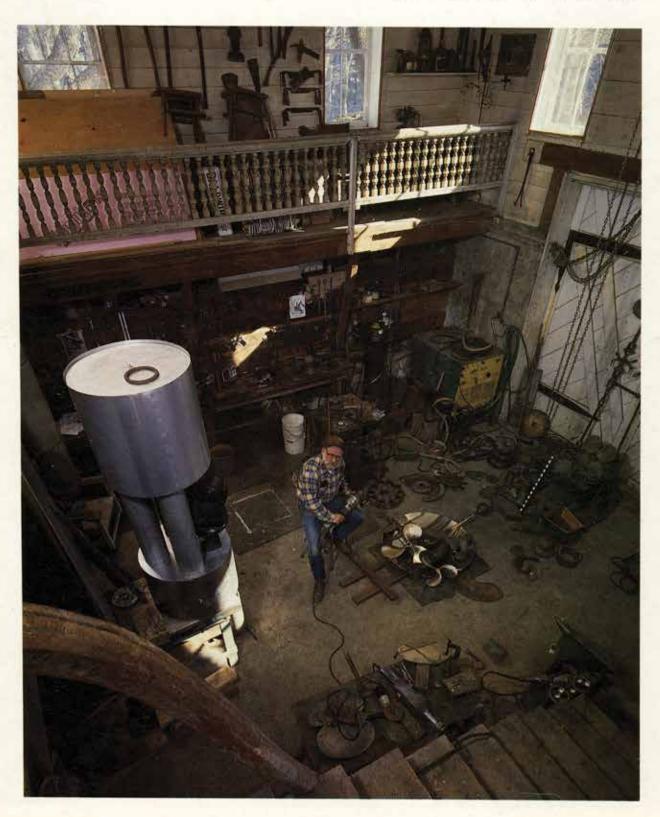
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Volume II, Number 1, Spring, 1987. Materials in this publication may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage.

ARTISTS IN MAINE is published quarterly by Artists in Maine, a Maine corporation with offices at 39 Wharf Street, Portland, Maine 04101, telephone (207) 772-4340.

JOSEPH L. SOLEY, chairman, JEFFREY BELYEA, president. Typesetting, Anthoensen Press, Portland; Color Separation, Graphic Color Service, Inc., Waterville; Printing, J. S. McCarthy, Augusta.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Inquiries and address changes should be sent to Artists in Maine, P.O. Box 8591, Portland, Maine 04104.

May 7 - June 7

John Gallagher, Daphne Cummings

Patt Franklin, Rob Pollien Don Sill, Don Duncan

June 11 - July 12

Sherry Miller - Figures

July 16 - August 16

Wendy Kindred - Oils

Also

Siri Beckman Thomas Cornell Theophil Groell Jill Hoy David Klopfenstein Michael H. Lewis Philip Paratore Carleton Plummer Rebekah Raye George Van Hook Fred Woell Sharon Yates



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Bernard Langlais, "Fish," wood relief, 301/2"x361/2"



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Bernard Langlais, The Target, c. 1961, wood relief, 37 x 36½", courtesy of Midtown Galleries

Here's for the plain old Adam, the simple genuine self against the whole world. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals*

Spring is the season of renewal and rebirth. Ablaze with blossoms, verdure returns, and land and sea rewarm. Spring brings to Maine scores of annual visitors—tourists, vacationers, outdoors enthusiasts, and part-time residents—more and more each passing year. In summer the state's population swells to more than six times its winter size. And these many visitors return to an increasingly dense and developed Maine.

Spring is a metaphor for change, and Maine is in the midst of both. Part of that change is cultural and involves how artists in Maine are thinking about their lives and their work. They have noticed that things are different. As individuals, they are feeling less isolated, more connected with other artists and cultures. They are motivated to make art with meaning and are confident about expressing their feelings.

This spring issue of Artists in Maine views some of these changes by reaching back into Maine's Edenic era, the nineteenth century; exploring some personal struggles of more recent times, in the careers of Bernard Langlais and Wilhelm Reich; and presenting a number of artists living in Maine now who are concerned about the future. As more and more of Maine is "from away," it is increasingly important for all of us to be clear about what our roots and resources really are.



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Cover photograph: Jon Bonjour



Dean Velentgas in his Hampshire Street gallery with works by Larry Hayden, David Salle, Greg Amenoff, Glen Goldberg, Ellsworth Kelly, Italo Scanga, and others

THE MOVE UP MUNIOY

NTIL recently, when one crossed the Franklin Arterial in Portland and headed east to Congress Street, one expected to find few points of cultural interest save perhaps the Carlson and Turner antiquarian bookstore.

With the gentrification of the Old Port, high rents have pushed many artists out of their studios. The Portland Art Building-which at one time accommodated dozens of artists-has been torn down; the Mariner's Church has been renovated; the Hard Sails building, a studio space artists counted on in the past, has been developed into condominiums; and Frank Akers's building on the corner of Fore and Moulton, once a haven for Portland School of Art graduates, has been turned into office spaces. Due to this lack of appropriate studio space and economic pressures, the move from the Old Port up Munjoy Hill is happening for a good portion of Portland's art community. Spaces are being made available specifically for artists, rents are reasonable, and a new community is gaining ground on the hill.

Perhaps the first art establishment to move across the arterial was the Phoenix Glass Company and Studio. For many years located in the Mariner's Church, their space was destroyed in the 1985 fire. Upon renovation of the church, owner Malcolm

Mailloux was faced with rent that was just too high, and so Phoenix Glass relocated to its present quarters on Congress Street. According to manager Gene Hilton, the move has not affected business adversely in any way-patrons merely followed them up the hill.

For over a year now, Cafe Always, located on Middle Street and known for its culinary artistry, has been exhibiting a variety of works by some of Portland's most respected artists such as Toni Wolf, Rose Marasco, and Juris Ubans. The caliber of the Cafe's exhibitions compares favorably with that

of any Portland gallery.

Last fall, one of Portland's nicest new studio spaces reached completion at 70 Merrill Street thanks to the renovation work of Peter Bass and his artist wife Lynn Lisberger. They have converted the old Mallia Concrete building into six deluxe artists studios: with their new windows, sheetrocked walls, fluorescent lights, efficient heating system, industrial-sized sinks, and even shower facilities, the studios represent a great improvement over what most Portland artists have been able to rent in the past.

A big step in the Munjoy art migration is the opening of the Dean Velentgas Gallery at 60 Hampshire Street, A native of Portland and an executive at UNUM (formerly Unionmutual), Velentgas avidly collected art for years with hopes of opening a gallery in Portland. Although he had planned to

wait until his retirement, Velentgas cites the availability of affordable space and his excitement over the painting of Larry Hayden as impetus for opening his gallery this year.

The gallery occupies two parlor rooms in a converted Victorian residence. With twelve-foot ceilings, a large bay window, plaster moldings. hardwood floors, a marble fireplace, and an overstuffed Victorian couch, it is a domestic setting unusual and vet appropriate for an art exhibition space. The warmth of the space worked particularly effectively as enhancement to the large, vibrant, gestural paintings of Peaks Island artist Larry Hayden, whose show inaugurated the gallery in February. Velentgas mounted a show of contemporary American prints in conjunction with the Bruce Brown Gallery in March, and featured the work of Portland artist Betsy Meyer in April and early May. In the future, Velentgas plans to show predominantly, but not exclusively. Maine artists. Above all, he insists on keeping the art he exhibits at a very high professional level. He says he is anxious to expose Portland people to art they might not find easy to take on first viewing. "The art that interests me is not art that is painted for an audience. It is art painted for the artist—artists' personal visions. We hope it sells. Art is what an artist needs to do. Probably art painted for an audience won't be here, but what will be here will be

interesting, wonderful, challenging stuff."

Velentgas has been most pleased by the show of support and confidence and the warm welcome he has received from the other gallery owners in Portland. He feels strongly that the move up Munjoy Hill is not a rebellious one, but a practical one. He would love to see seven or eight more galleries move to the hill as an alternative art neighborhood, an adjunct to Portland's greater cultural community.

"SIX EMERGING VOICES": A LONG OVERDUE FORUM FOR MAINE ARCHITECTS

THE curriculum demands of the Portland School of Art's new associate of arts degree program in architectural and interior design, and the yearning for improved and continuing education identified by the Maine Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (MAIA), have underlined the need for more professional dialogue in the Maine architectural community. A solution may be a new lecture series, "Architalx."

The "Architalx" series was initiated in January and runs through June at the Portland School of Art. The aim of these lectures is to present current issues and ideas to working architects and professionals in related fields. Many of the speakers chosen to lecture have connections with Maine, although their reputations are international.

Both the Portland School of Art and the MAIA are committed to the idea of continuing the series annually to further benefit the architectural community, and all involved feel strongly about providing and maintaining these lectures free of charge. The Portland school has donated time and space to the project, while MAIA has provided program monies, with added financial support from the architectural public.

Lori Rohr, chairman of the MAIA Lecture Committee, defines the targeted audience as architects, designers, and those in adjunct fields. Although the general public is welcome, Rohr comments that the content of the lectures may be overly technical for the lay person. The AIA is a national organization of licensed professional architects. The Maine chapter is small, but active for its size, and represents the entire state with a major focus on southern Maine.

Students in the Portland School of

Art's new A.A. degree program will also benefit from "Architalx," according to Connie Hayes, director of continuing education at the Portland School of Art. Previously, a degree program in architectural design was not offered in Maine, and talented students were forced to pursue their education outside of the state. Many have now returned to Maine. increasing the number of trained architects in the state. The A.A. degree in Architectural and Interior Design, which is pre-professional and non-licensing, has been initiated in part to provide support staff in the offices of licensed professionals.

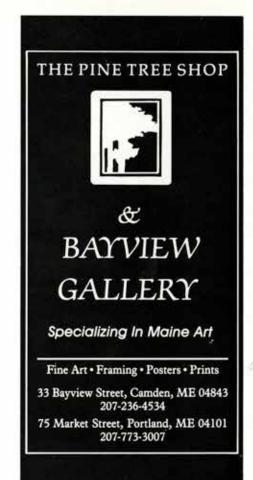
Robert W. Knight, partner in Kurutz and Knight Architects of Blue Hill, presents a lecture entitled "Vernacular Influences on the Evolution of Style" on May 13, and Roc Caivano, Associate/Project Manager for Venturi, Rauch, and Scott-Brown of Philadelphia, ends this year's series on June 10 with the talk "Recent Works." This year's "Architalx" lectures are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Baxter Building of the Portland School of Art.

IMPORTANT PRINTS FIND A HOME IN ORONO

A important group of sixty twentieth-century prints, valued at more than \$250,000, has just been given to the University of Maine Art Collection by alumnus Robert Venn Carr, Jr., and represents the largest single gift in that collection's history.

The University of Maine Art Collection was founded in 1946 and has grown to become one of the finest land grant university art collections in the United States, with more than 4,500 works of art, including 1,200 paintings and 3,000 prints. For a good part of its history, the University of Maine Art Collection was developed and administered by Vincent Hartgen. Hartgen, whose colorful and zealous teaching style established him as an important figure on campus, was responsible for instructing two generations of UMO students in the history of Western art. David Ebitz, associate professor of art history, is serving as interim director and curator of the collection and is largely responsible for cultivation of the Carr gift.

The newly acquired prints include work by such modern masters as Kollwitz, Picasso, Braque, Miro, Dubuffet,



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From the Carr gift to the University of Maine Art Collection: Jim Dine, Heart on the Rue de Genelle, 1981, color etching, 32% x 26%"

and de Kooning; American regionalists and social realists such as Grant Wood and Ivan Albright; 1960s generation artists Dine, Warhol, Hockney, Rosenquist, and Grooms; and contemporary artists Robert Longo, Mimmo Paladino, A. R. Penck, Jonathon Borofsky, and Alan Magee. With these prints, the University of Maine Art Collection gains a reputation as one of the leading university print collections in the country.

Selections from the newly acquired gift of prints are on exhibition at the Gallery I, Carnegie Hall, University of Maine at Orono from May 15 through June 14. A more extensive show of the prints is currently being planned for next year.

A LOOK AT VISUAL AID

N November 22, 1986 One City Center in Portland hosted an art auction of major importance on many fronts. "Visual Aid 86" was the culmination of an extensive. cooperative effort on the part of artists, volunteers, and Maine businesses to raise money in support of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) research. Unlike the Portland School of Art student auction, or the Portland Museum of Art's "Silent Auction." both conducted to raise money for community institutions, "Visual Aid 86" enabled participants to help suffering individuals. The auction was a tremendous success in terms of raising both funds and the consciousness of Maine residents concerning the AIDS crisis.

Sales from the art auction totaled over \$22,000, exceeding the \$20,000

goal set by the auction's organizers. A large proportion of the money raised went to the Maine AIDS project's patient support fund, which works to supply services such as transportation, housing, meals, advocacy, counseling, and companionship to AIDS victims. Joshua Noble, the support services coordinator, calls "Visual Aid 86" monies "a godsend" to the organization's depleted budget. Money was also channeled toward the establishment of an outpatient clinic run by Dr. Michael Bach for AIDS patients at Maine Medical Center. A smaller portion of the proceeds was sent to AIDS Action Lobby in Washington, D.C.

While around the country artists in other cities and states have coordinated their own auctions, sales, and exhibitions to support the fight against AIDS, the Maine "Visual Aid 86" auction was an independent venture, the brain child of Jane Burke and a small group of very dedicated people—F. R. Vance, Paula Ragsdale, Stephen Gorman, Kim Burch, and John Whitman. Over 110 artists statewide—some with gallery affiliation, some without—donated 130 works of art to the auction. Contributors included, among others,

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Corporate identity

Packaging

Direct mail programs

Sales promotion

Product/service brochures



884

The Claremont Hotel

Southwest Harbor, Maine

1984

Ratta Associates

9

Katherine Porter, Robert Indiana, Dewitt Hardy, Pat Hardy, Jeff Jonczyk, Patrick Plourde, Juris Ubans, Edwin Douglas, Orlando Olivera-Najaro, Wendy Kindred, Abbott Meader, Marjorie Moore, Frederick Lynch, and Alan Bray. Donated works represented all media, with paintings, prints, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, and textiles on view.

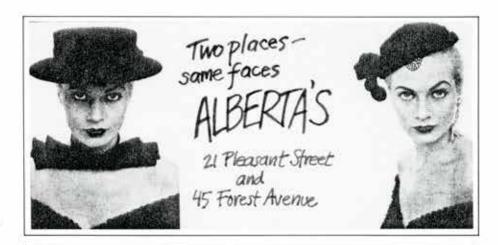
As important as the donation of art was that of time, services, and facilities by the business community. The use of One City Center was provided by MacBride Dunham, while Barridoff Galleries, long known for their prowess with art auctions, gave advice and funds. Catalog photography was tackled by Jay York; Franklin Allen, the auctioneer for the event, supplied his time; and many Portland area framers furnished materials and framing services. The breadth of support was enormous, and perhaps unprecedented for an auction of contemporary art in Maine. Already plans are underway for "Visual Aid 87.

Beyond raising money for AIDS research, "Visual Aid 86" could have a significant effect on art buying in Maine as well. State Representative Charlene Rydell, chairperson for the Maine State Department of Human Resources' Advisory Committee on AIDS, comments, "The auction provided an opportunity for people who usually don't buy art to become acquainted with some of the finest artists in Maine. Some of these people don't usually go to galleries. I think it widens the audience for art while providing funds for the most serious health problem of our time."

MAINE COAST ARTISTS GALLERY UNDERGOES MAJOR RENOVATION

MAJOR renovation of the century-old Maine Coast Artists building in Rockport is currently under way. Plans for completion of phase one are set for late May to correspond with the Annual Juried Show, which opens June 16, and this year celebrates the association's thirty-fifth season.

Maine Coast Artists was founded as a nonprofit gallery in 1952 by a group of artists living and working on the Maine coast. In 1968 they purchased the building on Russell Street in Rockport. Throughout the summer season, when the Gallery is open to the public, the organization presents



gold Smith gallery

Jewelry by Karen Swartsberg

Currently exhibiting works by contemporary Maine artists . . .

Margurerite Robichaux, Paula Ragsdale, Dyan Berk, Mathew O'Donnell, Mitch Billis

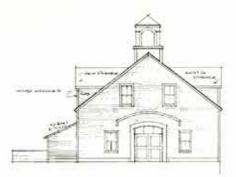
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Maine Coast Artists' renovation design by Christian H. Fasoldt of Belfast

major exhibitions, an annual art auction, gallery talks, a lecture series, and other educational programs. The guiding criterion for display in the gallery is that participating artists draw their inspiration in some way from Maine. Over the years the gallery has earned much respect and support in artistic circles for its dedication to the advancement of contemporary Maine art

In addition to its present function as the Maine Coast Artists Gallery, the two-and-a-half-story structure has been integral to Rockport's history for nearly a century. Built originally as a livery stable in 1892, it has subsequently served as the community firehouse, YMCA, Town Hall, and Rockport's town offices.

During these various occupations, the building has undergone significant wear and tear, and major structural work has become critical to the preservation of the building. According to Marilyn Rockefeller, president of the Maine Coast Artists board of trustees, "After a century of hard use, the post and beam frame was badly wracked, causing the building to lean alarmingly. Our needs were immediate—we had to act quickly to guarantee the building's preservation and future maintenance."

Architect Christian H. Fasoldt of Belfast conceived the architectural renovation of the building in two phases. The first includes the construction of a new facade and belfry; reinforcement of the structural framework; renovation of the first floor gallery; and expansion of space on the top floor, which had been used primarily for small one-person exhibitions, to provide space for large-scale works and group exhibitions. Phase two, projected for completion in spring of 1988, will create studios, staff offices, and lecture areas in the two under-utilized floors below the gallery's main floor.

continued on page 50

Prints, Paintings and Sculpture By Over 60 Outstanding Artists

Peter Agrafiotis Susan Amons: John Andrews Harry Barton Veronica Benning Holly Berry Edward Betts Mitch Billis Tony Birlolo John Black Lisa Blinn Ernest O. Brown Wendy Brown-Fox Cissy Buchanan Lina Burley George Carpenter Loraine Chalifoux Kate Chappell
Howard Cittoral
Jill Disque
Bea Madeira Edmonds
Gayle Fitzpatrick
Joe Frassetta
Warner Friedman
Skip Gleissner
Charles Goodhue
Martha Groome
Red Grooms
Frank Handlen
DeWitt Hardy
John Hullberg
Michael Jacques
Annette Kearmey

Birtne LaFlamme
Jim LaFuze
Ed Langford
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Julie Maas
Kate Mahoney
Fran Mallon
Janet Conlon Manyan
Mark Matthews
Martha Miller
Judith Christine Mills
Marc Moon
Sue Colbum Motta
Mortha O'Brien
Eliot O'Hara
Stan Phillips

Dennis Poirier
Robeit Allen Rose
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W H A T'S U P

VISITING ARTIST'S LECTURE SERIES Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Skowhegan, Maine 04976 207-474-9345 June 26-August 7

The Board of Governors of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture has selected resident and visiting faculty for this year's annual summer program. The artists selected have made important achievements in their fields and represent a crosssection of currents in the contemporary art world. The following artists have been selected as this year's visiting lecturers. While visiting artists at Skowhegan usually discuss their work and its development, the format and content of these lectures remains up to the discretion of the individual artist. The public is invited to attend these lectures free of charge. Please call the school prior to attending to confirm dates and times. All lectures begin at 8:00 p.m. and are held in the Fresco Barn.

Dame Elisabeth Frink: Friday, June 26

A native and resident of England, Dame Elisabeth is internationally known for her figurative sculptures especially dealing with the masculine ideal. She works primarily in cast bronze and is represented in New York by the Terry Dintenfass Gallery.

Lucienne Bloch: Friday, July 3 or July 24° (Willard Warren Cummings Lecture)

Lucienne Bloch is originally from Geneva, Switzerland, and now lives in California. She studied fresco with Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, and since 1934 has completed 45 public murals, with technical assistance from her husband Stephen Pope Dimitroff. Both Bloch and Dimitroff have given lectures and workshops across the country on fresco technique. Among her other accomplishments Bloch has also worked as an illustrator, printmaker and sculptor.

