

Good morning. 🌞 The curators of the Armory Show next year are all experts in Latin American and Latinx art, which will be the focus of the fair. It's a historic first. Biennials also need to do better. In Ela Bittencourt's moving remembrance of the Macuxi artist, curator, and activist Jaider Esbell, who recently took his life, she emphasizes his criticisms of the São Paulo biennial and institutions' failures to integrate Indigenous art. "There is no dialogue," he said. "The biennial takes your work and forgets you."

And don't miss John Yau's latest review, which follows John Willenbecher's work since Yau's first encounter in 1975.

— *Elisa Wouk Almino, Senior Editor*

TRANSITIONS

Tony Matelli is now represented by Nino Mier Gallery.

The estate of **Bob Smith** is now represented by Martos Gallery.

Crystal Williams was appointed president of the Rhode Island School of Design.

C SECTION

Landers C2
 Movie Clock C7
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Living

Friday, October 4, 1991

Rockland Journal-News, Rockland County, N.Y.

ROCKLAND'S ARTS

From waste to art

Artists find the beauty in refuse at Center for the Arts exhibit

By Nancy Cacloppo
 Staff Writer

In an age of recycling and ecological awareness, literally anything — including abandoned materials, remnants, fragments, and leftovers — can become a work of art.

Discarded material and the refuse of an urban environment add new meaning and richness of detail to the sculpture assemblages and installations in the exhibit, "Discarded," opening Sunday at the Rockland Center for the Arts in West Nyack.

"I've always been interested in artists who use non-precious materials," said curator Joyce Abrams, herself an artist who uses discarded materials. "We're living in a time when so much gets thrown out. And it's amazing what these artists choose to keep. It's not junk art. It's the purity of idea and someone's thoughts that emerge."

In the recycling of humble materials, the participating artists, all of them New Yorkers, have reassessed and redefined the flotsam and jetsam of their environment.

And their approaches and motivations vary as much as the discarded materials they come across.

"I like the kinds of things people will say to me when I'm nailing my bottle caps. . . Sometimes one of them says, 'You should make art.' And I say, 'Oh, I never thought of that,'" says David Hammons, who recently received a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" award.

Some of the other artists, such as, Richard Tuttle, Donald Lipski and Mel Edwards have received the recognition of major museum shows.

Tuttle was once described by a reviewer as the most human of the minimalists. "His work was always the slightest, the most quirky stuff, like art made by a small boy from odds and ends found in his pockets."

For Lipski, the small boy instinct is just one of the many expressions he seeks in the creative process.

"The weight of art history can be ballast or burden. What is learned from art schools, museums, critics, magazines and such is, however, secondary in the process of art making. What is primary is more obscure. It is concealed in the mid-brain, locked in the genetic code, grounded in childhood, and woven throughout the cloth of culture," says Lipski.

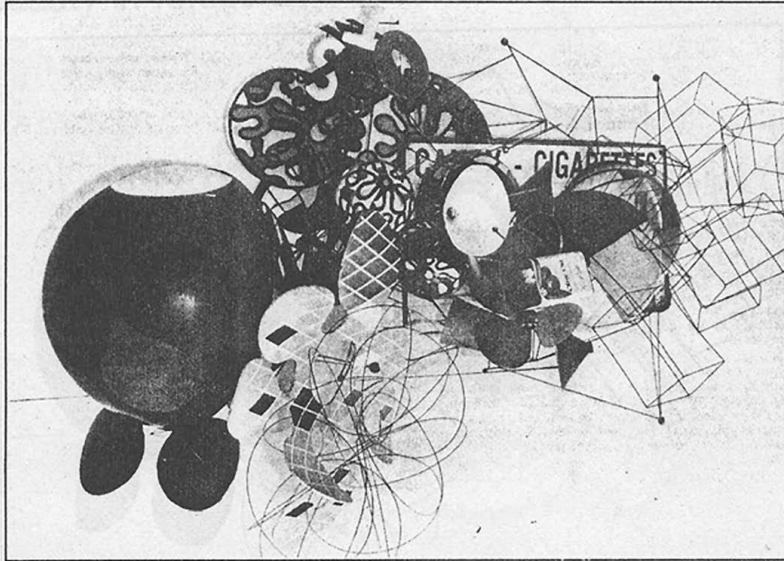
In a similar exploration, one reviewer writes that Edwards' steel reliefs "express powerful feelings of fear, violence, vigilance, sexuality and play. All these fragments seem to be faces, looking, pointing, warning, no matter how much they seem to be impaled, wedged in, enslaved."

Other featured artists, such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Alan Wexler and Judy Pfaff, are concentrating on new site-specific installations.

"I propose . . . the design of garbage . . . recycling facilities, transfer stations, trucks, landfills, receptacles, water treatment plants, rivers . . . be the giant clocks and thermometers of our age . . . the symbols of our survival," says Ukeles, the unsalaried artist-in-residence for the New York City Department of Sanitation.

Also featured in the exhibit are new works by Mattie Berhang, Bob Smith, Kalmia, and Ernest Acker-Gberardino.

"I use discarded elements because they are vigorous, because they excite my



Staff Photo/Robert F. Rodriguez

'Calle Vieja' ('Old Street'), discarded art by Judy Pfaff.



Staff Photo/Robert F. Rodriguez

Artist Kalmia of New York City uses discarded rags in her piece, 'Cleo.'

imagination, because they are types for resurrection and continued life, and because they are cheap," says Berhang.

Smith invited friends to be a part of

the "Barris Los Artistas" he created.

