha Gallery, Boston, and Tasende Gallery, Los Angeles, featured the works of Armando Romero, a Mexican artist who can as easily infuse a group portrait with a figure of a robot as he can evoke a reaction to his view of the world.

Nearby, Conner Rosenkranz proved that classical realism is still commanding. Paul Manship's masterpiece "Spring," 1949, a gilt bronze image of a female nude atop a cloud, her wrap borne aloft by the wind, a heraldic putto at her foot, led the offerings.

Though not limited by genre or material, tabletop sculptures were co-mingled with paintings throughout the armory. Lost City Arts presented six atop a credenza. Included were "Horse," a 1960 piece by Stig Lindberg, Paul Evans's circa 1970s bronze-over-foam, George Rickey's "Kinetic Sculpture," 1986, a Harry Bertoia 1950 "Sonambient," as well as Bertoia's "Panels" from the same year. Not to be upstaged by the dynamic sculptures, Frank Flynn's 1990 painting "Tribute to G. David Thompson" grabbed the eye.

Eric Firestone Gallery, of Scottsdale and Tucson, Ariz., jumped into the sculpture arena in a big way, featuring Paul Harris's "Kneeling Man, a bronze from 1998. The gallery also showcased the paintings of Jorge Fick, a one-time student of Franz Kline who attended Black Mountain College. The well-traveled artist was a product of his time, as comfortable in the company of San Francisco's beat poets as he was with Max Finstein, owner of Max's Kansas City. Among Fick's paintings, "Zoraster," 1969, stood out, as did selections from the "Pod" series, also 1969, that included "The Hitch-Hiker," "The Good Tree" and "What Time Does the Train Roll?"



Caroline Gillespie modeled an Andy Warhol dress at Gary Bruder, New York City.

Bernard Goldberg treated art in an innovative way, hanging a suite of early Twentieth Century masters in an architecturally designed booth that tricked the eye into believing the works had been suspended in midair. Both the effect and the art were showstoppers. At the very center of the white on white booth was Henry Glittenkamp's 1920 oil on canvas, "The Unimproved Street."

Nearby in Goldberg's stand was Marsden Hartley's 1935 "Roses for Seagulls that Lost Their Way." Having no visual reference to seagulls, the floral still life was homage to one

of Hartley's friends who always wore a flower in his ear as he worked, said Goldberg. The work was comfortably aligned with Stuart Davis's "A Sentimental Journey," 1929.

Spanierman Gallery focused on the works of Gershon Benjamin, whose output of seven decades made for a powerful exhibit. Drawing on his European background and influenced by the Modernists, Benjamin created reductive, nuanced images. Ironically, it was not until the 1980s that this prolific painter's works began to be noticed.

Tom Vielleux's offerings included Max Weber's "Woman with Flower Pot," 1921, and William Glackens's "Tulips and Freesia," circa 1930s, which commanded the center wall. Also on view were William Zorbach's bronze "Diva" and "Man and a Woman," in bronze relief.

Gerald Peters Gallery spanned the Twentieth Century's major movements. On center stage was John Gibson's "Washington," a contemporary work depicting balls covered in patterns — the scheme for which the artist worked out on real balls before committing the concept to canvas. Georgia O'Keeffe, however, provided deeper interest. Two works, one from 1917,

the other from 1977, showed how a creative mind can work the same theme decades apart. Another profound statement was to be found in Thomas Hart Benton's "Seascape Martha's Vineyard" and "Abstract Landscape," a double-sided work.

A second recto/verso work surfaced at Sanford Smith Fine Art of Great Barrington, Mass. In this case it was Reginald Marsh's "Carousel Girls," ink and gouache images of long haired, skirted beauties, carefree atop painted ponies. According to Stephanie De Angelo, the work tells a secondary story. It is that of the young artist, strapped for supplies, practicing his craft on every available surface. Meanwhile, the master of theatrical 3-D print constructions, Red Grooms, was shown on the outside wall. "Deli," 2004, and "Hot Vendors," 1993, put frenetic urban experiences within acrylic boxes.

Hollis Taggart Gallery provided a historic perspective on the artfully filled box. Three Joseph Cornell works from a forthcoming exhibition, "The Image in the Box: From Cornell to Contemporary," served to show the artist's influence on several decades of artists.

Birnam Wood Gallery's offerings gave viewers a taste of the old with Edward Willis Redfield's turn-of-the-century landscape "The Bridge of Charenton" as well as the new, with Wolf Kahn's "Before Pale Gray," 2002. Paintings by Chloe Lamb combined the best elements of traditional painting with a modern sensibility, bringing the display full circle.

Expressionism in all its forms was visible. David Findlay Jr featured Herman Cherry's "Pink thrust," 1960, an oil on canvas that achieves both harmonious balance and dynamic tension. John Opper's "#3 Jazz," 1969, was comprised vertical color fields that played against one another with startling richness.

Michael Borghi Fine Art led with Michael West's dark abstract "Atonement," 1953, and Tom Wesselmann's 1989 abstract, "Big Blonde," a screen print executed in 19 colors. Quietly dominating one side of the booth was Miro's bronze sculpture "Personnage," referenced in the book *In the Orbit of the Imaginary*.



The Hunt Diederich bronze "The Jockey" was \$95,000 at Gerald Peters Gallery, New York City. The John Marin watercolor, rear left, was \$130,000, while the Thomas Hart Benton oil on canvas double-sided painting, "Seascape, Martha's Vineyard" and "Abstract Landscape," both circa 1920, was \$475,000.

Vincent Vallarino showed William de Kooning's "Two Birds," 1977, an oil on newspaper, Mary Abbott's "Red Papers," 1950, and a large pair of Norman Bluhm's works, "Yangtze," 1960, and "Regal Music," 1962.



Deedee Wigmore of D. Wigmore Fine Art, New York City, showcased optic visionaries, as exemplified by Tadasky's circular piece "C-145," 1965, which, when originally shown at the Museum of Modern Art, was accompanied by a jigsaw puzzle.

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Louis Stern Fine Arts of West Hollywood thoroughly covered the midcentury West Coast hard-edged abstractionists. Filling its double booth were the cool, colorful works of Lorser Feitelson, Helen Lundeberg and Karl Stanley Benjamin, all of whom are featured in the traveling exhibition "Birth of The Cool."

In contrast, the "palimpsests" of Georges Noel, ten of which were on view at Abby M. Taylor Fine Art, were complexities to be pondered. (Palimpsest is defined as a manuscript that has been written on more than once, with the earlier writing incompletely erased.) Influenced by the work of DuBuffet, and often mentioned as having parallels to Cy Twombly, Noel's surfaces are fragmented by a multitude of broken lines and contrasted units that evoke a nearly visceral response.

The Outsider Art Fair will be the next show produced by Sanford Smith. New dates for the show are January 9–11 and the new location is at 7W New York, located at 7 West 34th Street, New York City. For further information, Sanford Smith and Associates, www.sanfordsmith.com or 212-777-5218.

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