Nancy Holt: Friday, July 17

Sculptor and video artist Nancy Holt creates art that evolves out of specific sites and their environmental, architectural, and technological aspects. She has had nine solo exhibitions, mostly at the John Weber Gallery in New York, and was included in the recent Greek biennial entitled "Artist as Social Designer."

Gregoire Müller: Friday, July 3 or July 24°

Gregoire Müller is a figurative political painter. He has had one-man shows at the Jean Chauvelin Gallery in Paris and at the Kornblee, Oil, and Steel Gruenbaum Galleries in New York. It has been said of his paintings that he "succeeds where much political art fails because of his ability to lead us inside the content.... The artist experiences paint as a medium through which the primal energies he identifies with can be released....

[The paintings] pull us in and pound away at us with their irregular insistent rhythms."

Joseph Campbell: Friday, July 31 (Paul Mellon Distinguished Fellow)

Joseph Campbell is a social historian and author of numerous publications dealing with myth and culture, including *The Masks of God*, 4 vols. (1959–67), *Myths to Live By* (1972), and *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space* (1986). He is concerned with the lack of mythology in present-day existence, and the effect it has on art created in a contemporary, secular world. A provocative speaker, he advocates that creativity is dependent on being in touch with the myths of one's time, and those that have preceded it.

Elmer Bischoff: Friday, August 7
Elmer Bischoff, early leader of the
San Francisco Bay Area figurative
style, has turned toward nonrepresentation since the early 1970s. According
to Sidra Stitch, Curator of the University Art Museum, Berkeley, California,
"His compositions still emphasize a
concern with the emotive qualities of
texture, space and color, but attempt

to achieve physical effects, even visceral responses without mediation through figures." A major retrospective of his works opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art last year and is traveling to the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

°to be determined at a later date

These lectures are made possible, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

MARK WETHLI: NEW PAINTINGS

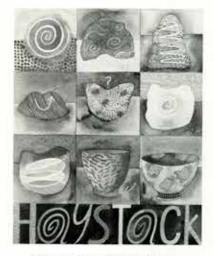
Koplin Gallery 8225½ Santa Monica Boulevard Los Angeles, California 90046 213-0656-3378 May 9–June 6



Mark Wethli, Alice Reading, 1986-87, oil on board, 8% x 8", collection of the artist

Mark Wethli, associate professor of drawing and painting and director of studio art at Bowdoin College, shows his small (8"x10") oil on board paintings of interiors at the Koplin Gallery in Los Angeles in May. Wethli received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. in painting from the University of Miami in Florida and held teaching positions in Iowa and California before coming to Maine in 1985. A past recipient of National Endowment of the Arts and MacDowell Colony Fellowships, Wethli has shown his paintings on both coasts. His list of group exhibi-

tions includes shows at Modernism Gallery, San Francisco, California; the Laguna Beach Museum of Art, also in California; and the Brooklyn Museum in New York. He was also included in the Whitney Museum of American Art's biennial. This winter Wethli's paintings will be included in a group show, "New England Now," that will tour six New England museums beginning at the DeCordova in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and concluding in Maine at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.



1987 poster designed by Lisa Houck

HAYSTACK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF CRAFTS 1987 PROGRAM Haystack Mountain School of Crafts Deer Isle, Maine 04627 207-348-2306 June 7-September 4

At the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, professionals and students from around the world gather each summer for intensive study and work in various craft media. The summer program for 1987 is divided into five sessions, each lasting two to three weeks. During each session, resident faculty and visiting artists work intensively with students to teach skills to the neophyte and nurture the creative spirit of amateur and established craft artists. Areas of exploration this summer include blacksmithing, glassblowing, weaving, surface design, woodturning. fibers, metals, fabric, and jewelry.

A total of thirty-two resident faculty and eleven visiting artists will be in attendance during the course of the sessions. Among participating faculty this summer are metal artist Arline M. Fisch, known for her contemporary jewelry designs; David Ellsworth, president of the American Association of Wood Turners; Jeff Kellar, a Portland artist known for his fine designs in wood; and Margaret Prentice, cofounder of Twinrocker Handmade Paper in Brockton, Indiana, who will enable students to explore printmaking and papermaking.

ALTERNATIVE SUPPORTS: CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE ON THE WALL

David Winton Bell Gallery, Brown University List Art Center 64 College Street Providence, Rhode Island 02912 401-863-1562 April 25—May 25



Quint-Rose, Shindi, 1986, corrugated cardboard, acrylic, and rhoplex, 42 x 37 x 11", collection of the artist

Quint-Rose of Kennebunkport has recently been selected for inclusion in "Alternative Supports: Contemporary Sculpture on the Wall." In curating this show, Judy E. Tolnick visited the studios of many artists, and, as it turned out, assembled a show featuring women sculptors. Others contributing to the exhibition with Quint-Rose include Lynda Benglis, Lee Bontecou, Phoebe Adams, Nancy Graves, Jackie Winsor, and the late Eva Hesse—an outstanding group.

TWILIGHT OF ARCADIA: AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS IN ROME 1830–1880

Bowdoin College Museum of Art Brunswick, Maine 04011 207-725-3000 April 3–July 5

"Twilight of Arcadia" is a major exhibition featuring twenty-five midnineteenth-century landscape paintings by Americans abroad. It is drawn from the public and private collections of nineteen individual and institutional lenders, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Currier Gallery of Art, and the Yale University Art Gallery.



George Loring Brown, Sunset, View of Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples, 1864, oil on canvas, 34% x 60%", courtesy of Bowdoin College Museum of Art

According to John Coffey, curator of the exhibition and author of its accompanying catalogue, "The idea for this exhibition was prompted by a recent cleaning that amounted to a transformation of two important Mediterranean views, by George Loring Brown (1814-1855) and John Rollin Tilton (1828-1888). Both artists lived long years in Rome and enjoyed international celebrity during their lifetimes, but by the first decade of this century, when these paintings entered Bowdoin's collection, the artists' names had lost all currency. A similar fate befell many of the American landscape painters in Italy. Their pictures, no longer fashionable, were quietly removed from gallery walls and consigned to the oblivion of the storeroom. It was therefore easy for historians of American art to overlook the real achievements of these painters.'

"Twilight of Arcadia" is an attempt to uncover for contemporary viewers some superlative nineteenth-century American landscape paintings, and to assemble before a Maine audience works ordinarily scattered out-of-state.

UPCOUNTRY ARTISTS SUMMER SHOWS

Kingfield Fair Upcountry Artists P.O. Box 36 Kingfield, Maine 04947 207-265-5000 July 31-August 2

A forthcoming exhibition by Upcountry Artists, a one-year-old organization of artists in Maine's western mountain region, will be held as part of the annual Kingfield Days celebration this summer. Over 25 artists from all over Franklin and Somerset counties will exhibit some 250 paintings, sculpture, photography, prints, woodcarvings, stained glass, and other crafts. A second show to be held in Rangeley later in the season is currently in the planning stages.

AST year AM conducted an exploratory survey of public, commer- cial, and cooperative galleries and museums in Maine. Although not statistically complete, it did provide us with an approximate profile of what art exhibition opportunities exist in Maine. Some outstanding overall trends emerged. In fiscal year 1985-1986 about a half-million people visited Maine galleries and museums. While roughly 20 percent of these galleries and museums were founded before 1966, over a quarter were five years old or less at the time of the survey, and an impressive 15 percent were fledgling enterprises, less than a year old, indicating a vigorous increase in the sheer number of exhibition spaces last year. These spaces range from those designed by architect Henry M. Cobb of I. M. Pei Associates for the Portland Museum of Art, to minimally converted barns. The vast majority of galleries and museums —nearly 65 percent—reported a concentration on Maine art while roughly 15 percent said they dealt as much as possible with national and international contemporary art. In all, as of last year, Maine's galleries and museums were characterized by rapid growth, physical diversity, and a focus on in-state art.

With this in mind, AM decided to initiate its museum and gallery segment by interviewing a number of individuals who are intrinsically involved in the collecting, dealing, and exhibiting of art in Maine.

John Coffey is curator of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Originally from Raleigh, North Carolina, he holds a bachelor of arts from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in European art and history. He received a master's degree from the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art with a concentration on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American art and architecture and went on to serve as assistant then acting director of the Williams College Museum of Art before coming to Bowdoin. He has been trustee, vice president, and president of the Maine Festival of the Arts, has served on the Visual Arts Advisory Panel of the Maine Arts Commission, and is currently on the advisory boards of the Maine Coast Artists Gallery, the Baxter Gallery of the Portland School of Art, and the Vinalhaven Workshop and Press. Editor

POINT OF VIEW

An Interview with John W. Coffey II

SER: John, you've been here about six years?

JWC: Since October of 1980.

SER: What was the museum and gallery situation like then as opposed to now? Have things changed in six

years?

JWC: Well, I was hearing then about a renaissance in the making here. There were expectations of great things to come. When I came here, the Portland Museum was shut down in preparation for the grand opening. And there was a lot of talk about that building really symbolizing the revival of the arts in the state. There were other indications. There were galleries that were beginning to show signs of prosperity in Portland, and a few like Barridoff, Hobe Sound North, and Frost Gully became year-round. The Barridoff auctions were seasonal sensations. I was hearing people say how exciting it was that there was a revival or renaissance. But what of? My estimation of the arts in Maine is that there never really was much as far as home-grown art. You had painters and sculptors coming up here in the summer, but they kept to themselves—their own small artists' colonies. And they didn't have that much of an impact upon the larger state. Most galleries were still seasonal and catered almost exclusively to the tourist trade, or to that idyllic myth —the myth of Maine—that is still very prevalent in the minds of some tourists and even some residents.

SER: And that is . . . ?

JWC: Well, the myth that's reflected in Winslow Homer or Andrew Wyeth, that Maine is all fantastically beautiful landscapes; that in some ways, God dwells more comfortably up here than elsewhere in the country. That's still very much a part of the psychology of artists up here.

SER: Do you mean that the artists themselves hold onto that myth or is it nurtured by tourists and vacationers?

JWC: I think it works both ways. Now there are quite a number of artists who are rebelling against that myth but, by doing so they admit that it exists. Maine has one of the strongest personae of any state that I can think of, matched only perhaps by Vermont. You know, the ironclad image of Vermont that is on the maple syrup cans—sleds going through the

maple groves in the snow. As for the myth of Maine, everybody up here knows exactly what I'm saying. We're all sort of conspirators.

SER: Logging and lobstering.

IWC: And the yachts riding gently at anchor in Castine, and Mount Katahdin in the autumn. It tends to blind people to the realities of life up here. In any case, I found that most of the galleries tended to present work that is safely along those lines. No doubt because that was the market. That's what people pay for-can't fault them for that. They were expressing the fairly provincial market. It hasn't changed that much. There is a real fundamental conservatism also on the part of museums in this state that is very hard to break out of. Any sense of innovation that seems radical, a curator who presents a show that is the least bit of a surprise, is immediately declared to be on the razor edge. It's a little absurd.

SER: So you're saying this is provincialism?

JWC: I think it's provincialism in that there's an overriding fascination—preoccupation, really—with the landscape here. A lot of artists live in fairly remote areas. They choose to live in these areas and are physically confronted with the natural environment much more than artists living in urban areas. There just seems to be a need to express that aspect of environment up here and it tends to give the art a homogeneity—a certain underlying theme.

SER: There was a period of time, from the late sixties through the seventies, when there was a particular influx of artists here.

JWC: Yes, you got a lot of the backto-nature people who were intentionally escaping urban life in New England and New York and so on, and Maine became something of an Emerald City to a lot of people. It was also cheaper—one good fact—to establish a comfortable life up here that didn't require the compromises they found elsewhere. A lot of people came up here and a lot of them have left.

SER: But many of those who came up here in the sixties, perhaps partly for economic reasons, were people who had been centrally involved with art in New York. They weren't in any way provincial.

JWC: Those people, until recently, have had almost negligible impact upon the arts in the state because they have led very private lives up here. 14

They came to Maine basically to escape involvement with an art community. There have been some exceptions, of course, like the Lincolnville people, who've patronized Artfellows or Maine Coast Artists.

SER: Because most have been linked up to galleries in New York? There is already a system that gets their art out of the state?

JWC: Oh, yes. Neil Welliver would paint his pictures and trucks would come and cart them away, and they weren't shown up here, even though they're all Maine landscapes. Now, this has changed just recently with the shows at the Farnsworth Museum and Bates College, Colby has had some shows and Bowdoin had some with Alex Katz and Yvonne Jacquette. All of that's a fairly recent phenomenon. In the seventies, I think, very few in the state knew who Yvonne Jacquette or Neil Welliver or Alex Katz were.

SER: And now they're real local art heroes.

JWC: They received a great deal more publicity—and became the stars of the past two years. I think we'll have to see how it all filters out.

SER: Has there been any change in the galleries over these past six years?

JWC: Well, the Baxter Gallery in Portland came into being when the PSA acquired the Baxter Building. They've turned it into a first-rate space with probably the most ambitious programming in the state.

SER: What about commercial galleries?

JWC: You've got far more galleries, and now they operate year-round. They still, for economic reasons, tend to be centered in the Portland area. but there are a few new outlying galleries, like O'Farrell. Some are more professional than others. There is a wider range of art available than in the past. But the leading galleries then, in 1980, are still the leading galleries now, and they're presenting roughly the same type of work as before. You've had a number of cooperative galleries—just out of sheer frustration artists established their own galleries, and these last as long as the enthusiasm of the operators.

SER: Like Nopo Gallery, which closed last year?

JWC: Yes. And then there are new galleries like Dean Velentgas's which has started up on Munjoy Hill. You've got a few zealous collectors now that are getting frustrated with the prevailing, what? Narrowness? Traditional

fare? So they're trying to take matters into their own hands.

SER: Who are "they"? Where did they come from?

JWC: Well, David Hitchcock is one, and Dean Velentgas—both David and Dean worked for Unionmutual, and Dean still does. And there are people like Bruce Brown, who's been a well-known art groupie in Portland for many years and has, with very modest resources, built up a distinguished collection of works by artists from Maine and elsewhere. And he's been working with Dean on his gallery, and it's really quite nice. These stopgap measures seem to indicate that something on a much grander scale is possible.

SER: Like an Institute of Contemporary Art?

JWC: That would be a next step in the development of Portland as an art community. The Baxter Gallery is fulfilling that role to a certain extent now as much as it can, being allied to a school and having curricular responsibilities. But it would be nice to see a nonprofit gallery that is noncollecting and totally devoted to the exhibition of contemporary art.

SER: It should be noncollecting? JWC: Absolutely. There's enough collecting going on elsewhere. What is really needed is a gallery that would examine the art in this state and outside, have a mixed programming, examine various themes and various artists in depth, and publish catalogs and other materials that would serve a real need to record what has been going on up here for the past twenty or thirty years. There's very little documentation. Most of what has been written is in the morgues of the Maine Sunday Telegram and the Maine Times. It would be hard for me to reconstruct what happened in the seventies. We've all gone to shows of an artist's most recent work in the past year or two, and that's followed by another show in a year or two. But most of those shows are undocumented; there are very few exceptions. Catalogs have not been produced. So any sense of continuity or historic perspective is lost. Another thing, it would be the death of such an institution if it were devoted solely to Maine art. I think that a part of the provincialism, in the pejorative sense, of this state is sustained by everybody wanting to patronize Maine art and to look at Maine art as if the fact that it is created here gave it an advantage, a

greater cachet somehow, than other art.

SER: Is that brought about because the bulk of our collectors seem to be out-of-towners who come up here looking for Maine art?

JWC: Well, there are certainly the people who come to Maine and want Maine images.

SER: You don't think they just come to Maine for art, period?

JWC: I would doubt it seriously. SER: And do you think that artists working here are being hurt by the fact that the gallery scene isn't more adventurous? Is there a gap between what's possible here with the artists that are present and what's being achieved here in the exhibition of material?

JWC: Oh, I think there's no question. For those artists who are involved in galleries, there is at least the implied pressure to conform to what is commercially acceptable, salable work. Now whether an artist succumbs to that pressure or not really depends on the individual. And survival is more important than artistic integrity for most people, so there is a predisposition to produce what will sell. What sells here, unfortunately, has tended to be conservative, retrograde, or rearguard work.

SER: Are there signs of change? JWC: I think there is an audience here that is much more critical than in the past. I don't know how large it is yet because the signs are very mixed right now. You have more galleries than before, but the quality of most of the work hasn't risen substantially over the past five or six years. Smaller galleries like Nopo haven't been making money.

SER: But if there's enough nurturing of an audience, and given the number of really gifted artists here, do you think that Maine could ever be a real, functioning northeast art center?

JWC: How many people do we have in the state? This is a very, very small state; it's also a very poor state. Its visiting population comes here to vacation. They want vacation art. There just isn't the economic base yet. What is needed is a year-round population that would support really adventurous art. You're going to have to look at Portland. And you're going to have to see where Portland is developing, and where all that money that is supposedly flowing into Portland, even as we speak, is coming from. How will that affect the arts?

How does this expanding community see the role of art in the emerging urban culture? So far there hasn't been any indication that it's more than local boosterism. There are few astute collectors who look beyond the Kittery bridge. Very few. That's the problem. There need to be more. There need to be a good base of people who are willing to spend money supporting Maine artists who want to do something of comparable adventurousness to what you would find anywhere else. That's not the case. If anybody wants to do something good up here, they go to New York or they go to Boston, because you can't make it in Maine unless you cater to the tourist trade. Most of the artists I know that have real concern for their careers and for the advancement of their art have always looked beyond Maine. They recognize that they live in Maine, but that Maine is part of a much larger cultural context in which they want to participate. So they do spend the money to get down to Boston or New York. We don't have enough museums for people here who really want to know what is going on in the twentieth century. There is no collection in Maine that can give them any sense of that. The cultural resources even in Portland are very limited.

SER: You mentioned at one point that you think more non-Maine art should be shown in Portland, and that would help encourage a broader and more aware local audience.

JWC: There's a real need to educate people. Less now about what is going on in this state because of the steady diet of Maine art being presented by most institutions here. But it's still very hard for people to discuss the work of leading contemporary artists based on reproductions in Art News or Artforum. And for most of the general public, magazines like Time or Newsweek are just about the only exposure they get to, say, a major painting by Jasper Johns or Robert Rauschenberg. The works don't exist here. Shows like the Baxter Gallery's recent "Young German Artists" are important for the general public, but even more important for the artists themselves. They need stimuli. They see each other's work all the time, but they don't see other art, particularly European work. I think it would make them feel a little less isolated. It would certainly loosen up their work, perhaps push them more.

SER: Contemporary European work in particular?

JWC: God knows, anything modern.

SER: A show of Cubists, for example.

JWC: Right. One of the reasons shows like that rarely come here is just pure economics. The museums up here are poor relatives to museums elsewhere in the country, and it's very difficult or almost impossible to afford major old master or new master exhibitions. Insurance and other costs are really prohibitive. But it is possible to extend the range of programming by institutions and I would love to see more of it.

SER: More traveling shows by institutions like college museums?

JWC: College and city museums. And not even traveling shows. They can put them together on their own. Bowdoin has put together shows in New York and Boston and brought them up here.

SER: That's a feasible objective for Maine museums?

JWC: It can be done, grants can be written, and money can be found for those sorts of shows. And I think they're absolutely critical. I'm all for the professional presentation of works by Maine artists. But I think there must also be a sense of those artists in a larger context. There is a good deal of art being produced up here that stands equal to anything that is done elsewhere in the country. It should be seen that way. Conversely, there's a lot of art here that is rather weak, that is touted a bit too loudly by people who are overly willing to give Maine art an advantage, a handicap. I don't think that serves the artists well at all. In the same way, I would never want to do an exhibition of women artists. I think that's offensive. Somebody asked me one time if Bowdoin would do a show of ten Maine women artists. And I said, I just can't do it. Because if I had to come up with ten artists in the state that I like a lot, over half of them would be women anyway. And I refuse to ghetto-ize women artists by somehow making them special and therefore inferior in that way, as if the only way they'll get shown is in company with other women. So why do a show of ten Maine artists with the implication that these poor slobs won't get shown unless they're in their own company? I've been as guilty of that as anybody, all of us have, doing Maine art extravaganzas, but I think



the time has come to rethink that approach.