"A photo donated by yourself will be in a window. The homes are made of cork from wine bottles and have slate

To see the exhibit

- What:** "Discarded"
- When:** Opening reception, 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Exhibit hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, and 1 to 4 p.m. weekends, through Nov. 15. Guided tours available to school and social groups by appointment.
- Where:** Rockland Center for the Arts, 27 Greenbush Road, West Nyack
- Admission:** Free
- For information:** Call 358-0877

roofs. . . It could end up being a city before I'm through."

Kalmia's purpose is simple. "I love people and nature and celebrate both in my work."

Acker-Gberardino also sees a dual role — one that raises awareness in a wasteful society and pleases the eye at the same time.

"Today we are faced, in all we choose, with junk, dressed up as shiny new products: banking services, nothing but rackets; electronic gadgetry, busted in a few months; new automobiles, ready for the mechanic two days after we buy them; shiny downtowns, overlooking destroyed ghettos. . . I give you dump works: the things themselves, true, beautiful, genuine," says Acker-Gberardino.

And to further the exhibit's educational role, the center's Arts in Education project, now in its second year, will take Nyack High School ninth grade Global Studies students on a gallery tour, accompanied by a museum educator who will take them in a series of hands-on workshops.

ART; ***Big Names in the Recycling Game Coax Poetry From Debris***

By William Zimmer

OBSESSIVE is the word that comes most often to mind while viewing "Discarded" at the Rockland Center for the Arts here. This is a varied exhibition featuring many big names in the recycling game as well as several not so well known. What stands out among all of them is how driven they are to coax poetry out of the unlovable.

On the lawn outside the center are two works by an artist who goes by the single name Kalmia. The sculptures have a ragtag look, being principally made of braided fabric. But they also have a seemingly ritualistic aspect.

Apples, which look as if they belong in this setting but appear nowhere else on the lawn, are heaped in the immediate vicinity of these pieces, and the enlisting of discarded organic nature is bracing.

Inside, Kalmia has two flat mosaic-like pieces called "Coney Island" and "Far Rockaway," which are surely made of embedded detritus from each of the named places.

Some of Ernest Acker-Gherardino's crumpled metal pieces hang outside the center, but the most terse is "Cape," hanging inside. This is a section of rusted corrugated sheet metal that resembles a cloak. In another material, "Tile" is also laconic. It seems to be simply a salvaged section of tiles in the shape of sections of chicken wire.

MARTOS GALLERY

Wire supports are important to two other artists. Mattie Berhang furthers the idea of "Drawing in Space" advanced by David Smith, and in a written statement she acknowledges his influence as well as that of Giacometti, Julio Gonzalez and Lucio Fontana. The simple wire grid -- it looks like fencing wire -- acts as a support for a diverse array of incongruous linear objects, all of which further a sense of likeness and suspension.

The other artist exploiting wire is Richard Tuttle, and the publicity advances him as "the most human of the minimalists." Mr. Tuttle has always walked a fine wire, so to speak; sometimes his pieces consist of so little that they seem either to be throwaway items or else they are painted in pastels that give them an aura of preciousness.

In the two pieces on exhibit, both titled "She Re-creates Herself as Spacious" (one is No. 3, the other No. 4), the subtle shift in materials gives the pair a tantalizing presence. One is acrylic on homosote and plywood, the other enamel on wood. Chicken wire is used in both. Whatever the metaphysical implications of Mr. Tuttle's titles, the notion of re-creation is brought strongly home.

The artists so far discussed are characterized by discreetness; other works are thunderous by comparison. My initial reaction was that Judy Pfaff might not belong in this crowd because the mixed media that she uses is too slick, possesses a kind of squeaky newness, which is the opposite of discarded material.

For example, she slices large plastic balls in half and paints them garishly to compose bumptious relief sculpture. Her materials are hung on a support of metal tubing, which is twisted like an amusement park ride. Ms. Pfaff is an expert choreographer; we focus less on the materials than on the sense of movement they create.

MARTOS GALLERY

The work of Donald Lipski emphasizes the fact that discarded materials do not have to be down at the heel. One of his pieces is a new version of one of the ideas that brought him renown in the late 1970's: "Gathering Dust." The most ephemeral objects, like rubber bands and broken matches, are hung individually on pins like trophies in a prized butterfly collection. In fact, they are the remnants of our age, which when added up will make a portrait of ourselves.

"Diced Rice" is a piece in Mr. Lipski's newer mode. He now makes solid objects out of the most incongruous materials: here is what looks like an overturned birdbath along with a generous heaping of rice and brightly colored game pieces that are preserved in something like a crystal ball. The components retain their individuality and plausibility but the aggregate is mysterious.

A very intelligent impudence informs the sculptures of David Hammons. "Rubber Dreadlocks" is just that, a braiding of slender black inner tubes. Taken along with another of his pieces, one which uses bottle caps bent so that they resemble cowrie shells, we have both a sincere homage to African culture and an acknowledgment that old values rub against technological or consumer culture.

The steel aggregates, somewhat larger than a fist, which make up Mel Edwards's "Lynch Fragment" series are examples of discarded elements that come together to state a political point. Each piece is like a Station of the Cross in that each reads like an emblem of the precariousness of life in America for blacks.

The political points scored by Mierle Laderman Ukeles are more wide ranging. This artist has been allied with the New York City Sanitation Department in conceptual works that explored the body politic through their attitude toward sanitation. In recent years,

MARTOS GALLERY

tangible works have come out of this alliance, including four "Briquettes" made of compressed aluminum cans that would make lustrous-looking ottomans.

The show-stopper is a bed of muck gleaned from subway train wheels. One feels that this ooze might be as primal as anything gets but also that it could sprout new life.

