

ART REVIEWS; A Three-Way View: Old, New, and Arresting

By. D. Dominick Lombardi

Eye on Art

Weber Fine Art, 17 Boniface Circle, Scarsdale, (914)472-4800. Through March 23.

"Eye on Art," the current show at Weber Fine Art, consists of a selection of works that form stellar secondary market names like Pablo Picasso, Sonia Delaunay and Milton Avery with lesser known contemporary artists. I found the selection of Hank Virgona's small still life paintings to be of particular import. Their Giorgio Morandi-like palette and subject matter is the initial draw. Then quickly, one may notice how the bottles begin to suggest movement, becoming somewhat suggestive of the human forms in motion.

Paul Manes's mixed media work on burlap, "Divine Folly No. 12" (2003), is also quite arresting. Crescent-shaped cuts of burlap, pigment, masking tape, rope and whatever seemed to work at the time is mixed and matched in a highly tactile procession of earthy tones.

Lee Weber, the gallery's director, introduces a new artist, Roger Phillips, in this show. His three pedestal-sized works: "90 Red Squares" (1990), "15 White Squares" (1996) and "Red Triangle" (2003) are elegant, and very Modernist in style.

But they are a little too corporate park, looking more like maquettes for larger public installations than actual, stand-alone works of art.

Daisy de Puthod and Vincent Baldassano

Garrison Art Center, 23 Garrison's Landing, Garrison, (845)424-3960. Through March 21.

Vincent Baldassano can be seen as an Abstract Expressionist, for lack of a better term. In his mixed-media works on paper, he builds his narratives through shallow vistas. He breaks up the picture plane in jagged ways that can, at times, be disturbing, even confusing. His best works are his small

mixed-media encaustic pieces. Here, he recycles bits and pieces of older works with iris prints, then covers them in layers of beeswax mixed with damar resin and oil paint.

This reduction, or distillation of visual information, is an important and welcome change in Mr. Baldassano's general approach. I found his more ethereal works like "Oxford Blues" (2004), and the other very small vertical works near the entrance to the gallery space, and "Pete's Tribute" (2002) to be of superior quality.

Daisy de Puthod's paintings lean a bit toward Fauvism. Unfortunately, her works are too observation based, too real in color to be truly Fauve. She works from live models, yet rarely captures their essence.

In most of the works here, however, one is reminded of student work where the ordinary abounds. There is just too much gravity in her work. I suspect that, if she pulled more from her model's personality, if she went a little further with her visceral impressions, she could greatly improve her work.

Mentor and Friend: The Late Bernard Corey and Michael Graves

Objects & Images Fine Art Inc., 99 Pondfield Road, Bronxville, (914)779-7979.
Through April 6.

Plein-air painters characterize much of the Impressionist genre. Working outdoors, they capture in paint some of nature's most poetic moments. The Rockport Art Association in Rockport, Mass., which was founded in 1921, and currently boasts around 250 members, has long been the proving ground for aspiring landscape painters from far and wide.

Two such painters, Bernard Corey and Michael Graves, currently have their work on display at Objects & Images Fine Art. Mr. Corey and Mr. Graves were great friends. Mr. Corey, the elder of the two, who died in early 2000, was seen as a wise, mature talent by many who knew him. It was said that you never asked Mr. Corey a direct question, or sought his advice because he would not respond. But if you worked side by side, in time he would tell you what was on his mind, giving advice in an endless stream of techniques and

perceptions.

Mr. Corey's paintings revealed bucolic vistas, like most American Impressionists. He often keyed on filtered sunlight as it scattered and skipped through leaves and bushes. I found "Fall Clouds" (1983) to be his most attractive work here. Muddy alizarin crimson; a Wedgewood sky; smooth, cool rocks punctuated with dashes of hot reds, and surrounded by coarse meadow grass -- a moody work that shows all the frustrations and the magic of painting in the outdoors.

Contrasting Mr. Corey's deliberate, viscous brush strokes are the more expressionistic paint applications of Mr. Graves. His brush strokes are longer, and more jagged. You picture his brushes loaded with color -- heavy-ended tools that push, as much as apply paint. "Beginning of Spring" (1999) has much of this technique.

Everything looks flustered, clustered, especially in the stream and tall grasses. But is this not what early spring tends to look like: dead grasses bent back from snow; ice-scarred stream banks; and everything with those dead to reborn colors?