SER: Are you also saying that commercial galleries ought to show or represent outside artists?

JWC: I would love to see the commercial galleries look beyond just Maine art. Whether they feel it's viable or not, I don't know, but it would be good to find out. They have depended on the sales pitch: "come to us for work by Maine artists." It may require them to change their approach, to educate the population to collecting not even just American artists but art whose only criteria is quality, really high quality. The awareness of how Maine art relates to a larger context is missing not only from the programming of most of the museums and galleries, but in a sense among artists themselves. It's too supportive a community in some ways. The best artists in the state are the ones who have a very strong selfcritical sense, who can critique their own work, who ask themselves very difficult questions. Many artists do not have that ability, and because there is something of a siege mentality among them here, a feeling that times are so rough that they all have to support one another and everybody is everybody's friend, you don't have that sharpness in the work that criticism draws out, and a lot of talent is squandered. It's very easy, in the artistic community here, to drift towards the path of least resistance, and perhaps not try as hard because that's not being demanded of them. In visiting a number of artists' studios or having them come here. they have often expressed surprise when I have been critical of their work. They have very rarely been defensive, they've just been surprised. And that really did concern me because in a larger community, artists would constantly be questioned regarding their motives in the production of a work of art. 'Why did you do this? What does this mean? Isn't this a

little vapid?'—those sorts of questions force artists to articulate clearly, verbally, what they are after. Up here reasons and answers not necessarily demanded of them.

SER: Artists here, then, rely a little too much on the idea that, 'if it's good it can't be expressed in words'?

IWC: We all admit that art is purely visual and that there is no way you can translate a visual image into words. Fine. At the same time, it's a beautiful cop out for people who have no idea, really, what they are doing and are presenting their own befuddlement as a new expression. That, I have real problems with. If somebody presents me with a very difficult or confusing image, and cannot in any way articulate what is going on in the picture or in the sculpture, and can give me no sense of the process by which they arrived at a particular image, then I have a hard time judging it highly. It's just so easy to get by up here.

SER: When you say get by, you don't necessarily mean make a living, but be accepted as an artist?

JWC: To be an artist, to act out the role of an artist. It is really an exceptional individual who is talented and who can keep that talent sharpened in this environment. I think that those who can do that can be truly exceptional individuals, not just in the context of Maine but anywhere. So to a certain extent Maine can have a positive effect on the development of a special kind of artist in a way that other places can't perhaps. Maybe the mythology of Maine, in that instance, can work to the advantage of an artist who is able to understand it and see the problems as well as the possibilities. Then the possibilities of the landscape and environment become very real, very exciting ones.

SER: But really it would be better if there was a more critical environment here?

JWC: I would love to see more of it. You hear talk about the large number of artists in this state per capita and that may very well be so, but they're diffused over a very wide geographic area. There are, as far as I know, no real active artists organizations. There are several political groups that get together, but there is no statewide, comprehensive organization of artists, and maybe there shouldn't be one. In some ways "organization of artists" is a contradiction in terms.

SER: In New York one thinks of groups of artists occurring automatically.

JWC: But artists there are aware of a lot more. You have galleries presenting a whole smorgasbord of stimuli that is not here at all. After all, Soho probably contains as many people as the whole of Portland.

SER: Soho has gotten pretty smug and mythologized as well.

JWC: Oh, Soho and East Village and the Tribec and the whole of Manhattan flooding out into Brooklyn. But at least you have a range of stimuli. If you want historical perspective, just start in gallery number one of MOMA and you can figure out sort of where you are, you know, given William Rubins's linear idea of modernism. Or the Whitney, or whatever. There are lots of things to be provoked by, and one of my aphorisms I guess is that good art really has to be provocative in some way, it can't just cloy, it can't be just pretty, there has to be something that pushes you. I don't get pushed that often here when I look at art. A lot of it is very good, but it's safe. There is an unfortunate tendency on the part of many people here to regard anything south of the Kittery bridge as somewhat alien. Xenophobia really works to the detriment of art. I rage at people who, when they describe American art, put American in italics, and they wrestle in long books with the question, 'What is specifically American about American art?', with the idea that what is produced here is somehow superior. It's the same everywhere, as in contemporary art histories of Britain. Edward Lucie-Smith is one writer with a very myopic view in which you somehow feel that the true secret center of the twentiethcentury art world is London.

SER: The idea of art patriotism is interesting when you realize it's the same everywhere.

JWC: As long as you recognize it as an aberration. Why is a sense of place so important that it should be used as a standard of quality? Why must American art, because it expresses an American sense of place, be somehow better than British art?

SER: But couldn't it be true that a sense of place can affect artists in a particular way—that art in certain areas might for some combination of reasons foster particular aesthetic characteristics?

JWC: There is no question that one can find common themes in Maine art

that relate to a response to the landscape and the environment. It's nice to celebrate the art that is produced here, but it's nice also to realize that good art is done elsewhere and that that art is equally interesting—or should be equally interesting—to people here.

SER: What about media and criticism? If the galleries could help by showing art from elsewhere, how could people who review art help to

expand that whole arena?

IWC: Well, when I first came here, I don't think any of the art writers then would have called themselves critics. They were promoters and publicists, supporters and boosters. They saw that art definitely needed exposure. They saw their mission as trying to develop public consciousness for the art that is produced in Maine. I think that's past. There have got to be critics now. The ones who write for the newspapers have gotten a little sharper in their judgments. I think their expectations of exhibitions and artists have been raised and that's partly, I think, because the readership has become more sophisticated. Or their perception of the readership has become more sophisticated. There is still a need just for pure information. But there is also a need for a quirky, subjective viewpoint that can be provided by individual critics and writers. More than anything there is the need to set Maine in the larger context and to start educating people on a larger level than is now the case. Writers can be boosters, or they can kick up a little dust. I think in general the media needs to be a little bit of both. First, provide good solid information on not only the contemporary art scene but perhaps a little historical context of the past twenty or thirty years, which is important to the understanding of what is going on up here in a larger sense. And at the same time act as not only a catalyst for certain movements, ideas, but as a provoker as well. Goad. Nobody likes a bad review and nobody likes a critical review, but you somehow appreciate the critical review more than a totally laudatory one. There's the feeling that the person is actually considering what you are doing. Artists who see themselves as professionals accept criticism. They may not like it, but they accept it. They see it as part of the whole process of development.

SER: A little controversy can be creative?



JWC: You don't want to read something where you know everything is going to be wonderful, sublime, spectacular, and that's what you read about the Portland art scene. It's just wonderful, thriving, things have never been better. Not so. By the same token, no artist who submits to public exhibition foregoes the privilege of being critiqued. If you put your work out on the line, you're accepting the mud balls as well as the laurel wreaths. And if people don't like something, fine. Where did the idea come from that you have to love art. I don't understand it.

SER: Maybe art has become as American as apple pie? It's needed to 'round out the community'.

JWC: It's just that attitude that encourages a very conservative, decorative type of art, because that is what people want. They do not want to be told anything about their social ills. They do not want their visual perceptions jarred by dissident colors or abstract designs that they can't make out, and they're not willing to apply their own imaginations to it, they're terrified of doing that. But that's the way really contemporary, experimental art is, and it's always been difficult for people to accept. In this state you've got people wanting art to be a part of the great civic renaissance of Portland.

SER: It's certainly become a major economic symbol.

JWC: Right. And all that has to be joyous, uplifting, forward-looking, positive, pretty, all of those things. I'm sorry, this is the twentieth century. This century does not strike me as terribly joyous. A lot of it's not very pretty. But it can generate good art. It doesn't have to be fictional. It doesn't have to be mythical.

SER: But would it drive the tourist industry away?

JWC: It would drive most anybody away that walks into a gallery and wants something on the walls over their furniture. They don't want some



scene of Armageddon. They want something that's decorative and that within two days will be ignored. That they can forget about. It's a part of this culture that we neutralize art so quickly. Psychologically, we can walk up to it and neuter it almost immediately. You put a frame on it, you put it over a sofa, the sofa colors coordinate with the picture, the picture immediately becomes part of a furniture ensemble.

SER: And as a culture we've been able to consume vanguard art movements and turn them around to become establishment trends in practically a matter of months.

IWC: Oh, yes, the great absurdity is going into a museum and seeing Marcel Duchamp pieces enshrined. Culture has a very insidious, subtle way of co-opting the energy of art, and galleries and museums are all part of the conspiracy, whether they are willing or not. By putting something on a pedestal you can render it alien. You can take it out of your world. By taking a painting out of a studio, cleaning it up a little bit, putting it into a very nice, tasteful home, whatever energy the artist put in there is fossilized. And that's what most people want. That's what they expect in art. They have such low expectations of what a painting or an object of art can do, that when any artist forces the issue and forces them to think beyond their expectations, they walk the other way. They don't even want to get involved in it. And that attitude, it's not just Maine. It's prevalent all over the country, even in New York. I mean, let's face it, most of the really thriving, prosperous galleries in New York are not the ones that are showing the most avant garde art, if there is such a term as avant garde anymore. They're showing neo-Impressionists and neo-Pointillists that are selling for incredible sums of money. And it's wall art. It's just decoration. But you get that in Maine, and that's what a lot of artists have had to deal with: the



pure commercial reality that what they are doing is not going to be salable. And how do you compromise your integrity, adjust your integrity to a certain level?

SER: So what of the whole idea of having a thriving and critical local exhibition environment in Maine?

JWC: Well, something like that may happen, but I do feel like it is going to require a great deal more education on the part of everybody concerned.

SER: And given that so much wall art—harbor scenes and seascapes and so forth—is one of Maine's exports, alongside that we ought to have, let's say, a downtown that has more adventurous kinds of art and a more critical kind of environment?

JWC: You've got the artists who are willing, who I think would participate in something like that if there was more financial backing. But right now when you look at the principal collectors, corporate and private collectors, and what they have collected -safe stuff—some of it is competent, but it's not contributing to anything other than bedrock conservativism. And conservativism is not necessarily good. In this case, a lot of it seems to be the result of a fear of not knowing, of not understanding, and so they go for art that either has a charming, decorative quality-the abstraction is not too abrasive—or else they go for pictures that have a narrative or pictorial quality. They represent something. People have to get beyond that, to see artists having other dimensions. We're basically raising a problem of the twentieth century. It's not a problem of Maine. It's a whole pattern, ever since people started walking out of Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring', or screaming at Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon. I mean, you go back and it's the same. People are terrified of the unknown. It's amazing how much passion art can arouse in people. You know, just simple little objects. But the fact that they are public personal statements terrifies them.

COVER PROFILE: ROGER MAJOROWICZ, MAVERICK MODERNIST





N his heart, sculptor Roger
Majorowicz is still a cowboy.
When asked to climb to the seat
of his eighteen-foot-tall, found-object
construction called Moon Chaser, his
right hand instinctively grasps the
tractor lever before him and his left
arm waves in the air—the characteristic bareback rider's pose. Missing only
is a wild "yahoo," present nonetheless
in the twinkle of his eyes and in the
long nostalgic grin on his face.

Actually, it has been nearly forty years since Majorowicz quit his rodeo career and took up sculpture. Yet the twang in his voice and the distinct western cadence to his speech betray roots on a Sioux Reservation ranch in South Dakota. Although he has long since given up the lariat for a welding torch and often replaces his Stetson with a visor cap and safety goggles, the scope and daring of his sculpture is "true west."

As long as Majorowicz can remember he has worked in steel. His father was a blacksmith, and from the age of five Majorowicz helped him repair farm machinery and fashion hinges at the family forge. In his spare time, Majorowicz drew pictures of ranch animals on brown paper supplied by his mother, and as a teenager, he was commissioned to paint western scenes on the doors of pickup trucks. But when he left for South Dakota State College, his father's parting words were, "I don't know what you're planning to do, but whatever it is 'give er hell.

Now fifty-five, he lives in a large colonial house in Whitefield, Maine. In his studio he is surrounded by objects bought in the junkyard, acquired at auctions, or scrounged from the dump. Sixteen large sculptures, six of which have been permanently erected in the two-acre field across Route 218 from the Majorowicz house and studio, are composed of antique farm implements and enormous chunks of discarded quarry granite. There is a coherence to this body of work which bears such titles as Red Mill, August Rock, and Moon Chaser. On closer examination one discovers that each work has movable or rotating parts and is designed to support a rider. Each is to be experienced at a particular time of day and under specific weather conditions. Although this sense of observer involvement within a context of time and place suggests the reverence of native Americans for their environment, thus paying homage to Majorowicz's experience on the reservation, it also reflects the industry of the frontier. From a distance one is struck by the massive, mechanistic quality of the work, the daring of its weighty and ingeniously balanced parts, and the energy of its vision. His intention had been to become a cartoonist, and after college he attended the Minneapolis School of Art with that goal in mind. Then while serving in Germany during the Korean War he provided illustrations for the army publication Stars and Stripes. In 1955 he returned to the Minnesota art school on the G.I. Bill,

still expecting to make cartooning a career. He studied with "Peanuts" creator Charles Schultz and was influenced by cartoonists Bull Mauldin, Virgil Partch, and Peter Arno. During that time another influence was felt. They were hard times financially and for extra income Majorowicz worked as a designer for Vaughan Displays, constructing six-foot fiberglass and paper-mache ice cream cones and hamburgers for parade floats. Looking back, he figures he was making "pop" imagery only years before Pop Art was developed by Oldenberg, Warhol, and others. It also happened that he was helping sculptor Paul Granlund set up a new studio. When later he secretly carved a small Brahma bull and slipped it in line for easting, Granlund was impressed. So was Daniel Soderlund who encouraged Majorowicz to apply to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Despite the potential hardships involved, Majorowicz accepted a Skowhegan scholarship in 1957. That summer the faculty included Henry Varnam Poor, Harold Tovich, and Sidney Simon, and sculptors David Smith and William Zorach among the visiting faculty. In the course of one evening lecture, Zorach attacked what was then a growing trend toward welded constructions with his oft-quoted comment, "Welding is for manhole covers," prompting the brash young Majorowicz to jump to his feet and reply, "Carving is for tombstones." Inspired by this exchange, he went to

Opposite page, left: (left to right) Bound Figure, 1963, 18 x 8"; Small Minotaur, 1963, 9 x 6"; Queen Tut (study), 1978, 14 x 7"; all cast bronzes collection of the artist

Opposite page, right: Shoonkaglishka, 1964, cast bronze, 7'2" x 18", collection of the artist

This page: Semaphore (front and back views), 1965, cast, fabricated, and polished bronze, 70 x 24", collection of the artist





work that weekend to weld a fifteenfoot-tall warrior figure out of scrap
metal, barrel hoops, and old Model T
parts. He hastily spray-painted the
piece in tones of silver, red, and black
and placed it where Zorach could not
fail to see it the following Monday
morning. Zorach was duly impressed
and asked who had made it.

"Major," answered a student.
"Looks like he had fun," Zorach
snapped. "It's good to have fun and
then get back to serious art."

Thinking back, Majorowicz considers that warrior to be his best piece of the summer. "The abstraction and exuberance of construction, plus the organization of parts is what I still try to capture in my work," says Majorowicz.

Sculptor Harold Tovich also had a profound influence on Majorowicz at Skowhegan. Tovich encouraged his students to model and draw from a moving or disrobing model. And it was from these classes that Majorowicz learned to incorporate the human figure within a dynamic abstract form. Even in totally abstract construction, Majorowicz finds that "vertical thrust with horizontal masses and a feeling of internal movement is what I have always dealt with."

That fall Majorowicz transferred into the sculpture department at the Minneapolis School of Art. And, following Henry Poor's encouragement the previous summer, he applied for a Fulbright Fellowship. During his final year at the school Majorowicz experi-

enced an explosion of creative energy. He made seventy-two pieces of sculpture ranging in height from a few inches to twelve feet. He ran the Granlund foundry, taught evening classes, and worked a gamut of media, from terra cotta and welded and poured bronze, to carved wood and stone. By the end of the year his efforts had brought him the Fulbright, a Vanderlip Foundation Scholarship, a first prize at the Minnesota Centennial State Fair, and a major exhibition of his work at the Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis.

Awards and commission work allowed Majorowicz to spend the next three years in Italy where he studied at the Academia delle Belle Arte in Florence and apprenticed at the renowned Guastini Foundry. Majorowicz took up a studio in Florence, a haven for many American artists in the late fifties, and became friendly with other Fulbright scholars including new realist painter Philip Pearlstein.

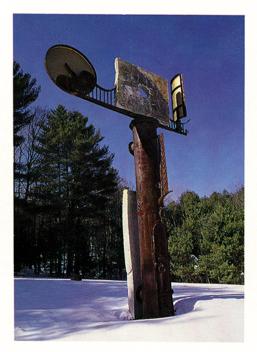
Majorowicz returned in 1961 to accept a position at the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana. During this tenure in Illinois he completed thirty-five abstract carvings from the three tons of olive wood he had shipped home from Italy. These are related to a group of Italian artinspired baroque figurative bronzes also done at this time, that became popular and were the subject of several shows at the Feingarten galleries in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. These bronzes often took the

form of winged figures, the wings supplying a stylized extension and sense of movement to the human form. The eloquence of such figures brought critical acclaim and were collected by, among others, celebrities like Andy Williams and Anthony Ouinn.

In 1964, while still at Illinois, Majorowicz began a series of abstract sculpture he later called his "Indian Bronzes." Just before the Feingarten opening in Los Angeles, he gave each work a Sioux name based on onomatopoeia-that is, according to the sound of the word and the feeling he received from the piece. The series also represents an interesting technique whereby the sculptor combined wax, sticks, and fabric in semi-abstract constructions of materials that were burned out in the casting process. An outstanding example from this series is Shoonkaglishka. In this piece the bronzed wax shapes and apple branches combine flawlessly to suggest a figure or figures that are never really defined.

In 1965 Majorowicz moved to the sculpture department of the Maryland Institute of Art in Baltimore. The institute was in the midst of a major expansion and had just bought an abandoned B & O railroad station. Majorowicz's task was to build a foundry and sculpture studio in this new space. He also scouted army surplus outlets for materials to incorporate into his own and his students' work. He began a new series of painted







bronzes inspired by the work of Marc Chagall featuring highly polished surfaces offset by acid-browned and painted areas. Semaphore and other pieces in the series move toward even greater abstraction, and a new idea emerges, literally from behind. A round polished mass from the front breaks the surface violently, fracturing the backside with jagged tears. This contrast of faces becomes a frequent theme in Majorowicz's subsequent work. As the punchline follows the straightline of a joke Majorowicz brilliantly recreates the action of a comic strip cartoon in abstract threedimensional form.

During his tenure at the institute. Majorowicz also became caught up with New York's minimalist movement which involved the reduction of sculpture to basic forms such as the cube or sphere. Majorowicz was by then close enough to major art world trends to be influenced by this work, but today he is not happy with his own adjustments to mainstream ideas during this period. His work became totally separated from human figuration. It was cool, analytical, and lacked spontaneity. Nevertheless, a number of large commissions were completed in this vein, principally for the percent for art program in Baltimore.