Allan Wexler has attempted to "repair an office so that it looks more interesting than the original," and his conference table looks as if it has seen several mergers, buyouts and bankruptcies, but it is always poised for another deal. Mr. Wexler's "Four Shirt Collars Sewn Into a Tablecloth" fulfils his wish: it's more interesting than either a mere tablecloth or four dress shirts.

The most poignant piece is the group of small houses, the "Barrio de los Artistas," envisioned by Bob Smith, who died last year. Like gingerbread houses, these dwellings are festive, but the sensation comes not from decorations in icing but from their being studded with wine corks.

There are photographs of artist friends, like the late Keith Haring, on the houses, and the corks are testaments not only to sorrow -- the analogy between wine and blood is an ancient one -- but to headiness. In Mr. Smith's barrio, there were many nights of serious drinking.

The exhibition continues through Nov. 15. For information, call 358-0877.

Choreographing a collaboration

The Berkshire Eagle, Thursday, January 9, 1986—25

Dancers, other artists to join in creating work at Williams

WILLIAMSTOWN — A group of artists, including choreographer Blondell Cummings and writer Jamaica Kincaid, will work together at Williams College this month on a dance production to premiere at the Adams Memorial Theatre on Jan. 24.

The project is the result of a \$30,000 grant to the college, one of 645 such awards for fiscal year 1986, from the Massachusetts Council on Arts and Humanities. According to state Sen. Peter C. Webber, the grant is part of an effort by the Commonwealth to "enrich cultural life" in the state.

Working with Williams coordinator of dance Sandra Burton are Cummings, Kincaid, artist Bob Smith, who will design the set, and composer Michael Riesman. The collaborative effort, "Basic Strategies No. V," will be performed by professional dancers and several invited Williams students.

Part of series

"Basic Strategies No. V" is part of a series of dance works choreographed by Cummings, who began when she was a resident artist at Williams in 1983. At that time, "Basic Strategies No. 1" was performed. According to Burton, the works explore "the general themes of basic human needs and the needs of society." "Basic Strategies No. V" will focus on money and how it affects people's lives.

The project includes a number of public workshops and a panel discussion by the guest artists. On Monday, Smith will offer a workshop on the MainStage of the Adams Memorial Theatre from 4:30 to 6. Cummings' workshop will be held on Tuesday from 2:30 to 4 in the Je-

rome Robbins Foundation. Kincaid, who will develop the spoken text for the performance at Williams, was born in St. John's, Antigua. She is the author of two books, "At The Bottom of the River" and "Annie John," and her short stories have appeared in The New Yorker, Rolling Stone magazine and The Paris Review. Kincaid is currently on the faculty of Bennington College.

Collaborative director Cummings is the artistic director of Cycle Art Foundation, a multi-discipline collaborative. She was an original member of Meredith Monk/The House, and was seen in Philip Glass's "The Photographer — Far From the Truth." She is on the faculty of Lincoln Center Institute as an affiliate artist and is a consultant to the Ohio Arts Council.

Cummings has been choreographing since 1978, and her works have been presented in the United States, Austria, Hong Kong and China. She has been awarded choreography fellowships from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Je-

Maker of 'boxes'

Smith's work has been exhibited in one-man shows and group shows in this country and Europe since 1969. Much of his work consists of small "environment boxes" that create scenes out of a variety of materials and found objects, such as wallpaper, tiles and shells.

Smith's contribution to the project at Williams is his first large-scale set design. He studied graphics at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and since then has been awarded two Museum of Fine Arts traveling scholarships.



Mark Mitchell



Art in America

NOVEMBER 1984

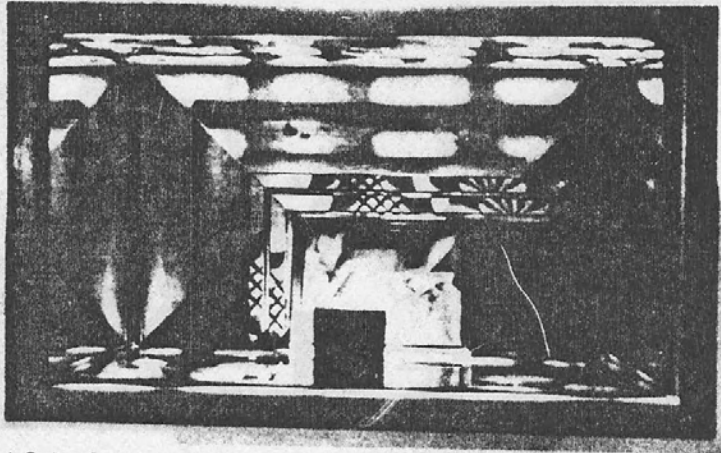
Bob Smith at Yvonne Seguy

It would be impossible to encompass this long-belated, geographically importunate retrospective of Bob Smith's environment-boxes in a single go. There were more than 40 works, of a very mixed character, installed in an eccentric series of gallery spaces, in an eccentric building. At least the show was there, if you knew about it.

Smith's boxes are not really boxes but terrariums. They contain found objects and accumulations, miniature objects, printer's platens, photographs, serial images, wallpaper, glass, wood, mirrors, tiles, columns, metal rods, artificial forests, animals, fur, and

much more. Many have internal lighting from miniature lamps; some can only be viewed through peep-holes; quite a number of them produce spectacular effects with mirrors. Often the basic box has a flamboyant outer shell with objects and images along the sides or on top.