His house in Whitefield was bought in 1969 as a summer retreat. After setting up his initial studio he began the series of large outdoor sculpture that he dubbed "fishing sculpture" because, as he tells it, while other people came to Maine to fish, he built sculpture. In 1983, after a difficult divorce and a disastrous flood in his Baltimore studio, Majorowicz moved to Maine year-round. During the last three years he has expanded his studio in preparation for new activity. Other than his 1983 show at the University of Maine Gallery Lounge, Majorowicz has not made an effort to show in Maine. He feels the loss of his friend Bernard Langlais. He remains in contact with former student Norm Therrien, but finds few peers with whom he can exchange ideas. Majorowicz muses: "I have all the materials. I have all the skills. I have ideas and sketches for a hundred pieces. . . . There is no brass valve I can turn on in my head called inspiration. Sometimes, boom, it will happen. But how many pieces do you have to make until that happens? If I were quintuplets I would sure as hell work on the other four." Majorowicz is currently working on a percent for art commission for the Washington County Vocational Technical Institute in the town of Calais. This sixteen-foot-high polished stainless steel column will include a central wind chime. Roger is still developing the final form of the central section. He has considerable experience with this kind of commission and frankly prefers the Baltimore version of the program, whereby a commitment to the artist is made before spe-

cific designs are reviewed. In this way the artist can work in a collaborative way with both the architect and art commission to develop the best possible work for the site. "I would really like to put this concave mirror in the piece. It would reflect the sunlight and act as a beacon to boats in the harbor. But that would change the piece and alter the entire concept." Majorowicz would like the latitude to make such changes that could accomplish greater site-specificity and excitement in the end

In a way, Roger Majorowicz may still yearn for that eight-second ride on a Brahma bull or the kind of creative burst that William Zorach inspired in the sculpture shed in Skowhegan thirty years ago. But as a mature artist he now relies on the more evenly paced impulses of experienced hands and eyes that place one object in proximity with another. He is content with the mystery of the work yet before him, and it is for his welding torch to show him the way. "What will it look like?" asks Majorowicz. "How do I know? I have to build the pieces to see what they will look like when they are done."

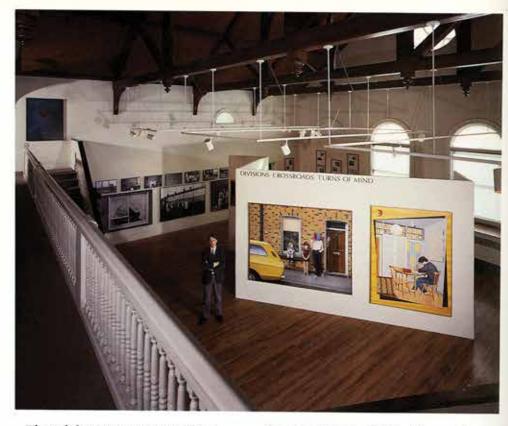
Arthur N. Mayers

Art Mayers is a writer and playwright living in North Whitefield, Maine. He was cofounder and contributing editor of Vision: A Journal of the Visual Arts in Maine from 1977 to 1981.



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The Stones And The Sublime: Art And Politics From Ireland To Maine



I Some New Irish Art

O foenix culprit! ex nickylow malo comes micklemassed bonum.

James Joyce, Finnegan's Wake, 1939

AINE was recently treated to an exhibition of contemporary Irish art. Although held in the season of St. Patrick's Day, there was nothing cliched about the display-no leprechauns or terrorist bombings-only some surveillance helicopters depicted here and there. Some of the art was tragic and searing. some of it restless and searching-all of which might be expected given Ireland's interminable political unrest. There was irony and a little humor. It was not even all "just about Ireland," and it didn't seem very remote. Because it expressed personally perceived reality, irrespective of cultural context, it was a show that evoked an essential empathy.

"Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind: Some New Irish Art" was organized in 1984–1985 by the Ireland America Arts Exchange and the Williams College Museum of Art, where it first opened late in 1985. Since then it has toured in Canada at the Art Gallery of York University, Toronto; the BANFF Centre School of Fine Arts, Alberta; Mackenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina; in New York at Exit Art; and in Portland at the Baxter Gallery of Art, after which it went to the Musée de Québec, where it closed in May of this year.

The exhibition was organized by Paula McCarthy Panczenko of Madison, Wisconsin. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, she is founder and president of the Ireland America Arts Exchange and a former member of the Arts Council of Ireland. The purpose of the Ireland America Arts Exchange is to promote awareness and accessibility of contemporary Irish art-especially visual arts-nationally and internationally, but especially in the United States. Panczenko explains, "People have been very aware of the literature and the theatrical traditions of Ireland and very unaware of the visual arts." In the exhibition catalog she points out that "The last exhibition of contemporary Irish art to tour the United States took place fifteen years ago and no major exhibition has ever toured to Canada. . . . Although exhibitions of contemporary art from both the United States and Canada have been seen in Ireland, it has been difficult for Irish art to obtain a platform in North America." This is partly due to the larger problem of limited arts funding. The Republic of Ireland is hampered "because, with the combination of the youngest and oldest population in Europe, the bulk of the State's financial resources are required for human

To carry out their goals, the Ireland America Arts Exchange wanted an American curator, someone fresh to the subject, who would be willing to tour the country and encounter art at the grassroots level. This, Panczenko says, "was very important because that way the artists were able to establish their own outside contacts," rather than their being represented by an interceding Irish selection committee.

The curator of choice was Lucy Lippard, coincidentally a summer resident of Georgetown, Maine, probably the most articulate and well-grounded art writer currently focusing on the relationships between art, politics, culture. Her pioneering 1966 book, Pop Art (with Lawrence Alloway, Nicolas Calas, and Nancy Marmer, contributors), was a definitive treatment of art's struggle to resume cultural relevancy during the early sixties. After a decade and a half writing numerous essays and books, curating exhibitions in America and Europe, and serving as art critic for Art in America and The Village Voice, Lippard wrote Overlay in 1983 (published by Penguin Books, New York), an unusual, evocative study of contemporary and prehistoric art-especially megalithic forms. "Overlay is about what we have forgotten about art. It is an attempt to recall the function of art by looking back to times and places where art was inseparable from life," she writes in the book's introduction. She adds, "I'd like this book to suggest the restoration of symbolic possibility in contemporary art." Much of the material for Overlay was drawn from Lippard's 1977 tour of such monuments throughout much of the British Isles.

Opposite page:

Steve High amidst the Baxter Gallery installation of "Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind," March 1987; (on display panel): Robert Ballagh, No. 3, 1977, acrylic and oil on canvas, 70 x 92", collection of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, (left); Ballagh, Inside No. 3 After Modernization, 1982, acrylic and oil on canvas, 82 x 61", collection of the artist, (right)

Right:

Brian Maguire, Hester Got Sacked and Died, Was She Murdered?, June 1983, acrylic on canvas, 45½ x 51½", collection of John O Sullivan and Cathy Reen

Lippard's art and politics orientation—since the sixties she has been an active participant in artists' political groups like the Art Workers Coalition and the Alliance for Cultural Democracy—has been reflected in another publication, Get the Message: A Decade of Art for Social Change (E. P. Dutton, 1984) in which she evaluates the contemporary history of political art. But it was Overlay that attracted Panczenko, since clearly Lippard was not only oriented to questions of cultural relevancy and the nature of contemporary art, but was obviously imaginative, sensitive, interested in the artists themselves, and willing to go far afield to look with her own eves.

What did she find? Some surprises, she tells us in the *Divisions*, *Cross-roads*, *Turns of Mind* catalog essay, really one of the most cross-culturally relevant writings on art today:

For North Americans, many of whom have an Irish heritage and/or continue to cherish the tragi-comic Irish stereotypes—the melancholy, the charm, the poverty, the war, the drunkenness, the Blarney or gift of language . . . the work in this show may not seem "Irish enough" . . . I had hoped it would include some communicable sense of "Irishness." I was also looking for an art that came to grips with, and expanded understanding of the political divisions with which Ireland from a distance is synonymous.

I floundered briefly among preconceived images of bones, stones, and spirals . . . I thought originally that Irish art would



divide itself into mythical and modernist, the grass rooters and the rootless internationalists. Because of the civil war euphemistically known as "The Troubles," I had expected the relationship between art and life to be more developed in Ireland than in other "high art worlds." But I found little explicitly political/social art, even in the North . . . I came to realize that The Troubles, like the threat of nuclear disaster internationally, are not so much acknowledged as they are internalized. They are an inseparable part of the anguish, the alienation, even the pleasure in local landscape and ancient traditions. Much of this art, then, is 'political' simply because it is made in Ireland today. (Pp. 15-16.)

Lippard goes on to discuss the individual artists whose work she included in the show, and simultaneously identifies some themes, and some polarities, that echo the country's political dichotomy; some, as one reviewer pointed out, Lippard was geared to find anyway, and others far more personal and universally artistic.

For example, painter Brian McGuire of Dublin (born 1951 in Wicklow) confronts head on the consequences of The Troubles. As a prime mover of Irish Neo-expressionism, which has its roots in Irish abstraction of the 1960s combined with shows during the 1970s of work by expressionists Egon Schiele, Karel Appel, and the late work of Picasso, he has at least one eye trained on art internationally. Maguire creates haunting and brutal images that echo anger, exploitation, and alienation, and that specifically

address the personal repercussions of public catastrophe, like Hester Got Sacked and Died, Was She Murdered?, which refers, beyond the implications of sex and violence, to the nightmare of unemployment so rampant in Eire. "Anger is my predominant emotion," Maguire is quoted as saying. "Small stories become so huge in my mind they stand for everything. The specific has a physical reality, the general is vague."

Robert Ballagh (born 1943 in Dublin) is the oldest artist represented in the show and the one with perhaps the most established international reputation. Developing along the political line he established in the sixties, Ballagh comments satirically upon urbanization, modernization, and "international style" with a hardedge representationalism that is more Pop than photo-realist—a kind of glitzy Vermeer—as in Inside No. 3 After Modernization. "Landscape," says Ballagh, "is always reactionary because it distracts from social reality.

John Carson's art, on the other hand, searches social reality to uncover the exploitation of myth. A Belfast-born (1951) and trained artist now working in a variety of media, Carson uses the symbolic format of a journey or pilgrimage. It is a search for America in his video American Medley (1981–82), in which country tunes, railroad songs, Nashville hits, and California croonings wail while visuals



The Pubs and Shops of Ireland, travel poster designed and photographed by Walter Pfeiffer Studios, Dublin (top); John Carson, A Bottle of Stout in Every Pub in Buncrana, 22, April 1978, photo series, 30 x 25", collection of Liam Kelly (bottom)

Right:

Alanna O'Kelly, Summer Solstice, 1983, performance/ fire drawing, Marley Park





esashops of Ireland

A BOTTLE OF STOUT

IN EVERY PUB IN BUNCRANA

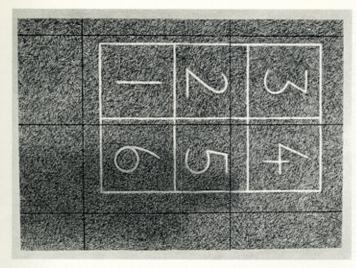
travel across Sheeleresque landscapes and commercially cluttered mainstreets of so many small towns. Carson's poster-like photo tour, A Bottle of Stout in Every Pub in Buncrana, parodies Irish tourism's votive objects (the story is that Carson suggested that Guinness might want to support the publication of his piece, but the brewery was not amused). His message is the repressiveness of myth: "How far back should we go to define true and essential Irishness? Does conformism to a sense of national identity contribute to self-awareness? Why should anyone conform to someone else's fixed ideas of what they should be?"

Other artists, however, transform mythical ideas in a wonderful way. Donneha MacGabhann from County Limerick (born 1957) confounds minimalist form and "primal" cultural imagery of the Celt and Anglo-Saxon. like the stones and that religiously adaptable diagram game, "hopscotch." Charles Bonenti, art critic of The Berkshire Eagle said of the show: "Few works are abstract. This is a country with strong narrative traditions" (December 5, 1985). Not narrative but visually poetic perhaps is the easy movement between symbol, number, association, and pure form in MacGabhann's Hopscotch Molloy, the title of which bears reference to Samuel Beckett's 1951 novel of endless searching, and the money counter ("stonecounter") title character, Mol-

loy. MacGabhann, an outspoken admirer of Beckett, calls him "a strong 'visual' artist . . . his gray evocations of the spiritual life of the twentieth century are powerful. He constantly returns to games in his drama and prose as an expression of the survival instinct . . . these games, in many ways, echo or parallel the nature of the artistic condition.'

Alanna O'Kellev, born 1955 in Gorey, County Wexford, is likewise easily creative with the images of her national heritage. Touching on landscape, symbol, ritual, decay, and rebirth in her performance art. O'Kelly is involved with ethnography and natural materials used not only by the ancient Irish but by various cultures. Lippard comments on the idea of "home" in O'Kelly's work, an idea O'Kelly became sensitized to, ironically, after living briefly in villages in Lapland and Nigeria. Her performance pieces, like Solstice Re-alignment, often begin with stone- or earth-sculpture that is activated as art in contact with human action (as ritual activates the static monument) and in some cases involve traditional sounds like folk songs and the wordless, rhythmic mourning known as keening. For Lippard, O'Kelly ". . . takes her Irishness for granted and seems at ease with local materials and obsessions, which paradoxically permits her a freedom to experiment and to treat the rest of the planet as home."

With its emphasis on the personal



Above: Donncha MacGabhann, Hopscotch Molloy (1), 1983, conte on paper, 32½ x 44", collection of the artist

Right:

Poster from "Quatre expressions," Musée des arts decoratifs, Lausanne: Paul Bruhwiler, graphics; Henzi AG, lithography; Albin Uldry, printer; 1986, 50% x 38"; courtesy of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Switzerland; poster lent by Oscar Fernandez, Portland

expression of cultural issues, it is not surprising that "Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind" was viewed as more interesting by Canadian and Maine institutions than by those in New York, where its appearance passed unnoticed by the press. Viewed at the Baxter Gallery of Art in Portland, however, it seemed particularly appropriate. In the context of the Baxter's renovated romanesque surroundings, in a space originally a church-like library (an American educational myth conventionalized in architecture) where a warm wood open beam ceiling historicizes and emotionalizes white gallery walls, and a rosette window high in a gable confounds the sterility of track lighting, Irish art appeared in Portland imbued with a patina that emphasized less the eerie than the essential quality of "kindred spirits."

II The Baxter Gallery:

Through art mysterious bonds of understanding and of knowledge are established among men. They are the bonds of a great Brotherhood. Those who are of the brotherhood know each other, and time and space cannot separate them.

-Robert Henri, The Art Spirit, 1923

"Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind" was part of a coherent progression of art exhibitions during the 1986–1987 academic year that presented entirely new material from around the nation and from Europe to Maine audiences. It was part of the plan designed by new Baxter Gallery director, Steven High.

Finally, the century-old Portland School of Art has set its sails for major accomplishments. Originally created by the Portland Society of Art as the Portland Art Museum's school, it severed its umbilical cord in 1983 and since then has upgraded its programs, undertaken a \$769,000 Milestone Campaign, mobilized development and public relations activities, and hired as president Peter Hero, a seasoned arts administrator with ambitious goals for the school. It is also launching what has lately become the most important contemporary art gallery in Portland.

The Portland School of Art had always had a gallery of sorts, devoted mostly to student and faculty shows, right up to its previous quarters in the Calderwood Building, a converted bakery on Pleasant Street, still in use as studio space. But when the city opened a massive postmodern public library building on Monument Square in 1979, it abandoned the impressive polychrome Victorian structure that had been designed in 1888 by Portland architect Francis Henry Fassett and given to the city by James Phinney Baxter, mayor and philanthropist of Portland during its City Beautiful period, and founder of the Portland Society of Art.

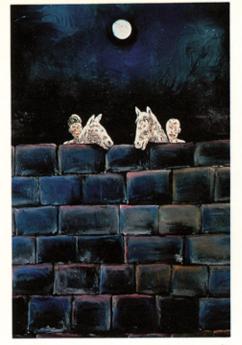
When the city solicited reuse proposals for the building, it had already lost the venerable allegorical figures



of Literature, History, and Art, by an unknown sculptor, which had once adorned its gable. But miraculously the Baxter Building, as it came to be called, escaped vilification as a converted restaurant or mini-mall. It took a few years, but it became the Portland School of Art's in 1983 and has since become the school's architectural emblem.

In 1983 it was renovated by architect Jim Soames of JSA, Inc. in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, who determined that the former stack areas at the top of the grand staircase and in the loft would be the most appropriate for gallery use, and designed an unaggressive renovation of those spaces that featured the original open frame ceiling.

The new director of the gallery, Steve High, is the architect of the gallery's ascendancy. High's art education and background have brought him far afield from his native Twin Falls, Idaho. He attended the University of Utah in Salt Lake; Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio; University of California, Berkeley; and Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he received his master's degree in art history. And he has worked or apprenticed at the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences in Savannah, Georgia; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Boston; and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Walter Dahn and Jirl Dokoupil, *Die Mauerbilder*, 1984, acrylic on linen, 100 x 70", collection of Emily and Jerry Spiegel



Thomas Schindler, Kreuzigung I, 1986, oil on canvas, 83 x 74", collection of Jeffrey Kotler, courtesy of Sharpe Gallery, New York



Rainer Fetting, Blue Head, 1984, oil on canvas and wood, 90 x 88", collection of David Robinson, courtesy of Marlborough Gallery, New York

Opposite: Barbara Donachy and Andy Bardwell, Amber Waves of Grain, 1982–83, ceramic installation

Museum, as well as the Williams College Museum of Art.

When he heard about the job at the Baxter Gallery he was all set to begin a doctoral program at University of California at Berkeley. It made him change his plans. "It was everything I wanted—I wanted to teach and I get to teach art history here, and I wanted to curate shows." And there was the gallery. "It's a beautiful, beautiful space. I haven't seen anything quite so striking. It's got these huge walls-twenty-five feet tall, one wall is twenty feet wide—and I can do a lot in terms of what I can show." Perhaps too it was the very nature of the art school exhibition space within this kind of city. the chance to build a gallery virtually from scratch. "There's a lot of energy here. And we're really trying to attract the public as well as provide educational experience via exhibitions for art students, most of whom otherwise have had limited exposure to foreign, alternative, or even just non-Maine art.'

The shows of the premiere season not only challenged students, they provided a powerful extra curriculum. High assembled a mixed season, combining traveling shows and those of his own design, creating a coherent program that assured steadily mounting interest.

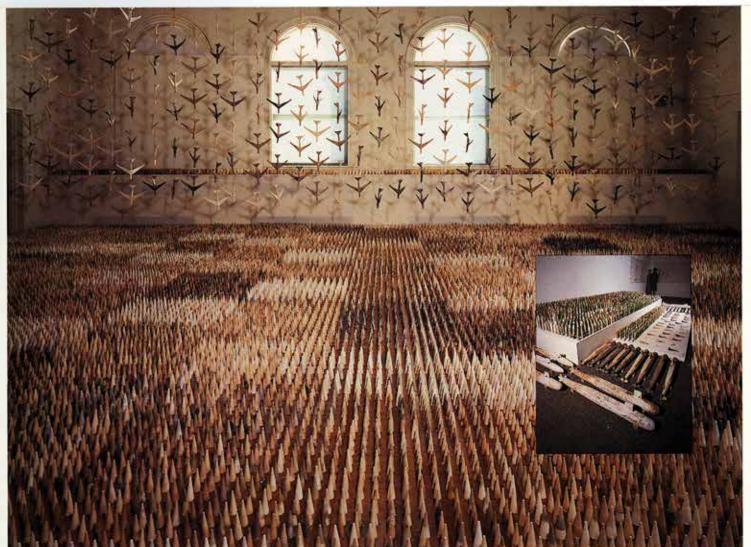
The season began last summer with the exhibition, "Donald Sultan: Prints," which was acquired through the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) and established the Portland School of Art's first contact with that important arts funding agency.

The exploration of international art began with "Swiss Design: Posters," an exhibition drawn from the massive annual "Gallery of the Streets" display in Berne, obtained through Switzerland's Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.

The Swiss poster show was followed by "Aggression, Subversion, Seduction," a show of works by young German artists organized entirely by Steve High. It grew out of his experience with the preparation of a postwar German art exhibition at Williams and his own special interest in contemporary European painting. What he accomplished was a landmark display for Portland, and, accompanying it, one of the most professional exhibition catalogs to emerge from this city. The importance of High's achievement with "Aggression, Subversion, Seduction" is indicated by the contribution of art critic and aesthetician Donald B. Kuspit to the catalog, one of the few art writers today possessing enough stature and relevancy to be published in both the edge-hunting Artforum and that bastion of art historical erudition, the Art Bulletin. The show's importance is also revealed by its funding base—the Maine Humanities Council, the National Endowment for

the Arts, and the Goethe Institute in Boston-a whole new arena of art funding for Portland. The relevancy of the German show rested in particular in its interest both for young artists and for those audiences seeking better understanding of current international trends. High writes in the catalog that the German artists represented, in pursuing their art, do so "with an awareness of the modernist position and what that implied, namely, the historical nature of the act of painting. With this understanding they have been free to manipulate historicism, to go back into traditions to draw their materials and. simultaneously, unite them with contemporary social, spiritual, and political issues." In other words, to be contemporary, for these artists, is to create a new alignment with German artistic roots.