Each of these boxes has its own peculiar atmosphere, its own funky dollhouse effect. Cornell comes less automatically to mind than you might suppose; Smith's boxes usually have a deeper perceptual depth, and his bric-a-brac has a less contrivedly "surreal" appearance. Cornell's imagery is often culturally rarefied in its "natural" state, whereas most of Smith's finds only become mysterious in their new context. Smith occasionally makes a corny gaffe, Cornell never. On the other hand, Smith's boxes at their best present us with models of consciousness that are more ambitious, more engaging of the darker edges of our actual fantasy life, than Cornell's sublime but deliberately circumscribed miniuniverses ever are. To put it plainly, there is a cloying chastity in Cornell's work; in Smith's, an explicitness which is equally dream-transmuted and not as seamlessly agreeable, but perhaps a truer index of the modern imagination.



Bob Smith: *Front Page*, 1983, mixed mediums, 14 by 24 by 12 1/2 inches; at Yvonne Seguy.

The Piers (1982), for example, is just what you're thinking it is. And it's done with a beautifully precise abstraction of detail: some architectural chunks, a few rusted metal rods, light pouring from jagged rips in the ceiling, even a vista of the river and the skeletal debris of the building's other end. *Conference Room* (1982) perfectly evokes the gray zone of modern decision-making. *Emotional Situation* (1983) contains a balustrade and outer fringe made of dental samples, a pastiche of luxury wallpaper at the back, four square columns covered with the same material, a round sea-green bath encased in a red plastic square, a smashed crystal bowl, all embedded in a two-pattern vinyl frame studded in a butterfly pattern with upholstery tacks. *Front Page* (1983) pulls us into an Art Deco theater whose center screen features a sepia still of some unimaginable trauma; mirrors expand the mise-en-scène into something truly monstrous, on a scale with Grauman's Egyptian during a screening of *Psycho*. Smith has quieter effects, some of them literally pastoral (*Danish Cows* and *Swedish Cows*); in each of his boxes some fantasy is decked out to completion, including the element of otherworldliness that keeps fantasies mysterious and compulsive.

—Gary Indiana

«El imperio de los sueños»

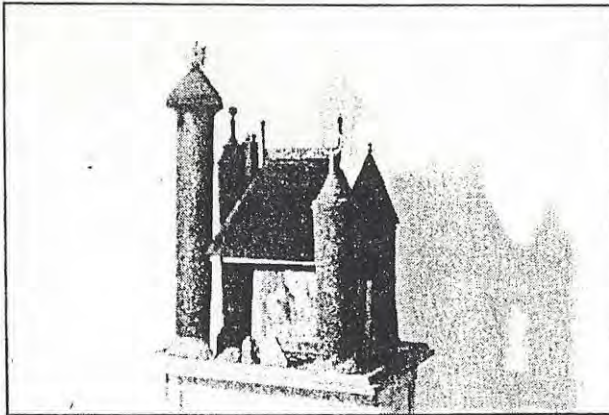
arte

Esculturas de Bob Smith.

Galería Mar Estrada. Orellana, 14, 2.º Hasta mediados de diciembre.

AUNQUE a primera vista la obra de Bob Smith se atiene simplemente al juego visual de unas imágenes intrascendentes, en sus piezas existe una gran carga íntima, casi filosófica, sobre la que conviene reflexionar. Es difícil determinar si estas obras son escultura o invento; si responden a una herencia «pop» o son el resultado de contraponer a la moda una carga tradicional y un gran acerbo sentimental nacido del recuerdo, pero potenciado por la ilusión. De cualquier modo, en Smith hay que reconocer a un artista entrañable cuya capacidad para transmitir estados de ánimo se encuentra más allá de lo superficial, de las imágenes, ya que arranca de unas emociones muy íntimas.

Tal vez la lectura más adecuada esté en la búsqueda del antagonismo entre dos mundos: el interior y el externo, como prueba tanto de su hu-



«Castillo», escultura de Bob Smith.

manidad como del análisis de los sucesos que ocurren en torno suyo y que observa con detenimiento. La visión de Smith está revestida de una gran poesía; con ella baña cada imagen haciendo aflorar lo íntimo para convertirlo en apariencias de un mundo exterior que está plagado de in-

convenientes, y lo hace sin ningún tipo de agresividad, sin lucha, con el convencimiento de una necesaria dramatización, utilizando como recurso apropiado la representación de los sueños, de sus fantasías, como alternativa de las emociones, de la pasión y de la trascendencia.

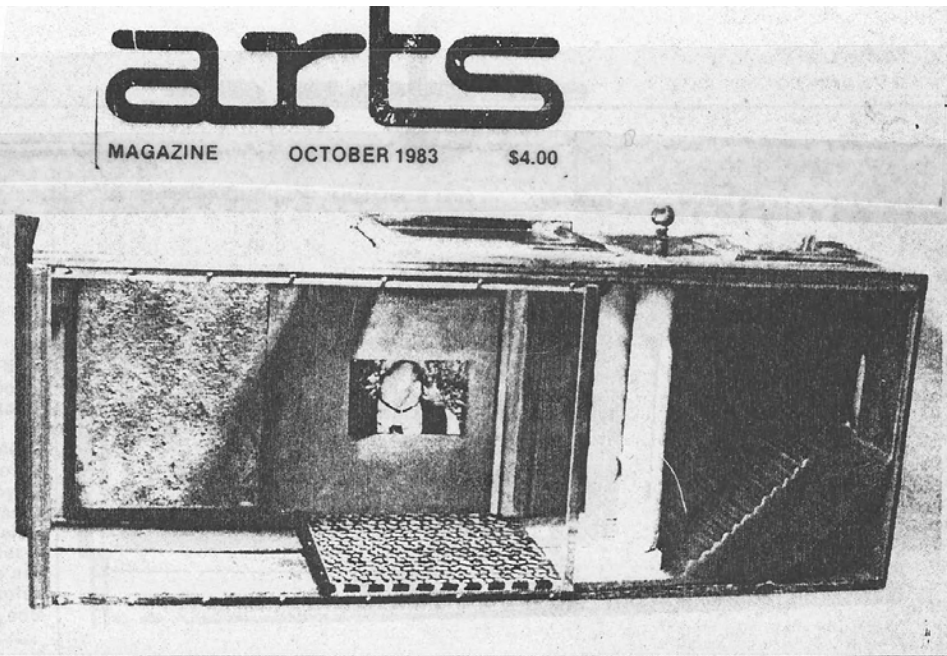
SUMMER GROUP SHOW

The summer show at Esta Robinson Gallery seems appropriate to the season. Three unrelated genres are presented without any ponderous connecting theme, simply to be sampled and enjoyed. The work of Joyce Abrams, Robert Smith, and Lawrence Warshaw has much to offer in the way of visual delights and provocative historical references; it is not fluff but a substantial aesthetic picnic.

Robert Smith's boxes are wall-mounted, with glass fronts through which the viewer peers into dimly lit interiors. They are furnished with figures and objects arranged with a Surrealist's flair for unlikely juxtapositions; a statuette of a couple bowling, for example, is dwarfed by tall spools of thread standing like columns nearby, in one of the little rooms inside a box. His interiors contain more than a disorienting mélange of objects arranged by chance, however, and in this way they defeat a Surrealist reading. In each piece he treats the decor and architecture with which we surround ourselves as a language, and by reducing the interior decoration of our homes and public buildings to a series of signs, he makes explicit some deeply rooted cultural norms.

Bathing Room is divided into two styles of decor. The upper portion makes reference to antiquity; light filters softly from overhead into a luxuriously appointed atrium. Imitation colored marble paneling, a convention of First Style in Roman painting, adorns the windowless walls. An air of richness, luxury, and an emphasis on the ritual aspects of the bath prevail in the upper portion, while the lower half contains the modern equivalent: a white tiled bathroom that bounces cold industrial light off its high-tech surfaces. By comparing the modern bath to its Roman equivalent, Smith exposes the transcultural meaning, as if to say, "This means the same as that."

Reminiscent of some mod-



Robert Smith, *Four Columns*, 1983. Mixed media, 14 x 37 x 9".
Courtesy Esta Robinson Gallery.

ernist art, notably Joseph Cornell's boxes and Giacometti's *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, Smith's pieces undercut modernist sentimentality with irony and a presentation of the structures of myth freed from any cultural particularity. His piece titled *Area Code 212*, for example, is a garish little disco sporting tiger-striped wallpaper, in which Halloween gremlins, dressed like devils and witches, rock in a blue haze. Smith's achievement is to make us see them as dancing at the Mudd Club and in some circle of Dante's *Purgatorio* simultaneously.

Lawrence Warshaw's three large painterly abstractions verge on prettiness, but are more mysterious and profound than they appear at first glance. Their strength lies in their polarity. Each is an atmospheric field of Olitski-like colored mist, changing in hue and intensity across the surface. In *Ninja*, the blue-violet along the left edge grades gently into a bright column of rosy peach light, then continues to change through the center of the canvas to cobalt violet, and finally to deep burgundy near the right edge.

Warshaw applies acrylic paint in vertical strokes that read as lines as well as being vehicles for color. The literalness of the brushwork returns our attention to the surface

and prevents the colors from atomizing into three-dimensional clouds. In this picture, the peach-colored area forms a vertical shaft of brilliant light, while the winey brown assumes the shape of a dark column, a shadowy presence that stands opposed to the bright beam. The fugue-like musical play between literalness and illusion, dark and light, vertical brushwork and horizontal color movement, provides the drama and tension of his paintings. His sensibility is Romantic; it has something of Wordsworth's feeling for the ecstatic qualities of light and that poet's suggestion that dark mysteries lurk horrifically in shadow.

Joyce Abrams' wall constructions function as autobiography on one level. She free-associates in plastic images around memories: of a particular beach house, of her study in architecture, of a brief Bauhaus infatuation, and of painting classes with Philip Guston and Charles Cajori. Yet her work recapitulates episodes in recent art history as well. In their dialogues with space, the pieces include the walls and even the rooms as parts, as do Stella's constructions (but without his bravado). Their geometry recalls Cubism and Mondrian, but it is softened by the relaxed brushwork of color-field painting.

And, like the kimono-inspired works she showed at the Nippon Club last year, these pieces refer to the bold gestures and flat shapes of Japanese art that became part of Western art history through Impressionism. Her pieces consist of basic building elements: white clapboards, tree branches tied together with twine, a few furring strips partially hammered together. She takes as her subject the process of constructing, the act itself.

In *Winter Night* a mannered abstract painting is incorporated as a structural element, its corner lifted to reveal its wooden support. Rather than attempt to mystify the viewer by obscuring the way in which her art was made, she exposes the process with complete candor. Yet the pieces present the tantalizing mystery of the urge to build that results in our grandest edifices. She isolates this impulse by exercising it at its most primitive level. By taking a few tree branches and boards and connecting them together, she comments on the history of architecture by examining its beginnings. Tepees, huts, and grand houses with many art-filled rooms all proceed from the urge embodied in Abrams' simple constructions. Her content is the evolution of that aspect of human intelligence that constructs a dwelling for survival to human imagination which manifests itself in mosques and pyramids and great cathedrals. (Esta Robinson, August 2-31)

Diana Morris

SANTIAGO AMON

JAN 26, 1977 - 18:00 EST

«Divertir a los demás.» La actual exposición de Robert Smith se aviene, en buena medida, al conocido consejo del pintor René Bertholo. Divertir a los demás, interesar, si se quiere, a los demás, atraer la atención de los otros. ¿Cómo? Descubriendo imágenes familiares al ojo del visitante y acertando a combinarlas con otras no codificadas ni codificables, cuya existencia sólo es posible en los límites del cuadro. «Antes del viaje, en el viaje y después del viaje.» Tampoco había de avenirse mal a esta trilogía irinerante la exposición del buen pintor yanqui afincado hace tiempo entre nosotros. El artista nos relata cómo eran sus obras antes del viaje que el pasado año llevó a cabo por Grecia, Egipto, Turquía y Marruecos, da cumplido testimonio de lo que por tales tierras vio e hizo, y deja constancia de lo que pensó y pintó, ya de retorno.