By the time the winter session installation was in place Maine gallery goers were primed. But "Amber Waves of Grain" became front page news. A reproduction of the entire United States nuclear arsenal, including strategic warheads, ballistic missiles, bombers, subs-the whole nuclear caboodle, it was created by Denver ceramic artist Barbara Donachy and her husband, Andy Bardwell, and was sponsored in Portland by the Maine branch of Physicians for Social Responsibility. As an instructional piece, students helped develop the installation.



The popularity of "Amber Waves of Grain" was phenomenal. Not only did it receive much free publicity, it attracted some 2000 people in one 10-day period-beyond any record even an Old Port gallery over Fourth of July weekend would ever dream of. "'Amber Waves of Grain' crossed boundaries," High says, "even though it was a very interesting installation piece, it was seen as a political statement . . . the whole nuclear issue is such a touchy thing, it's on everybody's mind. And maybe there's a heightened awareness of it in this state because of the debate over Maine Yankee and especially over nuclear waste. The show gave people the opportunity to do something. It's not much but they could at least come to the show and participate in that way, and it gave them an outlet for their own concerns.

"I only got one negative response. The rest were all very positive. And very moved by the show, and that's interesting, how a show can have that kind of effect on people who, for the most part, I would say, have probably either never been or rarely go to museums or galleries."

The arms show also served as an excellent preliminary to what followed-in many ways the crescendo of the season's programming: "Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind." Then the windup in April with "Drawing Toward Sculpture," a beautifully designed show by Maine sculptors that explored the technical and creative processes and showcased Maine artists. Having one "Maine art show" each year at the end of a wide range of non-Maine exhibitions provides an interesting opportunity for artists and audience to consider local work relative to that of far different contexts.

"This year most of the shows have had sort of a political element or underlying theme and I don't want to leave the impression that that's all I deal with. But it was certainly a key factor in organizing this year's exhibitions," High concludes. Within the art school context that approach not only enabled him to create a fine program from many points of view, but one that had a particular educational message, encouraging a more serious and perhaps less glamorous view of art than the one popularized by the

media from MTV to the New Yorker.

"A lot of contemporary work is unfortunately cast in a frivolous manner. Many people feel it isn't serious but only focused toward markets, reviews, fashion, and style. And it becomes really easy, especially for the developing artist, to make art about art, rather than examining what they really feel and why art's important for them. I wanted to present art that related to that alternative."

III East Coast Eden and the American Adam, Again

'And now', observes Adam, 'we must again try to discover what sort of world this is, and why we have been sent hither.' —Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The New Adam and Eve," Mosses From An Old Manse, 1846

When "Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind," opened in Williamstown, Massachusetts, it was accompanied by a symposium entitled "The Irishness of Irish Art." Director Thomas Krenz of the Williams College Museum, Lucy Lippard, and some of the participating artists debated political versus mythological characteristics as valid



George Bellows, *The Rope or Builders of Ships*, 1916, oil on canvas, 30 x 44", Yale University Art Gallery, gift in memory of Chauncey K. Hubbard '29 by his classmates in Scroll and Key

presuppositions of "Irish art." The exhibition's appearance in Maine, in turn, was accessorized by a symposium on art and politics entitled "The Power of the Visual." While that symposium was broadly conceived and did not involve strictly Maine artists or the Maine point of view—and perhaps the star of that day was Lani Maestro, a Filipino artist living in Montreal who bases her political work on personal memories—it raised the question, "What about political art in Maine?"

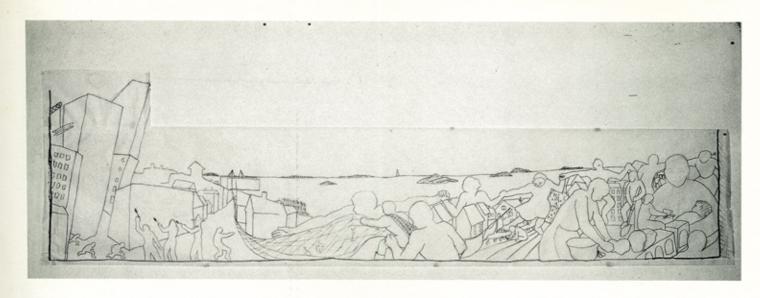
Among the numbers of artists who toured or summered in Maine in the early twentieth century, prominent among these were Americans and European expatriates whose art was oriented toward social or political subject matter: members of New York's Ashcan School like Robert Henri, George Bellows, and early Rockwell Kent; social realists Raphael Soyer, Ivan Albright, and Edward Hopper; social "surrealists" Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Peter Blume; and the more overt social critics Ben Shahn, Jack Levine, and Leonard Baskin. The majority of these, succumbing to the power of the natural environment in Maine, left their social observations in the city and indulged their abilities in the sheer beauty of the landscape.

They thus responded to that special quality Maine holds for much of the Eastern seaboard—a quality felt by artists from the nineteenth century, when Hudson River School painters like Thomas Cole, Thomas Doughty, and Frederick Edwin Church journeyed here from the Catskills. It was a quality pursued by Church and

novelist Theodore Winthrop across the Allagash in an 1856 expedition when Church painted the wildest peak in the East, and Winthrop described it in Life in the Open Air (1863): "Katahdin, from the hill guarding the exit of the Penobscot from Ripogenus, is silent and emphatic, a signal and solitary pyramid, grander than any below the realms of the unchangeable, more distinctly mountainous than any mountain of those that stop short of the venerable honors of eternal snow." In picturesque and beautiful New England, Maine alone possessed the quality of the sublime that writers and poets and artists associated with the presence of God. It was a frontier that was so much closer to home than that which was west of the Mississippi, and which American historian Frederick Jackson Turner had declared closed with his "frontier theory" of 1893. The extreme Northeast was unsettled and unspoiled, it was like Eden before the Fall, the garden before the machine. In short, it was an expedient repository for that Adamic myth so much discussed by generations of American writers and art historians, from Emerson and Whitman to R. W. B. Lewis (The American Adam, 1955) and Barbara Novak (Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting 1825— 1875, 1980). And the Maine myth so much discussed these days isn't really Maine's at all, it's the national myth of nature and innocence drained off to the tip of the East. As Philip Isaacson suggested in an early article on the Maine myth and the visual arts, "As Others See Us" (Maine Sunday Telegram, March 2, 1980), "Our culture [Maine's] is often a metaphor for nature. We are comfortable with wood and granite when they appear in nature and when they appear logically in buildings and paintings." Yet Isaacson couldn't quite explain why painters from away like Fitz Hugh Lane and John Marin "added poetry to fact and came up with a world more tranquil and placid than any that could have existed."

Among the artists, largely from New York, who were carried by the Adams in their souls to Monhegan, or Vinalhaven, or Prout's Neck, a few were able to notice and cared to record aspects of real life in rural Maine. Homer's people are adjuncts of the landscape (man before the Fall), but by the early twentieth century some. like George Bellows, occasionally focused on aspects of labor, industry, struggle, and perhaps a hint of poverty, as in his painting The Rope, although Bellows's idyllic unpeopled Maine scenes, like one of sheep on a coastal bluff in Criehaven (1917, University of Connecticut, Storrs) are perhaps rightfully better known. Others, of European background, though they stayed longer, like Shahn and Baskin, simply continued their cosmopolitan criticism from their Maine studios and were altogether untouched by the myth.

Over the last two decades or so, due to the development of Maine cities, the slow suburbanization of many rural communities, and the influx of socially conscious urban refugees, there has been a swelling in the ranks



Judy Branfman with Portland School of Art 1985 mural workshop, sketch for "Two Views of Portland," courtesy of Judy Branfman

of artists who live in Maine but address social concerns in their work. They are in some ways connected with the older and more entrenched tradition of socially conscious Maine writers and a realist school of Maine fiction featuring names like Miriam Colewell, Clifford S. Reynolds, and Ruth Moore, for whom the primitivism of Maine is less Edenic than it is poverty-ridden, isolated, and inbred. That sensitivity to the dichotomy that exists between Maine myth and reality is shared too by contemporary Maine writers like Carolyn Chute, and was the subject of a conference on "The Maine Novel in the Twentieth Century," held by the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance last summer.

Among visual artists, the desire to remain connected with groups fighting international injustice has resulted in a few artistic manifestations, among these the 1984 Colby exhibition "Call and Response: Art on Central America," a selection from a national Artists Call exhibition curated by Lucy Lippard and held in New York that same year, and also to a certain extent this year's program at the Baxter Gallery.

Although the interest of Maine artists in socially involved art appears to be growing, there is no doubt that, unlike Maine writers, Maine artists have been less quick to focus on figures at the expense of landscape. Even art at the community level is only beginning to illustrate some very real and very growing local concerns. One example is View of Two Portlands, a mural project designed by a

Portland School of Art workshop in 1985 under the direction of Judy Branfman, a Boston weaver and muralist involved with public art projects from New England to Managua. It is related to the WPA tradition of public art—the right-hand portion shows people at work, but the left-hand section, as shown in the sketch for the unexecuted mural, depicts the "menacing" encroachment of massive corporate towers along Portland's harbor front.

A more significant direction is represented by the numbers of artists working in Maine who incorporate their concern or involvement in social and political issues within the expressive content of their art. Among these is Katherine Porter, who maintains a residence in New York but does most of her painting in a downtown Belfast loft. A late-blooming painter, Porter's work and career took off partly through her encounter with the late work of Philip Guston, partly through her move to Maine from Boston in 1976, and partly through her growing distress over United States's involvement in Central America-the latter electrified Porter's abstractions and organized itself as part of her artistic expression. In an article by William Corbett for the Boston Review (December 1985), she explains, "My art should have a strong meaning, a social responsibility, like works of Orozco, or Picasso's Guernica . . . I think one's artistic and social conscience are inseparable." While not all of her work has a political component, some of her most political

works are also her most abstract, like an untitled drawing at the Portland Museum of Art, in which lines of force seem to emanate from—or converge in—a central spiral like a whirlpool or an exploding galaxy. It is related to a mural project entitled "Winds of the People" rejected by the San Francisco Arts Commission, and another drawing that appeared in Vantage Point, both of which incorporate names of activists like Paul Robeson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Wounded Knee.

The five artists on the following pages live year-round in Maine although, like Katherine Porter, they were born and have spent much of their lives elsewhere. They exemplify a larger, more scattered faction of young Maine artists who, like their Irish counterparts, address their social and political concerns via their personal experiences. But between the old Belfast and the new the myths are different and so are the circumstances. Whereas in Ireland they are ancient, born of a mystery of mankind older than Christianity, Maine's Adamic myth preaches renewal and is at its core optimistic. Perhaps that is why so much of it is oriented less to the personal calamity, more to the cause and the call, and is less an articulation of emotion than an activation of that didacticism that is part of the Adamic myth, that maybe we can avoid another Fall.

am

Scenes from Toying in the Woods; performance with dancer/choreographers June Vail, Nancy Salmon, Laura Faure, and Martha Lask; music by John Etnier; and animation by Huey Coleman; 1986; Portland Museum of Art; photo Steven



MARJORIE MOORE Brunswick

AINTER Marjorie Moore has an affinity for animals. Not that she collects them-she has one cat and one dog-or that she paints animal portraits. She admires them, and paints what might be called animal allegories. Her expressionistically rendered rustic scenes of subjugated dogs or disappearing deer tell a story of man's diminishing humanity.

"My paintings are really about animals, politics, and culture, and the animals that I use as subject matter become metaphors for a whole situation that I feel exists in extreme culture. Ever since the advent of the machine age in the nineteenth century we have tended to view animals not as part of ourselves, or not in a parallel sense, which I think most cultures did before that time. And that's sort of given us the okay signal to have very thoughtless ways of development, and of treating our environment. And animals get caught in that, they symbolize that. It's that kind of senseless development without thought to the consequences that I find really extremely frightening. And it will spread; it's like a disease."

An interest in the environment and ecology is one of the reasons Marjorie and her husband, architect Steven Moore, came to Maine in 1970. She's originally from Akron, Ohio, and met Steven when she was studying art at Syracuse University. "That was during the sixties and I worked for the poverty program in Syracuse doing

graphics. We entered the Peace Corps after we got married and spent two years in Iran. And I would have to say that that experience formulated my political beliefs. I knew I was angry when I left the country, but I didn't really know why I was angry. I was also upset about Vietnam. And I think being out of the United States I was able to organize my thinking. And especially being in a country like Iran, where the Shah was in the height of his power, and we were there as representatives of our government, we were really able to see what was going on. It was the beginning perhaps of my cynicism-thinking in terms of the underdog and the overdog.

"I had never considered myself a political person, never thought of myself as an activist. I marched in a couple of demonstrations when I got back from Iran, but that was about it. I never felt like it was my role to become an activist, essentially. I've always felt that my role was to be an artist. And I didn't think of my art in terms of politics. But I always felt that it was the internal part of me that had to come out. And then later-I think really in the last five years—I've realized the crossover, of becoming aware of politics and becoming aware of my own sensitivity to them and making those two things relate somehow."









In the last few years Moore has shown her paintings at a wide range of galleries throughout the Northeast, including the Boston University Art Gallery; the Addison Museum and Andover Gallery, both in Andover, Massachusetts: the Stavaridis Gallery in Boston; the Works Gallery in Philadelphia; the Portland Museum of Art; and the Barridoff Galleries in Portland, where her work is represented in Maine. But she has become increasingly interested in multi-media and performance pieces, and her Barridoff show last year, "Toying in the Woods," was related to a collaborative performance with the same title held at the Portland Museum of Art with dancer/choreographers June Vail, Nancy Salmon, Laura Faure, and Martha Lask. The performance, with music by John Etnier and film animation by Huey Coleman, features an antlered buck harassed by human interlopers in the forest, until the buck's mutant successor, a Disneydescended "Bambi," gambols idiotically into the scene.

"I think by doing performance art you can reach a lot more people than by just hanging paintings on gallery walls. So that's one motivation. The other is that I really enjoy the process of putting together that kind of thing because it then brings back a lot of important images and thoughts into the studio. Also, the process of doing performances helps me to organize my

thoughts so that I have a clear view of what's really going on."

Moore's environmental interests have involved her in a number of organizations like Greenpeace, and as an artist she would like to work with a biologist or zoologist out in the field. She's done a proposal called "Evolutionary Dog" for Mobius, an alternative art and performance space in Boston. It involves a time line of exaggerated images of wolves and dogs in history, and how that distorted perspective has affected our treatment of these species. She's an authority on animal literature and art, from Jack London to Grimm, Beatrix Potter, Uncle Remus, and Disney-and she is appalled at the alienation and misunderstanding of animals they record: "Animals were once such a part of culture—they were sacrificial, religious, and they were food and clothing, but there was always respect for who they were. They represented powers and forces in legend and myth. In the nineteenth century we started dressing animals up, making them like humans and prisoners of our imaginations. It winds up with the endless children's books where animals stand on their hind legs. It says something about how we see animals now. We don't see them where they belong-we see them as under our power, and we became conquerors of nature rather than living with nature."

Marjorie Moore in her studio with works in progress for "Lets Go See the Animals," a Fusion-Fission project for Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut



Left: Caribou Antler Sheet Music No. 1, for Gary Lawless, 1986, pen and ink, 8% x 5"

Opposite: Stephen Petroff in South Harpswell with Toppling Columns, created in collaboration with David Brooks, 1980, cut and carved spruce logs, approx. 20' high

STEPHEN PETROFF Bowdoinham

TEPHEN Petroff lives in a trailer in the woods on his family's land in Bowdoinham, and until recently he worked nights at L. L. Bean in Freeport. Most of the time now he paints, draws, designs sculpture, writes poetry, and publishes his own and other poets' writings through his press, Red Tea Books, which he founded in New York in 1969. While Petroff sells his art, he doesn't show in galleries. He says that's important in order to change people's consciousnesses: "I have especially gained an idea of this since withdrawing from ambitions in the 'gallery scene'—in the pecking order of art. I see you can build up a certain power-not power in the sense of being a developer, or a politician, or having persuasive power like advertising. I mean imaginative power, a spiritual kind of power. I feel often that I have nothing material to offer anyone, and yet I feel a sense of power and I feel it grow. I think people are affected by what I do, and I think I've gotten more effective by not working through normal channels.

Petroff's parents are both from Bowdoinham and his family of Maine Yankees goes back to the Revolution, "except for the Petroffs, who were Russian." But because his father was in the army, Stephen was born in Georgia and grew up moving from place to place in the United States and Germany. When his father retired in the sixties the family returned to Bowdoinham, but Stephen dropped out of Brunswick High School shortly thereafter and took off for New York, seeking poet Tuli Kupferberg, then with the rock group The Village Fugs, and the whole milieu of contemporary New York poets. In 1969 he joined Kupferberg's Revolting Theater, which put on political performances they called "reality vaudeville." And he began to paint on his own, studying works in New York's museums.

"I had always painted, always wrote, but around 1971 I decided to be a painter. And I always thought I would fit in with the western oil painting tradition, maybe just a link in the chain with Degas and Cezanne and so on. But my true love and inspiration was William Blake. I had to put him aside when I decided I could not really bring forth the images in my imagination. I didn't have the technique, so I decided to concentrate on that first. I feel less like a student now and I've come back to that inspiration. And Blake has been my model as a fiercely political artist. He apparently saw a vision and reproduced it. There was no second thought at all, it was completely automatic. It is my ambition to be considered a political artist in the same sense as William Blake.'

When Petroff decided he had had enough of New York, he set off on the Appalachian Trail bound for Maine, but wound up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he stayed and painted in the Saginaw Forest. But by 1977 he was back in Maine, painting alongside his brother Mark, and achieving a degree of recognition for his work. He participated with Bernard Langlais in a two-person show at the Waldoboro Gallery in 1977 and contributed to "Small Works," a juried show at New York University in 1978. And he exhibited recurrently around Maine in group shows organized by the Union of Maine Visual Artists, which he helped organize in 1975.

One day his attitude and his work changed. "It was 1980 and, while I hate to give any politician credit for any move I might make, one night at work our supervisor called us over and said, 'I'd like to inform you all that Ronald Reagan is our new president'. I really felt very bad as a citizen, but very excited as an artist. I could see the distinction there, because I remembered how the juices flowed when Lyndon Johnson was wrecking things. And I felt that although things were bad and times were going to be very hard for people like me, they would also contain the solution by stimulating a lot of creative joy, which works like an acid."

Around that time Petroff also began to formulate the idea that art could be "catching," could infect people like a virus. "I had a show called 'Toppling Columns' at the Patten Free Library in Bath in 1979—it led to a monumental sculpture in 1980 with David Brooks in South Harpswell. The library association wanted to do some-



thing really different; they got ahold of my name and we talked, and decided to put up this show. It was a show of visionary drawings that represented my idea about what was going on in the world. It was interesting because the library association included many elderly people. At the opening I had just put the work up; I had no statement to go along with it. I was approached over and over by these elderly members, particularly the women, who said to me, 'This is what's happening in the world today. you know'. That's just a small indication of how art can work."

Petroff was also writing poetry at this time, and poem-pamphlets like 101 Ways to Kill Each Other Without Nuclear Weapons (1982), published by Red Tea Press. And he began to give readings around Maine at places like the Gulf of Maine Bookstore in Brunswick. "I decided to do anything I was asked to do-that fit in with my energies-to become more public. I'm very shy and I hate being in public, but I decided there was no one who was going to say this stuff. I don't have the money to pay actors to recite my work. So I do readings. And I do shows, only not in galleries.'

Petroff's approach to writing and to

painting are the same. "If I have something to say, and it's in words, I will not try to translate it into a painting. And, if I visualize an image, it comes right out of me in that form. If it's a political image, I will not try to translate it into tanks crushing peasants. If I see Greek temples collapsing, and I know what this means, I will paint Greek temples collapsing and say, 'This is what you should see'—I want to do it without translation. This is how I think art can change consciousness."