Robert Smith

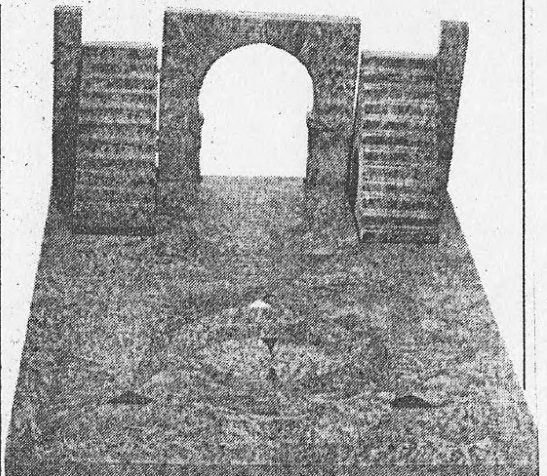
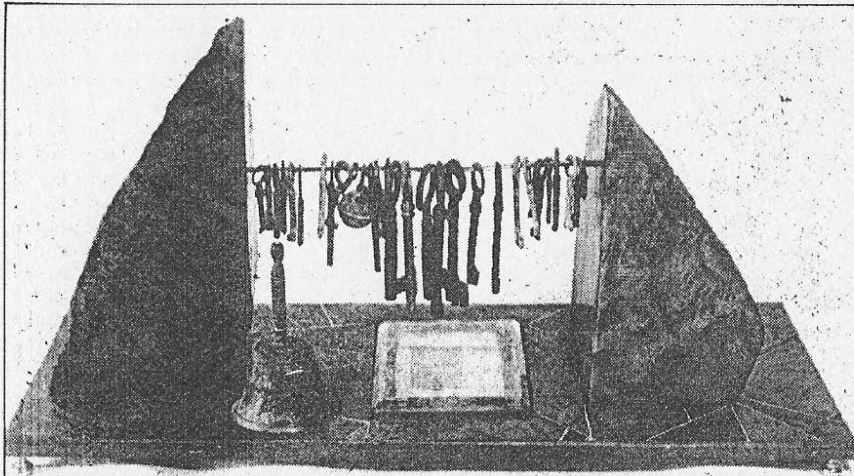
Galería Vandrés. Don Ramón de la Cruz, 26.

El primer apartado constituye, de hecho, una pequeña antología (a contar de 1971), en que la mezcla ponderada, según dije, de imágenes familiares e imágenes no codificadas, cobra condición de ejemplo. Se nos hace ver cómo un arco de medio punto, o de herradura, puede sustentar la densidad de la atmósfera y la fijeza de un sueño, cómo un pétalo se convierte en labio, y éste en filamento y en nave y en nube y en falo o axila..., y en lo que usted dé en imaginar, al margen de toda idea de codificación.

El pintor, en el segundo apartado, empieza por mostrar a usted los utensilios de que se valió en el viaje y los recuerdos que de él se trajo. Pasa luego a narrar, obra por obra, lo que vio (las pirámides, el templo islámico, la remembranza de Patmos, las casas-chimenea de Turquía...) y concluye por barajar estas estampas tan sabidas con otros ignorados argumentos, cuya razón de existir se hace posible únicamente en el cuadro.

MARTOS GALLERY

En la tercera fase se incluyen semblanzas de última hora. Obras de formato medio en que ahora más que nunca, y sobre el esquema de una somera composición, el pintor fía el surgir de la imagen a los propios elementos materiales que la conforman, (la línea, el color, el blanco del papel...). Lo demás corre de cuenta de la sensibilidad y complacencia del hacedor ante el nacimiento de las criaturas, en parte suyas, debidas, en parte, a sí mismas, y en otra buena parte, recreadas, reconformadas y reconstruidas por la atenta mirada del contemplador.



Obras de Bob Smith.

Bob Smith, objetos con alma

Bob Smith

Galería Oliva Mara. Claudio Coello, 19. Madrid, del 10 de septiembre al 3 de octubre de 1987.

F. C. S.

Tras un largo paréntesis de ausencia, vuelve a exponer en Madrid el norteamericano Bob Smith, que anduvo involucrado, desde comienzos de la pasada década, en el interesante grupo de artistas gestionado entonces por la desaparecida galería Vandrés. Artista sensible y culto, con

ese refinamiento de los americanos fascinados por la vieja cultura europea, ha encontrado ahora, en plena madurez, un vehículo adecuado para su evocación poética de mundos y vivencias a través de la construcción de objetos microcósmicos.

Miniaturista

Es la lírica del miniaturista, cuyas raíces sentimentales calan tan hondo y antiguo en la imaginación humana. En esta misma línea se impone el recuerdo sobe-

rano de J. Cornell y sus maravillosas cajas, en las que lo metafísico y lo místico desempeñaban un papel mucho más relevante que la tónica emocional más corriente al respecto, en la que apenas se logra sobrepasar lo meramente encantador.

Bob Smith reconstruye paisajes en miniatura y acumula objetos que superrealísticamente rompen entre sí las escalas, abriendo de esta manera la puerta de lo maravilloso. Conserva, empero, una concentración mágica, ese aire de intemporalidad y

misterio, a veces punzante, en las antípodas de la trivialidad. Hay así nostalgia, pero también dolor. Nunca hace un *bibelo*: el anverso del microcosmos. Son objetos, los suyos, por tanto, con calma.

Por último, llamar la atención, en esta exposición básicamente dedicada a objetos, sobre algún dibujo acuarelado cuyo esquinamiento funcional en el marco de la misma no oscurece su refinada belleza. Es prueba de lo que concentran estos objetos de Bob Smith como lámparas de Aladino.

Castillos en España

BOB SMITH

Galería Mar Estrada.
Orellana, 14. Madrid.
Hasta el 4 de diciembre.

FERNANDO HUICI

Desde los setenta, el artista norteamericano Bob Smith ha tenido, con frecuencia intermitente, una cierta presencia en el panorama expositivo madrileño que ha permitido seguir los sugerentes y entrañables meandros de su particular mundo creativo.

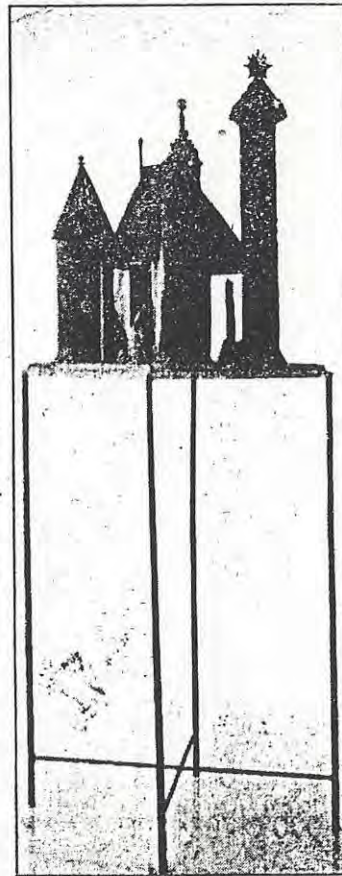
Espíritu de libre y delicada invención, ingenuista e irónico, Bob Smith se inclina hacia aquellos terrenos en los que la exploración plástica se acerca más a la atmósfera del juego, en un tejido de sutiles, casi rituales, hallazgos y guiños.

Dejándose prender por el embrujo de objetos y materiales encontrados de la más diversa índole, Smith nos ofrece en su trabajo reciente construcciones que emanan una callada pero penetrante magia elemental, próxima a un talante corneliano más en su ánimo interior que en las posibles coincidencias formales o lingüísticas.

Cercanas, en algún caso, a la idea de tótem, pero girando en su mayor parte sobre arquetipos constructivos que van de la cabaña al castillo imaginario, los poemas objetuales que Bob Smith nos ofrece en el marco de esta exposición entrelazan acentos que nacen, por igual, de paradigmas mayores o menores de nuestra imaginación archi-

tectónica y de la materia de ensañaciones y afectos más íntimos.

Más bien lugares mentales que situaciones espaciales o formales, sueños contruidos con fascinantes desechos, los castillos y mansiones oníricas de Bob Smith son como relicarios para los afectos, fascinantes en su aparente ingenuidad.



Chateau revelation, de Bob Smith.

The New York Times

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1980

'Art for Public Places' Captured in Photos

By JOHN RUSSELL

IT emerges from "Art for Public Places," an exhibition of photographs that can be seen through Sept. 15 at Lever House, 390 Park Avenue, that a great deal of good has been done to New York City by the Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project. In all, 175 works of public art have been created since January 1978 by artists working for the project. They include murals large and small, sculptures in a wide variety of mediums and large-scale photographs.

All five boroughs have benefited from the council's activity, which has been financed by the Federal jobs program under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Sixty of the works are shown in photographs in the Lever House exhibition, of which Bill Lapham has been curator, and they suggest that the general level of the work is remarkably high: so much so, in fact, that we can only regret that the council's project, which came under the city's Department of Employment, is scheduled to end on Sept. 30.

The chosen sites were of many kinds, but they had it in common that if it were not for the council's project, they would probably not have had any art at all. There are some possible exceptions to this statement — the employees' cafeteria at the World Trade Center, for instance, and the New York Botanical Garden — but in general, the sites in question have connotations of sadness, sickness, old age or unwantedness. It is the role of art in such places to suggest that life may not be so bad after all; and on the whole — again with some possible exceptions — the artists have done very well.

This was not a beginners' project. The average age was the average age of professional artists anywhere, and the senior painter on the list was Herman Cherry, who worked for the Works Progress Administration's art program in the 1930's. (Mr. Cherry turned in a piece called "To Bring Color Into an Institutional Situation," which was the equivalent of a keynote address for the whole project.) There were artists like Ursula von Rydingsvard, who has a considerable avant-garde following, but, fundamentally this was a project in which there were no stars; all worked as equals.



Photograph of a mural by Herman Cherry in "Art for Public Places," at Lever House

There were some strikingly happy solutions to problems that cannot have been easy. For the Dyckman Center of the Human Resources Administration at 4660 Broadway, Robert Smith produced a painting called "Different Walks of Life," in which human diversity is vividly epitomized in terms of legs and feet. Hunt Slonem's menagerie of wild beasts, painted on the outside wall of the Ocean Primary School at 904 East 98th Street, Brooklyn, is an embellishment to the whole neighborhood.