In 1983 Petroff and South Solon painter Abby Shahn organized an exhibition entitled "Ghost Dance." It opened, with the help of Professor Tom Higgins, in 1984 at the University of Maine, Farmington. Artists Baychar, David Brooks, Jonathon Conant, Bill Coyne, Tamar Etingen, Margaret Leonard, Nancy Marstaller, and Iudith Valentine were included along with Petroff and Shahn. It was a very unusual show of political art because there was essentially no political subject matter. "We agreed that it's impossible to change consciousness by saying something like 'capitalism has spawned a host of ills'. People keep running around and repeating that kind of thing, and they can't seem to

understand why it doesn't take effect. We wanted to do something that was really directly from the heart, because artists are said to be reflectors of culture. We were trying to heal culture.

"The Plains Indians in the late nineteenth century had this ghost dance religion. They were being massacred, their culture was being annihilated, and they were using that part of themselves, the only thing they had left, to respond: they were singing away disaster. It was a visionary response to a desperate situation.

"As a political artist, I'm trying to root out impulses toward what I call advertising. I think advertising works to sell things but I don't think it can work to actually change much of anything." Sometimes, however, the two overlap. "I think Natasha Mayers's poster, Hands Off Central America, overlaps. There's advertising in it, but then there's also an image of a hand—actually a cactus—that touches some part of my mind that isn't touched in everyday life.

"My impulse is toward coherence and direct expression that goes right in and changes. I do want to convert people—I want to spoil their lives."



NATASHA MAYERS Whitefield

Natasha Mayers in her studio with Domestic Conflict (series), 1986-87, oil stick on paper, 24 x 8'

ATASHA Mayers is one of Maine's most prodigious and outspoken political artists. But by her own estimation, she is a relative newcomer to the task of motivating people through art to act on political issues. In a recent interview with Donna Gold for the Maine Progressive, she explains, "I started doing political art because I recognized that my work had the power to move people-people were telling me that. If I had the power to move people, and some reason to move people, then I should do it through my work. That was my challenge" (October 1986).

Born in upstate New York, Mayers graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1967, then earned a teaching degree from Antioch Graduate School of Education in Yellow Springs, Ohio, before joining the Peace Corps and teaching art and education to prospective teachers in Nigeria. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1976, then stayed on in Maine. Her art making in the late seventies was allied with her teaching in grade schools around the state.

Mayers has also been a Maine Arts
Commission Artist-in-Residence since
1975 and organized numerous art projects in the Augusta Mental Health
Institute—conscientious concerns but
not exactly activist. "In the seventies
when I worked with mental patients
and in the state prison—we helped set
up a bail fund—I suppose I was working

politically. And I stayed well informed and sent my money in to all the organizations that I thought were doing good work. But it did take a lot to get me moving on an issue, to grab it, or let it grab me.

'I read Kinzer and Schlesinger's book, Bitter Fruit (1982), about the overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954 through United States intervention and the CIA. I was getting close to forty and I had this sense that I'm responsible; that I'm getting older and have little kids, and if I wasn't going to do anything, who would? I was also struck by something that Erhard Kepler, a German theologian, said: 'Even if it's like pissing in the ocean, you've got to do something.' In other words, no matter how insignificant your action might seem, you must do it to get beyond the powerlessness, the cynicism, the paralysis."

Mayers had been creating some works on paper and canvas in the early eighties, involving the idea of maps. They were personal maps of her life, involving chronology as well as geography and symbolic marks, like a graphic conception of a child's view of the world as her own life. She was also doing set design for some performance pieces, such as Arterial with Sam Costa and the Ram Island Dance Company of Portland in 1983-1984. Shortly thereafter she became involved in an effort by artists around Maine to make posters and banners commemorating the assassination of El Salvador's Archbishop

Oscar Romero, and she began thinking about how to make a statement without words that would move people. Then she went to Nicaragua in 1984 as part of the Artists' Brigade to paint a mural on a soap factory wall and she was impressed by the enthusiasm for public art there: the ubiquitous presence of murals and graffiti, and the sense of artists being a real part of the people, helping the new government and economy work. Nicaragua revolutionized her art.

Mayers's exceptionally strong sense of color, pattern, and design-that sometimes evokes Matisse or the German paintings of Marsden Hartley -has been both an asset to her political intentions and a stumbling block. At first she tried incorporating the Nicaraguan experiences into her map work, but the result was too personal and too sweet. "Your work reflects your personality. I'm not a party-goer but I am a real optimistic kind of person, and I like bright colors. It's real hard not to miss something that is pretty and colorful, but it's hard to make it powerful. And so I was combining that kind of seductive, tropical, very primary color with the idea of getting bombarded by things that just aren't right, that it's not paradise after all." Brightly colored semiabstract paintings were shown at her one-person Barridoff Galleries show in 1985 entitled "U.S. vs. Nicaragua." "When I came back I did a series of the Red and the Black vs. the Red, White, and Blue, and another series that someone called 'insidious travel posters.'



Work from Mayers's "Nicaragua," "Victims of War," and "Skull" series, 1984-86

Natasha and husband Art collaborated on an art circus for the 1985 Maine Festival at Bowdoin College in Brunswick called the "House of Real Horrors," installed in a fourteen-bythirty-two-foot tent-six rooms of politically motivated art about the United States' policies in Central America. Lucy Lippard, reviewing the piece in In These Times, identified it as the "first and only 'political' event allowed at the Maine Festival," and reported hearing visitors voice the old prejudice that it wasn't very good art because it was so political. But what struck Mayers about the event was the failure of festival officials to recognize it as anything but art. "It was amazing how positive most of the comments were. Senator Mitchell said that everybody should see it. And the director of the museum never questioned the piece beforehand, or even asked what it was—'Anything you do is fine.' Even when you assault people

with ferocious imagery and try to make them run screaming out of there, they still thank you very much. I didn't want to be thanked. It's really hard sometimes to make art in this country that will make people vomit, or run off and write a letter protesting a missile launching."

After the festival she focused on a more figurative expression that was less colorful but more powerful, as in her "Victims of War" series. A number of other influences fell into place-a trip to Mexico where she saw Mayan reliefs of skulls, a calamitous fight with her husband-and she began to think about conflicts and the role of personal feelings in political expression.

Issues of internal conflict-"domestic" war, whether national, marital, or personal-are also behind her most recent work, mounted on two walls and used as the backdrop for a play about conflicts in Hell entitled Resolutions. It

was written by Brunswick author Mark Melnicove, and featured actor Nat Warren White, and the video work of Huey Coleman. Produced under a Fusion-Fission grant from Real Art Ways in Hartford, Connecticut, it was performed at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in March. The walls will be exhibited again at Maine Coast Artists in July. "It's about victims and victimizing. Teeth become words and words become weapons.

"The work that I'm doing now, I think, is a transition to finding parallels in my life to the bullying the United States government is doing. The images are more personal. It's also the most revealing work of all so far, the most from the gut. To me it's the most political, the most personal, and I hope it's

the most universal."



NANCY M. COYNE, M.D. Brunswick

ANCY Coyne has two careers, as a painter and as a psychiatrist. "I've been an artist since I was about three and I actually thought that making art was something that everybody did, like eating or going to the movies. Being an artist came first and it never occurred to me that there was anything incongruent about also being a doctor."

Coyne prepared herself for both careers simultaneously, after her graduation from New York's High School of Art and Design. From the late fifties through the early seventies, while she was earning a bachelor's degree in literature and art from City College and then a psychiatric degree from the Medical College of Pennsylvania, she took courses at the New York Art Students League and then at the Philadelphia Academy and at the Fleishman School of Art in the same city. After more than thirty years of urban life, she was ready for Maine. "Places like New York City encourage people to be brutal. It was a brutalizing experience for me. And I got out as soon as I could."

She moved to Maine upon graduation and opened up her own psychiatric practice in Brunswick in 1976. She pursued her other profession—painting—alongside, reacting naturally to the sensuous tranquillity of the Maine landscape. "I was weaned on Impressionism. In my earliest paintings, and in paintings I still do today that are not political, I am a romantic impressionist. I love the play of light on water, and

This page (left): Nancy Coyne with (crockwise from top left) Photo Memories: Mama, 1985, oil stick on paper, 20 x 30"; Photo Memories: Mama Drinking Coffee, 1985, oil stick on paper, 20 x 33"; Portrait of Mama, 1985, oil on canvas, 18 x 24"

Opposite page (top): At home with Ex-husband, 1986, soft sculpture, life-size; in front: Hunger, 1986, oil stick on paper, 18 x 24"

Opposite page (bottom), works from Sorrows Series, War, 1985, acrylic on paper, 10 x 14" (above), 20 x 30" (below)

every summer I spend nearly every morning painting landscapes that I feel guilty about because they're so juicy and lush and beautiful. But we can't forget how important it is to live in such a beautiful, harmonious place, to have our senses filled with pleasurable experiences, where the air smells good and it's good to be alive. Because that's what makes everybody feel like it's worth being alive."

But a few years ago the part of her that is trained to detect and understand people's problems and their reasons for despair led her art in a different direction. "Natasha Mayers and I were sitting in her studio lamenting about the fact that we didn't know how to put our politics where our aesthetics are. How do you do it without making trivial art? At the time I was involved with Physicians for Social Responsibility, an antinuclear doctors' group, and I was becoming aware of a panicky anxiety that the world is going to blow itself up. So my first involvement with making political art was in organizing about a hundred Maine artists as part of a project that Artists for Survival was doing in Boston, and we did a series of posters that have to do with our feelings about life on earth." Most of the posters were done by artists who otherwise do not do political art, and some were done by artistically inclined handicapped persons, and the whole group of posters was exhibited across the country.

At the same time Coyne began another series of paintings that she thought was quite personal but turned out to be about the individual's connection with humanity. "That series had to do with a miscarriage, the loss of a very much wanted pregnancy, and with loss and grief. And I began to think about the implications of the loss of my baby, your baby, and how many countless babies we couldn't even grieve." She realized the series was connected with the posters. "These paintings began to represent to me a more global sense of trying to get people in touch with, and trying to get myself in touch with, grief that needs to be felt. Because the problem about nuclear war is that people numb themselves, we've been living with it too long. We numb ourselves into thinking that it's not going to happen, that it can't happen, that it won't happen. And not only nuclear war-that's the way we are dealing with the earth's problems like hunger and famine. And I think that artists are absolutely essential in times like these to stay in touch with feelings and with what's going on in the world and to communicate it. And we do it through a very personal mechanism. We do it by reaching into our own feelings and expressing things strongly enough in a way that people can't be numb to.

Some of her paintings are visibly immediate, activated by the need to make the marks of her feelings directly with simple, somber colors and big brushes. "At times it just seems I was full of intense images that I needed to get out fast and so I used a fast medium,



I've been struggling to get rid of my art training. Years ago 'art training' evoked 'aristocratic' and 'sexist.' You were told how to draw 'the figure' or approach 'landscape' and you were told what's important in pictures. And then there was the whole influence of the New York School, which said there should be no content in painting-no meaning in painting. But the Abstract Expressionists were almost all alcoholics, and it was the alcoholic's desolate, despairing view of life that said there's no meaning in anything. So for years artists have been thinking, 'well, there should be no meaning in my pictures.' And that was also a lesson that I struggled to get rid of.

"So I do things that are so untrendy that no one will buy them," she jokes. But she really has no intention to market her art. She has shown in galleries and alternative exhibition spaces around Maine, from Maine Coast Artists in Rockport (1985), the Caldebeck Gallery in Rockland (1985), and the Harlow Gallery in Hallowell (1986), to the "Maine Women in the Arts" show at the Portland School of Art (1984 and 1985) and Morning Glory Natural Foods in Brunswick (1984). But, "the way that I hope my work will get used is through feminist networks and alternative political networks. The posters have been looked at by people at the State House and at the Democratic and Republican national conventions. I am frequently asked to lecture with slides at feminist events and I use those opportunities to show my work in a way that I

hope touches people.

'I'm involved in a very interesting grass roots organization called Maine Women in the Arts, which is one of those unmilitant feminist organizations that includes all kinds of women from all over the state. Natasha Mayers and Katherine Porter and I did a workshop for the organization on political art and art as a way of becoming socially active, both to heal oneself and to heal the world. Because I don't think it's

separate.

"I can't react directly to what's happening in Nigeria because I'm not in Nigeria. But I sure as hell can react to what's happening right down the road from me in the trailer park. My images come from my life, not from far away, although certainly I'm influenced by living here—sometimes my figurative work includes Maine landscapes. But it seems to me that Maine is not very different from the rest of the world-I guess that's part of what I feel about being an activist. If we pay attention to what's right around us-really pay attention to it-we see poverty that we live with and react to it, like the tragedy of people who can't afford their medical care, right here. As a doctor I have to deal with that every day. If we allow ourselves to really react to that, to do something about it, then we may also begin to be concerned about the larger issues in Maine, like the nuclear weapons we have here, or problems of hunger or poverty, or nuclear war facing the whole world."





38







Clockwise from top: Displacement Activity, 1980, performance, Edwardsville, Illinois; Intensive Care Unit, 1983, installation, Bowdoin College Museum of Art; Practical Dogs (etc.), 1984, installation, University of Maine at Augusta; The Meeting Place, 1983, steel and granite environmental sculpture, Readfield, Maine; photos Robert Katz







BOB KATZ Hallowell

OBERT L. Katz is motivated by real issues and reacts to them in terms of art. "All of my work is about art in a very formal context. It has color, form, shape, space—but it's a question of, why bother to put all these elements together? For me, I put them together because I'm responding to the world around me, be it Maine or Colorado or Montana; wherever it happens to be. I enjoy making art about the issues." But he doesn't consider himself an activist. "I don't know how to define that. All of the pieces that I build are somehow tied in to an issue. And there's no time outside of my art-it's all-consuming. When one project ends, another begins. If I have to invest my time, the most precious thing I have, it's a choice I make not to spend every Wednesday night at a caucus meeting, but to invest that time developing the next project, that could be about the caucus issue.'

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Katz studied at the Brooklyn Museum School and the New York University School of Education before earning his master of fine arts degree at the University of Montana in Missoula. Always interested in education, he taught art in New Milford, Connecticut, and the Bronx in the early seventies, and worked for the Crow Central Education Commission in

Montana, developing programs and facilities for the Indian reservation in Big Horn County. He has regularly held workshops and served as guest lecturer and artist-in-residence in numerous local communities alongside his teaching jobs at Oberlin College in Ohio, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and currently at the University of Maine at Augusta. Communities have naturally become a part of his art process: "A lot of my work is based on organizing communities to get together and build major pieces with minimum funding. A lot of students and local people help with these pieces. I had a really interesting experience about two years ago, when a steel company invited me in and just turned over a steel plant to me. The workers became part of the process and helped create the piece. I enjoy that interaction Homage to the Lost Village, commissioned by the Sacks Steel and Supply Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri, 1985].

Working with cross sections of communities doesn't mean he seeks the lowest common denominator in his art. "There are different levels to it. I don't think all my art is obvious in what it's trying to say. I feel that sometimes it is the responsibility of a serious viewer to do a little legwork. Art does not have to be simplistic and if someone needs to

read a book that I suggest to them, or i they need to talk to me. . . . It's just like anything of value. You might have to read four books about a subject to realls grasp its meaning."

Katz conceives, designs, builds, and sometimes organizes the construction of his environmental sculptures and installations. He doesn't make art objects for sale. He is most interested in art that breaks down traditional boundaries, between painting and sculpture, or between drawing and real life. His massive works arise out of a certain idea suggested partly by the site and place where they are to be located. "Every piece I do is very significant in my work, I feel, because I end up producing only three or four such pieces a year, and it usually takes several months to put together all the resources to be able to build them."

He feels his installations are the most involved with traditional design. They evolved from his earliest work in Montana, "in which I was really exploring materials and processes—relationships of hard to soft, and materials that flow or contain flow, for example. That was a very exciting period because when I was in New York, it was hard not to be under the influence of the art scene—it was so all-encompassing. Your teachers were part of that scene. And when I got out to Montana in 1972 the influence came





from the ranchers and Indians and not the artists."

His most recent site-specific sculpture, The Most Crucial Aspect of Process Is That It Is Reversible (Even Though Limitations of Knowledge May Prevent It), was installed at Cherry Creek High School in Englewood, Colorado, last year with the help of the students. The title is a quote from southwest "arcology" architect Paolo Soleri. Like many of Katz's pieces, it is about the process man inflicts on the environment. And Colorado surprised Katz. As reported by The Village Newspapers there: "When he left Maine, he saw just a couple of cars, a moose, and a coyote. He was expecting similar imagery when he arrived, but instead found bumper-to-bumper traffic, smog, and skyscrapers. He believes that people have choices and obviously what he saw is the choice this community is taking" (May 22, 1986).

Another important branch of Katz's work is his performances: "I actually think these are the strongest pieces, and maybe that's because I don't get caught up with the rules. I've done pieces where I've been buried, or had the head of a cow that died in a field strapped to me for eight hours (Displacement Activity, 1980, Edwardsville, Illinois; Coyote Kill, 1980, Wyola, Montana). And I did a big performance piece in Virginia, where I was impersonating dinosaurs

(The Day of the Dinosaur, collaborative piece with Philip Paratore, University of Richmond, 1983). I like my performance pieces the best. But I think perhaps they make people the most uneasy—they're the most difficult pieces."

Since he came to Maine in 1981, Katz has completed several major installations, including Intensive Care Unit (1983) at Bowdoin College's "Maine Artists Invitational," which involved his reaction to his father's recent surgery, and incorporated as the "patient" a bird that was killed when it flew into his studio during that time. A piece entitled Practical Dogs, Who Believe Themselves to Be Quite Exempt from Any Intellectual Influences Are Usually the Slaves of Some Obsolete Society (University of Maine Faculty Exhibition, Jewett Hall Gallery, 1984), where 'practical dogs" metaphor segments of a society-particularly American society-that systematically misleads and exploits them. In Readfield he built an environmental sculpture entitled The Meeting Place (1983), that is about the attachment of people to a place-in this case the Maranacook Community School—and students, parents, and faculty helped to construct it. Katz also wanted to explore ideas he had about the great prehistoric stone rings found throughout the British Isles because he was planning a trip there, "and I knew that after I actually saw them I wouldn't

be able to do anything related to them at all." One group of students collected material for a time capsule that was buried underneath the sculpture, and on a certain day in May each year, at sunrise, the shadow of the sculpture's steel arrow points to the spot. And like the megaliths made of hand cut stones hauled to their sites by prehistoric man, the Readfield sculpture's granite blocks were drawn from foundations of ruined old buildings in the area, and many of the blocks were brought by farmers who owned these properties.

Currently, Katz is working on a complex multi-media installation called The Diaspora Project, with the historical theme of the global dispersion of Jews since the first century A.D. It relates to the whole concept of cultural identity. "There are different paths for people to take in terms of how they feel they can contribute the most to their society. Some people just don't think about it. But for those who do, they have to find the path they feel most comfortable with, and for me it's working through the projects I build, because they are so involved with people." He expects the project to take at least two years, including the process of fundraising. For Katz, that reaches the chronological limit. "I can't plan my work too far in advance, because I don't know where I'm going to be, or what the world's going to be like."





Richard Misrach, Desert Fire #1 (Burning Palms), 1983, ektacolor print, 23 x 18", copyright Richard Misrach

Brassi (Gyula Halasz), Bistro, Place d'Italie, 1932, silver print, 9 x 111/4"

LIGHT YEARS: BUILDING A PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION IN MAINE

AINE'S art community in recent years has viewed photography much as New York did at the turn of the century: it hesitates to admit that photography is a fine art. Few Maine galleries in the last five years have made a serious commitment to showing fine art photography, either historical or contemporary. The Portland Museum of Art. Maine's largest museum, does not have what could be considered an organized or comprehensive photography collection, and other museums with ambitions in this area often lack the wherewithal. Some Maine critics still worry about photography's apparently democratic method of representing the world, the ease with which it can be derivative of its own history. and its capability for reproduction ad nauseam.

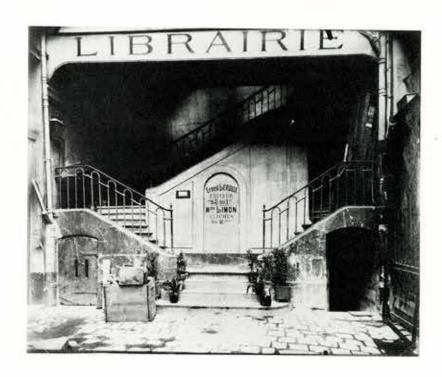
We are therefore delighted to learn that over the last several years, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art has quietly been acquiring the foundations of a thorough and historically insightful photography collection spanning the short history of this prevalent medium. The collection has come to our attention through the museum's recently mounted show, Building a Collection: Recent Acquisitions in Photography, which ran from December 2, 1986, through March 15, 1987. A "greatest hits" show of this kind, representing the largest and most important collection of photography in the state, is long overdue.

The Bowdoin Museum began acquiring photographs fairly casually in 1967 with the purchase of two Bowdoin students' work. Little else was done until 1973, when an alumnus donated two photographs of contemporary significance—Harry Callahan's Wisconsin and Ansel Adams's Moonrise Over Hernandez. But as John Coffey, the museum's current curator, commented in a 1986 acquisition policy statement, "Welcome as these two gifts were, their obvious quality only emphasized the overall deficiencies of the museum's collection." Even that realization did not enable Bowdoin to begin actively acquiring more photographs of equal importance. The museum's primary

endowment specified that it be used to purchase "paintings, drawings, and etchings by American artists." For the next eight years, until an unrestricted bequest by Lloyd and Marjorie Coulter was received, the museum was dependent upon donations of photographs from alumni and other sources. The Coulter fund gave the museum the means to start a carefully planned photography collection by entering the marketplace with specific goals and needs.

Dollar for dollar a museum art endowment can buy a great many more master photographs than paintings, sculptures, or old master drawings. Any adequately funded museum that recognizes photography as a fine art can develop a significant photography collection. As a relatively young art form, its history is distinctly shorter-and better documentedthan that of its venerable cousins. Only 160 years ago Nicéphore Niépce made the first eight-hour exposure from his window. It has been only 150 years since Louis Daguerre inspired a generation to have photographic im-





Jean-Eugene-Auguste Atget, Funeral Carriage, early 1900s, printing-out paper, 6% x 8%"

Jean-Eugene-Auguste Atget, Cour, 28 Rue Bonaparte, Paris, 1910, printing-out paper with gold toning, 8½ x 7°

ages made of themselves, and inventors and entrepreneurs to perfect and market the process. Because of its youth and because it is a medium which produces multiple images, the cost of a photograph by an Edward Weston or an August Sander is significantly smaller than that of a painting by a Bruegel or Vermeer. Such a finite history also allows a museum to be more focused in its collecting.

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art recognized that it was necessary for any photography acquisitions policy to be compatible with the philosophy behind the rest of the museum's collection. Accordingly, it began by collecting vintage prints by photographers born before 1920-by and large, those who were producing work before World War II-in order to provide a historical framework. In this way, the museum sought to trace techniques-daguerreotypes, calotypes, collodion negatives, albumen prints, platinum and silver prints, and color photographs; and theory-landscape, pictorial, reportage, romantic, naturalistic, abstract, and cubist.

Within this context it could then buy works of contemporary photographers who were using the medium primarily as a fine art. Although the museum continues to seek vintage work by artists not yet represented in the collection, such as Alfred Steiglitz and Julia Margaret Cameron, it is currently at the pivotal stage of actively seeking contemporary work.

By the middle of 1986 the museum had amassed some 281 photographs. Shortly thereafter, Isaac Lagnado, class of 1971, donated 250 photographs including some by established masters as well as a group by lesser known Eastern European artists. Lagnado's gift brought the number of prints in the collection to 600 by the end of 1986.

Appended to the museum's acquisition policy is a list of photographers: eighty-six were born before 1920, fifty-two after this date. They are, as the policy states, "photographers who have made significant and lasting contributions to the technical and/or aesthetic advancement of the medium. Any collection of photography with

pretensions to significance must include work by most, if not all, of these masters."

The museum does not make any particular effort to collect Maine photographers. It is trying to build a cohesive and comprehensive collection which surveys the history of photography. Bernice Abbott and Todd Webb, two photographic masters living in Maine are included, their reputations having been established prior to their arrival in the state. But the collection is still not evenly representative. For example, two photographers whose work has been accessioned into the collection—former Bowdoin student Abelardo Morell, Jr., and John McKee, director of the Bowdoin photography program—are ranked with contemporary masters. Meanwhile many of their equally important contemporaries do not appear on the list. among them Nathan Lyons (director of the Visual Studies Workshop), Larry Clark (author of Tulsa), Wright Morris, Sheila Metzner, Rosamund Purcell, Olivia Parker, David Hockney, William Eggleston, Eve Sonneman,





Francis Frith, The Pyramids of Dahshoor from the South, 1858, albumen print from wet collodion negative, 19 x 15"

John B. Greene, Constantine, Algeria, ca. 1885–56, salt print from paper negative, 11½ x 9"

Mark Cohen, and Michael Bishop. Also missing are Japan's two best contemporary photographers, Hiromi Tsuchida and Shomei Tomatsu. Of course, contemporary work is harder to judge because it hasn't stood the test of time. But where, for example, is Clarence John Laughlin (born before 1920), whose staged, obsessive pictures of a mythological, historical South employed multiple images, negative reversals, and staged events long before they became fashionable?

Coffey works closely with museum director Katherine J. Watson and John McKee on developing and guiding the photography collection. Their goal has been to collect fine examples of the work of photographers on their list and, because the true intent and vision of an artist can only be perceived in a body of work, to collect more than one example of each. Their priority is also to obtain original prints whenever possible, despite their cost, thereby adhering more closely to the photographer's vision (in a comparison of Atget's vintage and contemporary prints, the luminous presence of the

vintage print is apparent, even when compared to a contemporary albumen print). And in spite of the escalating market, they have taken time to develop a rapport with dealers, galleries, and auction houses.

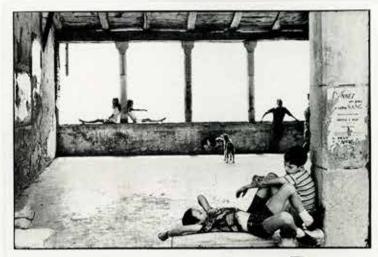
One exemplary result of their careful strategy was last year's acquisition at auction of a copy of Paul Strand's *Tailor's Apprentice* which, while not very well known, is considered by many to be among Strand's best work. And, while it is neither as sensational nor as expensive as *Blind Woman* or *Young Boy*, it encapsulates Strand's vision—his abstract organization within the frame and his fascination with people.

The museum is not satisfied with merely finding the best examples of an artist's work if they are not in acceptable condition. A year and a half was spent searching through galleries, dealers, and auction houses, scrutinizing more than twenty prints, before an acceptable copy was found of Francis Frith's sizable print *The Pyramids*.

While aesthetic concerns determine most of their acquisitions, technical problems pose some limitations. With the exception of dye-transfer prints, most color processes such as Cibachrome and C-41 (prints from negatives) have not proven stable for archival requirements the way black and white photography has. Therefore museums and collectors are reluctant to invest money for posterity in a photograph that may fade and be worthless in fifty years. However, some photographers working in color-Richard Misrach, for example, whom the museum deems too important to pass up—do not use dye-transfer, which is laborious and expensive.

Bowdoin's active photography program, taught and administered by art department lecturer John McKee since 1969, benefits greatly from the use of the collection, which augments the college library's holdings in this field. "It's a great resource," says McKee. "Students are invited to make appointments and encouraged to go over to look at the collection up close." There is nothing quite equal to viewing an original print; reproductions in books do not have the same





Hemi Cartier - Busson

Paul Strand, Tailor's Apprentice, Luzzara, Italy, 1952, silver print, 4½ x 6"

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Simaine-la-Rotonde, France, 1970, 14 x 19"

surface quality and cannot create the same effect.

The collection is also a resource for other photography schools and departments around the state. Before the development of this collection students of photography in Maine had to visit galleries and museums in Boston or New York to view much of the work now available in Brunswick. Tours of the collection are also available to the public by appointment.

The museum is about halfway along in its core collection goal of 1200 prints. The recent show of the collection at mid-stream thus provided an opportunity for criticism and reassessment. Watson, Coffey, and McKee selected the collection's best work and hung those prints in rough chronological order in the museum's small downstairs gallery. The show contained seventy prints from the work of such pioneers as Fox Talbot, and Hill and Adamson, to contemporary masters Brassai, Carrier-Bresson, Arnold Newman, Robert Frank, Aaron Siskind, and Harry Callahan. And it contains less well-known work, such as a tiny, murky landscape by the Czech photographer Jan Saudek, and a large color print by Richard Misrach of palms burning in the desert—a print that has an uncanny similarity in scale and presence to Frith's pyramids, taken over 100 years earlier. An early landscape by John B. Green, taken in 1855, is among Coffey's favorites of the collection: "Green was an amateur archeologist born and raised in France, and was one of the first people to use photography for research. His photographs don't seem to be about anything but vision—there is nothing like a pyramid or a city street. They seem unpremeditated and spontaneous, a natural response by the artist to the landscape."

Significantly, this show has been the most popular ever mounted at the museum, outdrawing even the Winslow Homer watercolor exhibit of 1983. One can only hope that other museums in Maine will take heed of the positive publicity this collection has received, and commit themselves to a more aggressive acquisitions policy in photography.

All photographs reproduced courtesy of Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine

> By George Benington George Benington is a photographer and book designer living in Portland



A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF ARCHITECTS IN MAINE ON CAMDEN'S CYRUS P. BROWN

Since 1984 the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has been compiling A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine. It consists of illustrated, four-page entries on the lives and careers of architects who worked in the state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and twentieth-century architects who are deceased.

The dictionary is edited by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., with Roger G. Reed as associate editor. It is a vast resource that sheds light on the relative significance of Maine structures in terms of their designers' careers, and is therefore an important contribution to historic preservation in the state. It enables the commission to make available some of its massive stores of information on Maine architecture. And it can help foster a sense of pride through greater public awareness of Maine's architectural history.

Maine's dictionary is one of two initial statewide endeavors of its kind-a similar resource is being compiled in North Carolina—although one for all of Canada is also in the works. A Biographical Dictionary of Maine Architects is being distributed in installments as a supplement to Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation's Maine Preservation News. It is being sent simultaneously to libraries and historical societies throughout the state. When volume one is complete, early in 1988, the commission will bind five hundred additional copies and make them available to other organizations as needed. Information about the dictionary can be obtained from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in Augusta.

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Cyrus P. Brown 1862–1949

ATE nineteenth-century Maine saw the development of numerous summer colonies from York to Winter Harbor, in which wealthy out-of-state rusticators built substantial cottages by the sea. The demand for architectural services in all of these communities was considerable, for by the 1880s the inexpensively produced one and one-half-story cottages popular in the previous two decades no longer sufficiently met the needs of the visitors who came for "the season."

Camden was similar to other resorts both in the large number of summer homes that were built and in the consequent need for local firms to supervise their construction. One person stands out for the quality of his work as an architect-builder in the Camden area—Cyrus P. Brown.

Camden's transformation from a fishing village and mill town to a summer resort began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Edward F. Dillingham of Bangor built the first cottage in 1880 on Dillingham Point. Local builder Spencer Mero supervised the construction of this small Stick Style cottage from plans obtained by the noted architectural mail order firm of Palliser, Palliser & Co. of New York. Camden was not discovered. however, until 1886 when Joseph P. Stearns of New York constructed his great stone residence, Norumbega. Designed by fellow New Yorker Arthur Bates Jennings, the Stearns villa immediately became the focal point of Camden society and set off a brief flurry of construction activity by people attracted to the great natural beauty of the harbor and by the promise of money to be made through speculative development. While the next decade did not quite live up to initial expectations, the dramatic reconstruction of Camden's downtown in 1893 following a devastating fire the year before demonstrated the town's potential for growth.

Brown established his practice in Camden in 1887, the year Joseph Stearns completed Norumbega. Although he was born in Boston in 1862, Brown was descended from Benjamin Porter, an early Camden settler. James R. Brown, his father, was a carpenter who worked in Boston and Camden, and it was in the latter community that Cyrus was raised and educated. After working as a builder in Rhode Island, he came back to Maine in time to participate in the town's first important period of cottage construction.

One of the young builder's earliest major projects was the Norumbega carriage house that Joseph Stearns built in 1888. Boston architect E. K. Blakie, who was apparently active as

Blakie, who was apparently active as a developer in the area, provided the plans. The construction of this stable, comparable in size and decorative trim to a small house, could well have helped establish Brown's reputation as

a leading contractor.

Little is known about Brown's work

in the 1890s, although it is known that after 1892 he designed and built the W. F. Brisbee block on Elm Street, the Bird and Hodgman blocks on the north side of Main Street, and the Russell block on the south side of Main Street. It was not until this century that what Stearns and others envisaged as Camden's potential began to be realized. In the early 1900s Brown supervised the construction of a number of large summer homes designed by a variety of architects. Kentmoor, for Frederick Gilbert of Utica, New York, was begun in 1900 and finished in the following year. Designed by Boston architect Charles Brigham, it was one of the most distinctive Shingle Style residences in Camden. The house is characteristic of how that style had evolved by 1900. Ornamented with Colonial Revival style trim and the combination of gambrel and gable roofs, the exterior was entirely sheathed in cedar shingles, a material long felt to be compatible with the scenic splendors of the Maine coast. In plan, Kentmoor followed a formula developed and refined by Boston architects such as William Ralph Emerson in which the two principal elevations are on either side of the long rambling plan, one facing the sea and the other facing the driveway. In this scheme the main formal entry is traditionally located in the center of the land side, with secondary entries located on either narrow end of the house, one for the family and the other one for the servants and tradesmen.

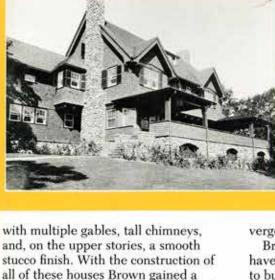
A second major Shingle Style house erected under his supervision is Armsleigh, built sometime between 1901 and 1904 for Charles F. Hofer of Ohio. The architect has not been identified, but the design is sophisticated in a way which, unlike Kentmoor, reflects the trends of the new century. The exterior is entirely shingled, but there is almost a complete absence of traditional historical ornament. Second story oriel windows, which are partially enveloped by the broad sweep of the roof, provide a major character-defining feature. The whole design is very low slung, a characteristic accentuated by the shedroof appendages at either end. This horizontal character results in a house that is quite compatible with Maine's rugged terrain.

In contrast, the 1903 residence of William Borden, designed by his fellow Chicagoan Jarvis Hunt, is a masonry building prominently sited









thorough familiarity with the range of

domestic architecture. Another house

was begun in 1903 and that was Lvn-

don, for Cyrus H. K. Curtis of Phila-

delphia, publisher of the Saturday

Evening Post and founder of one of

the most successful magazines in the

residence, by an unknown architect.

suggests influences of the Arts and

Crafts movement. Natural building

materials, such as shingle siding and

and steps, were blended with a rustic

trim that consisted of exposed rafter

ends, square porch posts, and plain

rubble stone chimneys, foundation.

country, the Ladies Home Journal. His

prevailing fashions in American



Kentmoor, Frederich Gilbert House, Charles Brigham, 1900-01, (top); Armsleigh, Charles F. Hofer House (later "Cedar Ledge"), Camden, c. 1901-04, (middle); Lyndon, Cyrus H. K. Curtis House, 1903-04, (bottom)

Right

Shorelands, Edward Hager House, Camden, Calvin and John Howard Stevens, 1912–13, (top); Weatherend, T. H. Dougherty House, Rockport, W. E. Schwartz, 1902, addition, Cyrus P. Brown, c. 1913, (middle); Pinecrest, Colonel Myron M. Parker House, Camden, Cyrus P. Brown, 1901–02, courtesy of Martha L. Rogers, (bottom)

Period photographs, except where noted, were provided courtesy of the Camden-Rockport Historical Society







vergeboards supported on brackets.

Brown's work for Cyrus Curtis may have helped him to obtain the contract to build the Camden Yacht Club. The wealthy Curtis hired Portland architects John Calvin and John Howard Stevens to design this Shingle Style clubhouse in 1912. Brown worked on another Stevens project in 1912 and 1913. This was Shorelands, built for Edward Hager of New York. Designed in a very refined and graceful Colonial Revival style, the Hager cottage departed from the traditional symmetry of the style only in the gentle, sweeping arc of its plan that embraces its spectacular view of the ocean. The use of novelty siding instead of clapboards accentuates the already pronounced horizontal effect of the design, while the rubble stone

chimneys, foundation, and terrace provide the house with a very subtle rustic air.

While Brown's work consisted primarily of contracting, he did provide architectural services. In some instances this consisted of additions to existing structures. For example, Weatherend, the 1902 cottage for T. H. Dougherty, was the work of local architect-builder W. E. Schwartz. John Gribbell of Philadelphia purchased the Rockport house and landscaped its grounds in 1913. It was probably at that time that Brown was engaged to design an addition which, on the exterior, duplicated Schwartz's scheme.

Brown's most important commission as an architect, however, was undoubtedly Pinecrest, the Chestnut Street cottage for Colonel Myron M. Parker of Washington, D.C. Constructed in 1901 and 1902, this Shingle Style house was more in the spirit of the freely interpreted late nineteenthcentury examples of that style. The roofs and walls are shingled, and there is a picturesque asymmetry that disguises what is basically a rectangular house. Two steeply pitched gable roofs sweep down to just above the first floor level, encompassing an entrance vestibule and two porches. Broad gable ends are punctuated by second story porches whose railings barely project from the surface of the wall. On the principal elevation facing Chestnut Street, a section of the cornice of one gable envelops a round three-story tower which, like the porches, is tightly held within the plane of the exterior walls. In this fashion the various picturesque elements are contained within the volume of the structure.

The interior of Pinecrest features beautiful Colonial Revival style woodwork. In plan it is very much part of the tradition developed in the 1880s of large open interior spaces. The main entry, recessed behind a shingled round arch, opens into a large living hall containing the staircase. The latter has an intermediate landing and is well lighted by a two-story bay window. To the right of the hall is a sitting room with windows and porch that open on to the lawn. Directly opposite the hall is a large dining room that originally provided a view toward the ocean.

Although Cyrus Brown's career may have continued in the years between world wars, building activity in Camden had reached its apogee by the 1920s, two decades before his death in 1949. Brown built many more houses than he designed, but his construction experience exposed him to some of the best architectural work of his time. This working body of knowledge is reflected in Pinecrest, Brown's most significant design, which compares favorably with the work of such contemporaries as John Calvin Stevens. This great Shingle Style house has earned for him a special place in Maine's architectural history.

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., and Roger G. Reed

Earle Shettleworth is director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Roger Reed is the commission's architectural historian.







AM BOOK REVIEW EXHIBITION CATALOGS, PART II:

Bernard Langlais: The Middle Years, Midtown Galleries, New York City, 1986.



Bernard Langlais, Untitled, c. 1961, painted wood relief, 24 x 25%", courtesy of Midtown Galleries, New York

ERNARD "Blackie" Langlais was born under the sign of Leo-a "leonardo" if you will—and indeed he was a lion of American art. Yet he has never been accurately understood by the art community in his home state of Maine where, after he returned here in 1966. he wielded a saw like a scepter. Unfortunately too, that was when his advancing national and international acclaim was cut short midstream, only to be followed eleven years later by his death at an incredibly young fiftysix. A small but accomplished exhibition entitled "Bernard Langlais: The Middle Years," hung during November and December of 1986, not in Maine, but in the Maine-connected Midtown Galleries in New York, has brought a welcome reappearance of Langlais's work before cosmopolitan eyes. The show is gone but a fine catalog remains that not only documents that event but is also the first serious consideration of Langlais and his career to appear in print.