Art Guerra's forest-and-pool mural for the Holy Name Men's Shelter at the

intersection of Bleecker and Elizabeth Streets evokes unspoiled nature in a part of town that can certainly do with it. In his sculpture for the Municipal Building at 1 Centre Street, Steve Linden has rehabilitated some very old linoleum to quite remarkable effect. At the New York Hall of Science in Flushing Meadow, Queens, Richard Nicksic's mural "Seven Disciplines of Science" rejuvenates the ancient tradition of the didactic panorama.

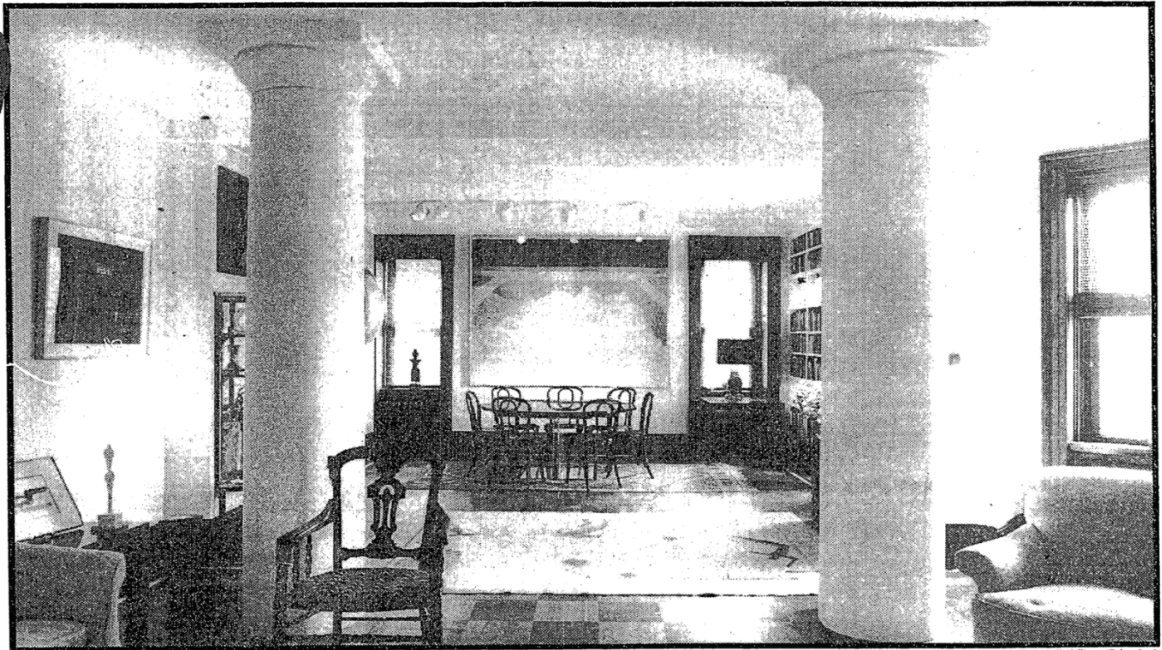
Not all the work is of this quality, but this observer suspects that, piece for

piece, these contributions to the gaiety of our city compare quite favorably with those paid for by the W.P.A. nearly 50 years ago. The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project has demonstrably succeeded in its aim, which was that more people in this city should have art somewhere at hand and not have to cross town to see it. In doing so, it employed a total of 325 artists over the last 18 months. It gave work to those artists, and it will give pleasure in places where pleasure is in short supply. It is difficult to imagine that in this context the money could have been better spent.

The New York Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1982

A Gentleman's Quarters, Made to Order



The New York Times/Robert Lewis

Ashton Hawkins, above, renovated a West Side apartment in a turn-of-the-century building. Two Doric columns, right, one structural, one fake, stand between the dining and living areas.

By SUZANNE SLESIN

WHILE most apartment renovations are made-to-measure projects, some, like good English tailoring, just fit their owners better than others. The Central Park West apartment of Ashton Hawkins, for example, is like a custom-made suit: It becomes the wearer perfectly, and many of its best qualities are, at first glance, undetectable. It is a rather quiet, personal apartment with a sense of the Old World tempered with a lively collection of modern art, precisely what one might expect from its occupant, a worldly, self-assured individual who frequently entertains.

Mr. Hawkins, who is vice president, secretary and counsel of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wanted his home flexible

enough to have parties for two dozen or two hundred people, yet comfortable and private enough for him to enjoy living there alone. He also wanted the place to function as a background for his art collection and his many and varied mementos. Mr. Hawkins said he decided to move from his East Side residence to the West Side apartment because it "had all the things that one didn't find in other New York apartments: high ceilings, good views and a potential for a belle époque ambience."

"A particular style is not what's it's about," said Yana Weymouth, a partner in Redroof Design, the architectural firm that reworked the structure of the apartment and designed its interior framework. "A person's life is in here," Mr. Weymouth said. "This apartment is about Ash's lifelong interest in people and art."

Mr. Hawkins did not have an open loftlike space in mind for

his new residence. Instead, he wanted his space to reflect the feeling of the vintage 1907 West Side apartment building. "In his building, a sleek look would be wasted," he said. Mr. Hawkins set out on a renovation in which his new apartment was to be completely gutted, working independently with Mr. Weymouth, an architect, and Mark Hampton, an interior designer, both friends.

Mr. Weymouth was responsible for the interior architecture and planning of the space; Mr. Hampton advised his client on fabric choices and helped him with the selection and placement of the furnishings. The apartment had originally been the bedroom wing of a larger apartment but was now what Mr. Weymouth called "a dark and claustrophobic rabbit warren."

"Two bedrooms, one living room, two foyers and three hall-

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