Langlais was born in Old Town, Maine, of French-Canadian parents. His father was a carpenter, and his mother a maker of quilts and braided rugs. Of his upbringing, the catalog quotes Langlais: "[I was] born and brought up in a rural area, on a river, where timber, logging lumber, lumber mills, woodworking factories are as common as steel and cement to New York. It was years before I realized my original environment would have that

much effect on my creative process. That is, being around and working with wood from the child to the man established my life's work."

He attended the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., spent three summers at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, and continued with his study of painting at the Brooklyn Museum School under expatriate German Expressionist Max Beckmann, whose direct, physical approach to teaching as well as to painting and woodcut made a strong impression on Langlais. He attended the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris in the early 1950s, a good free school at that time with an international student body including many eager young American artists. Even so, Langlais was among the minority of his peers in his devotion to abstract painting, and aligned with a few other students who called themselves "Purists" and who were possibly connected with the hardedge nonobjective Purism of Ad Reinhardt and others emerging in New York about the same time. After returning to New York where he met his future wife Helen Friend (ironically a native of Skowhegan, Maine), he received a Fulbright Fellowship and entered the Kunstakademie in Oslo, Norway, the home of psychological expressionist, Edvard Munch (d. 1944), and the Munch Museum. Afterwards he spent a brief period painting cubist landscapes in a Spanish fishing village on

the Costa Brava. Back in New York again, in 1956, with Helen (whom he had married in Oslo), Langlais's career began to take off, initiating a difficult period of experimentation and exhibition. For relief from the fray, the couple purchased summer quarters in Cushing, Maine, following the precedent of many New York artists, only for Langlais it was a kind of coming home. At this time, he began to play with ideas in wood. His "wood paintings," as they were then dubbed (at first Langlais glued painted pieces against a canvas backing), and his later wood reliefs, varied from the abstract to figurative and animal subjects. For the artist, they ignited creative wildfire.

In Manhattan Langlais showed everywhere and often, frustrating a potential home base at Leo Castelli. His talent was recognized but his exuberance was received with distrust and this, along with the sudden death of his two biggest collectors, G. David Thompson and Jon Nicolas Street, contributed to Langlais's retreat to Cushing.

Langlais's subsequent direction as an animalier resulted in scores of witty, heart-warming reliefs and freestanding sculptures, some colossi, like his 1972 Skowhegan Indian, created largely out of Maine spruce and pine. Such works are frequently seen in both public and private collections in Maine and in parks and landscapes throughout the state. Langlais became

a favorite son-perhaps the most beloved artist in the state. But his elephants and rhinoceri—and perhaps lions most of all-have been, while not misunderstood, not well understood. Often they are mistakenly termed primitive or naive. One looks at them differently after considering the explorative variety of his pivotal middle period. In fact, in his studies and in his art, Langlais subtly synthesized diverse currents of twentieth-century modernism—from Munch to Cezanne, from Baule mask to cubist collage. And the anthropomorphism, expressionism, and physicality of his art make it seem, looking back from today, rather in advance of its time.

. . . .

"Bernard Langlais: The Middle Years," was masterfully conceived by Midtown Galleries owner John W. Payson as the first in an ultimate series of three shows (on the early, middle, and late years) that will represent, for the first time, Langlais's entire career. The first in the series of accompanying catalogs, then, is a praiseworthy publication in the tradition of fine, wellresearched documents produced by some enlightened commercial galleries, principally in New York. Something of its ilk would be big news in Portland. At least the Langlais catalog is locally available at Midtown's sister gallery, Hobe Sound North.

The forty-seven-page catalog printed by Eastern Press of New Haven, Connecticut, features blackand-white illustrations and fourteen four-color reproductions. Its clear, straightforward, and unpretentious design is the work of Grant Jacks, former publications director of the Martha Jackson Gallery (now the David Anderson Gallery) in New York. Jacks and his wife Shirley have recently become residents of Portland. Commentary is provided by John Payson himself, Hugh Gourley, director of the Colby College Museum of Art, and Shirley Jacks.

Payson's piece is personal, personable, and perceptive—a real joy of an introduction. As a dealer (president of Payson Art Enterprises, Hobe Sound, Florida), a patron (chairman of the board of the Skowhegan School and founder of Westbrook College's Joan Whitney Payson Gallery of Art in Portland), a collector of twentieth-century American art, and a journalism graduate (from Pepperdine University

in Los Angeles), Payson brings to the task an assortment of skills. He has written several previous catalogs, among them *Expressions from Maine* (1976), for a bicentennial traveling exhibition that originated at Hobe Sound Gallery, Florida, and, with Nancy Lawler Payson, Westbrook College's 1977 permanent collection catalog. He was also Langlais's dealer and close friend from the late 1960s until the artist's death.

Shirley Jacks's essay provides the world with the first overview of Langlais's career. Though more journalist than art historian—Jacks holds a degree from Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism—she provides a picture of Langlais's development and of the dynamics that surround his watershed withdrawal from New York. Her essay provides us with a suggestive synopsis of the special interests and influences that are relevant to Langlais's work, from the emotiveness of German and Norwegian expressionism to the rampant American Abstract Expressionism that in the late 1950s consumed all but New York's most artistically gifted and individualistic.

Like Payson, Hugh Gourley was a personal and professional friend of Langlais. Gourley's contribution is an assemblage of explanatory notes, on a number of individual works shown in the exhibition and catalog, that identify key themes in Langlais's oeuvre: the subtle interplay of two- and threedimensional references (a dialogue between easel painting and relief); the clever incorporation of found wood objects like window frames; splinters and matchstick forms that in some pieces behave like painterly brushwork in wood; and the expressive use of primitive and folk art related images in many of his pieces. Gourley points out that Langlais's broad knowledge of artists and styles is reflected in works such as the ca. 1960s relief, Bathers, in which his carved interpretation of this age-old art theme calls strongly to mind the crude anatomies and masked faces of Picasso's 1907 painting, Desmoiselles D'Avignon.

In addition to the essays, Shirley Jacks provides, in the catalog's backmatter, essential data on Langlais's entire career: a detailed chronology and exhibition history, lists of collections, and the first extensive Langlais bibliography. In this material, the

diminishing exposure and critical evaluation of Langlais's work after 1966 is documented.

In the early 1960s when Langlais showed frequently at Castelli, he was sandwiched between rising stars like Jack Tworkov, Yves Klein, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, and John Chamberlain. Langlais was identified by articles in Arts Magazine, Art in America, and Art News as a new talent to watch. And reviewers challenged him. Wrote Vivian Raynor in Arts Magazine's April 1961 issue about Langlais's work in one show, "There is a strong feeling of being among last year's best sellers, now remaindered," and reviewing another in the November 1964 issue, "It isn't every day of the week that someone switches from abstractions suitable for the Castelli Gallery . . . to flat out representation." Clearly it was a tough and exciting period for Langlais, fraught with difficulty, rife with possibility.

Despite Langlais's fierce productivity in Maine and the new directions his work was taking, he never again regained the center stage context of mainstream galleries and of national reviews. He showed in numerous college, university, and small private galleries, increasingly more around New England than in New York, and frequently throughout Maine in galleries like Maine Coast Artists in Rockport where Hugh Gourley met Langlais through a mutual friend, the gallery's director, Mildred Cummings. Press coverage of the latter was local, limited largely to pieces like "The Man with a Zoo in his Garden" (Maine Sunday Telegram, October 10, 1971), "Bernard Langlais and his Gigantic Art" (Downeast, June 1972), and "Langlais-A Fine Artist in Wood" (Maine Life, October 1979). Gourley notes: "When I began to work on the catalog essay for Midtown I found the news articles very repeti-

tive. There was nothing serious."

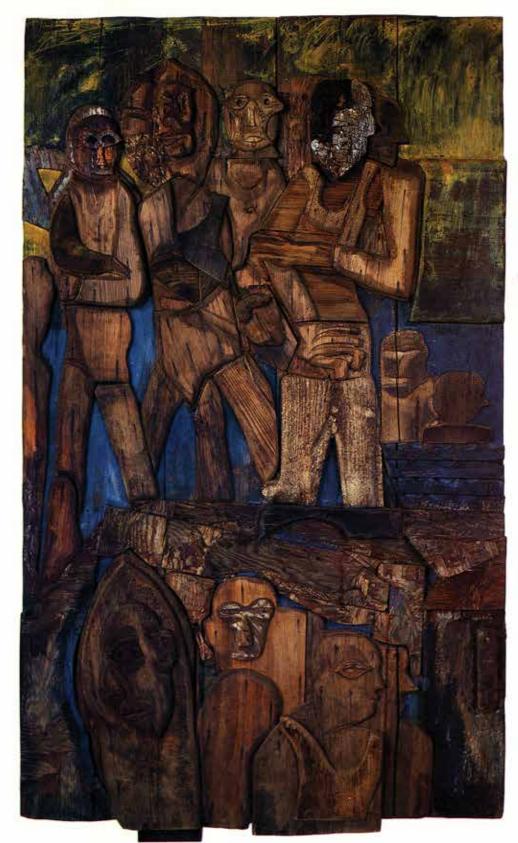
There have been two publications on Langlais in Maine, both since his death. The first, a catalog that accompanied the University of Maine at Augusta exhibition, "The Lion Within" (1981), contains a partial exhibition history and other data with a brief preface by a Langlais family friend, painter Cecily Aikman—nothing like catalog commentary.

Then there is a lovely little tome by Patricia Davidson Reef, Bernard Langlais, Sculptor (Kennebec River Press, 1985), designed for young people. These, especially the second, are fine beginnings, but they still do not satisfy a need for broader publication and informed appreciation of Langlais's art.

Moreover, an essential transition has somehow taken place. Bernard Langlais, "modern artist," became Bernard Langlais, "Maine artist." During his life Langlais himself seems to have felt it. Even though he considered his best work to have been done in Maine he commented in a 1973 interview: "Of course I would like to be better known... Maybe my best work is yet to come... maybe not... You realize it's an almost impossible dream. You go to exhibits... you think, well, tomorrow or next year it'll be my turn."

Perhaps the time has come. Already this year-the tenth anniversary of Langlais's death—the Midtown show has occasioned an extensive review by Carl Little in Arts Magazine (January 1987). Hopefully, Midtown's future exhibitions in the series will generate more. There would be much to learn from a formal, comprehensive study of Langlais, perhaps of the art historical monograph variety (a task this somewhat rusty academic may soon take on). But for now, we at least have a pioneering document on a major American artist in Bernard Langlais: The Middle Years.

Langlais's abstract works will be exhibited at Hobe Sound Galleries North from August 19 through September 19, 1987.



When Maine Coast Artists reopens in June, visitors will miss the familiar seagull logo bearing the gallery's name, which formerly adorned the front of the building. Originally carved in 1968 by the late Bernard Langlais, it was removed last November to be conserved and placed in a new location inside the gallery.

The anticipated \$300,000 cost of the basic renovation is being financed through private gifts to the gallery's ongoing capital campaign, and according to Rockefeller, more than half of the projected total has already been raised through the generosity of Maine Coast Artists board members and individual donors. The fundraising campaign will continue, and completion of the drive is targeted for late summer.

There is tremendous pride on behalf of those involved with the renovation project. Says Rockefeller, "Our success in launching this project reflects the commitment of Maine Coast Artists' trustees and other generous individuals to preserving and beautifying this important Rockport landmark as well as to promoting excellence in contemporary Maine art."

NEW ACQUISITION COMES TO COLBY COLLEGE



Philip Pearlstein, Female Model Reclining on Empire Sofa, 1972, oil on canvas, 48 x 60", Colby College Museum of Art, gift of Paul J. Schupf

■HE Museum of Art at Colby College has recently acquired an oil painting, Female Model Reclining on Empire Sofa (1972), by American artist Philip Pearlstein. Pearlstein, a contemporary figurative painter associated with the New Realism, is best known for his studies of the nude figure as pure form, of which the Colby painting is an excellent example. It is an important addition to Colby's collection and is significant for Maine as a state that has few important postmodernist works in its public collections.

Female Model Reclining on Empire Sofa was given to Colby in October 1986 by Paul Jacques Schupf of Hamilton, New York. He is a partner in the firm Schupf, Woltman, and Company, Inc., and a noted collector of contemporary art. Schupf became acquainted with Colby through the 1985 Colby-Bowdoin joint exhibition of works by Alex Katz, to which he was the principal lender. A member of the Colby Board of Overseers and chairman of that board's recent visiting committee to the art department and museum of art, Schupf also serves on the acquisition committee for the museum's Iere Abbott Purchase Fund.

Michael Marlais, assistant professor of art at Colby, writes about the new acquisition and describes Pearlstein's style: "Philip Pearlstein . . . has devoted himself to one of life's more artificial situations: the posing of models in the painter's studio. From this situation—so the official critical line would say-Pearlstein has created an art of magnificently abstract intentions. He bends and twists, distorts and disfigures his sitters, amoutating a limb with the edge of his two-dimensional arrangement of shapes on the

surface of his paintings.'

The Colby museum is not commonly known for its small, but growing collection of contemporary art, but according to museum director Hugh Gourley, this Pearlstein is a major addition to that collection. Other contemporary artists represented in the Colby collection include Alex Katz, Robert Indiana, Neil Welliver, Louise Nevelson, and Fairfield Porter, all of whom have established connections with Maine. Although Colby already owns a Pearlstein lithograph, Gourley believes that Female Model Reclining on Empire Sofa is the first Pearlstein painting to enter a collection in the state.

LEONARD BASKIN SPEAKS IN PORTLAND

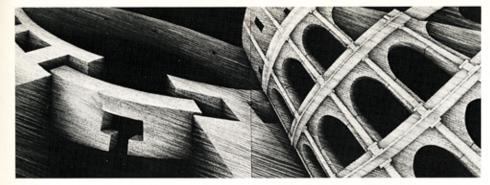
EONARD Baskin, known to the art world primarily as a printmaker and sculptor, spoke in February at the Portland Club to members and guests of the Baxter Society, a statewide book collector's group. Baskin's topic, "Books That Were Classically Illustrated," revealed his life-long interest in book collecting and his love of the printed image.

Philip Isaacson, an attorney and art critic, introduced his longtime friend and described Baskin's unique library at his home in Leeds, Massachusetts. It contains thousands of volumes, ranging from rare antiquarian editions to herbals, bestiaries, and books on history and eighteenth-century anatomy. Baskin's graphic work over the past thirty years has been greatly influenced by illustrations found in these books, and his command of the graphic arts, as printmaker and book designer, as well as his establishment of the Gehenna Press, have earned him great respect.

As an artist Baskin is most often associated with harsh black images of tormented souls and mutilated birdmen, but his humor and warmth were evident during the Baxter Club address. He described illustrations and books that he liked, some of which he has owned. Starting with the Lubeck Bible, he journeyed through the centuries, showing slides and speaking of such diverse works as a book of travels to the Holy Land, a book of scripts, a livre des terms, herbals, "The First Book of Fish," books illustrated by Hans Holbein, William Blake, and Aubrey Beardsley, and on into the twentieth century to those books published by the art dealer Vollard. He spoke of the "exquisite marriage of typography and woodcut," of how 'delicious'' a certain book was, of 'gorgeous images"; listening, one discovered an affinity between his words and the weird and powerful beauty of his work.

The lecture was arranged by David Turner of the Carlson and Turner antiquarian bookstore on Congress Street in Portland. Turner and his partner, Norma Carlson, met Baskin years ago, when he wandered in (they were then located on Milk Street) looking for old, unusual books. A personal friendship developed with Baskin's increased patronage of the shop. In addition, Carlson and Turner became specialists in Baskin's books and prints, which they often display and sell.

Baskin recently designed and illustrated the 1987 Carlson and Turner calendar. The drawing, entitled The Demon of the Book Collector, shows a possessed winged creature clutching an armful of books and expressing a tormented scream. It is Baskin's projection of the book collector's obsession and, like much of his work, has been both praised and damned.



Susan Groce, Historical Vortex at Casa Rinconada, mixed media drawing, 4 x 11', collection of the artist

THE WATERVILLE ART PROJECT: GRASS ROOTS AND LOFTY GOALS

SUSAN GROCE

■IG drawings and mixed media prints by Susan Groce were on exhibition at the Joan Whitney Payson Gallery of Art, Westbrook College, in Portland during the month of April. Associate professor of art at the University of Maine at Orono since 1979, Groce recently received a faculty research grant which allowed her to travel to Italy and the American Southwest, and she drew inspiration for her new, powerful images from these diverse locales. Payson art gallery director Judith Sobol says Groce "is an extraordinary interpreter of visual signs. Intrigued by ancient architecture and by the power of the graphic mark, she draws with pencil, with inks, with crayons, with charcoal, and with paints. She fills paper that is often as large as four by fourteen feet. She makes strong and mysterious equivalents for cliff dwellings, for amphitheaters, for stone circles. And when you look at these drawings, you become part of them.'

Groce received a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona at Tucson and a master's degree from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and has participated in numerous group exhibitions nationally. She has conducted workshops and critiques focused on a New England audience, at the 1985 Maine Printmaking Workshop on Vinalhaven and more recently in March at the Rhode Island School of Design. While the Payson Gallery exhibition was Groce's first one-person show since 1980, she will have another solo exhibition of prints and drawings this coming October at Carnegie Hall Galleries of the University of Maine at Orono.

TALTER Isgro, a painter for thirty years, left Brooklyn in 1970 for the alternative environment offered to him in rural Maine. There Isgro discovered not only a place to paint, but also a spawning ground for his organizational concepts, when he founded the Waterville Art Project.

After arriving in Maine Isgro continued to paint, exhibiting his work at Maine Coast Artists Gallery in Rockport; University of Maine at Farmington; the Railroad Square Cinema and Thomas College Gallery, both in Waterville; and the Rumford Public Library. At the same time he observed the art scene of which he was a part and realized that there was no focal point for practicing artists. He established the Waterville Art Project (WAP) in June 1955 as a nonprofit foundation to provide grass roots advocacy for individual artists, and also to create a cultural service organization for the community. Serving most of central Maine, WAP has developed educational programs for children and adults; offered classes on organizational and fund-raising skills to professional, performing, and visual artists; and attempted to own and manage its own gallery space with the goal of maintaining an ongoing exhibition program. Although the focus is local, Isgro's vision is to broaden the impact of the organization beyond its geographic region as much as possible.

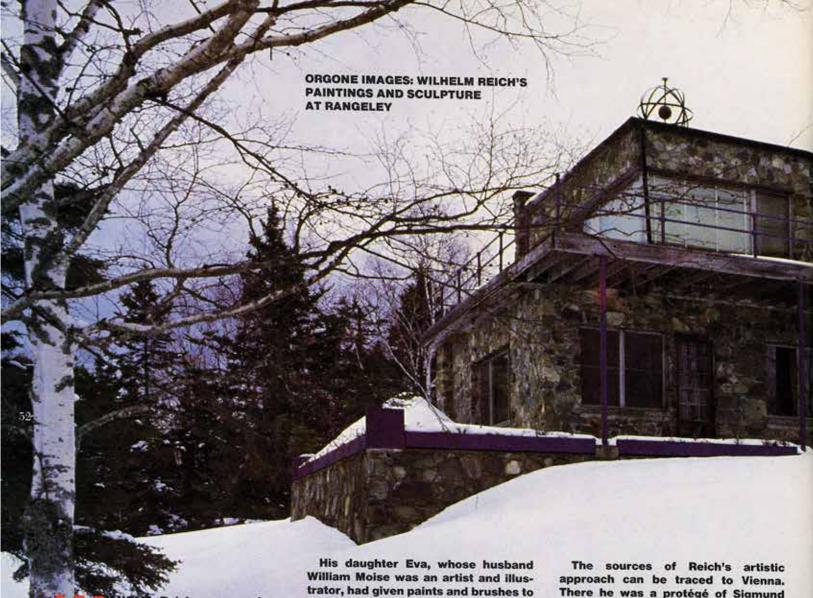
At a community level, WAP has offered activities that promote enjoyment of the arts regardless of the level of experience. Events have included a lecture and film survey of American art history, a public service radio show entitled Artreach that serves a central Maine listening audience, and a weekly arts calendar aired on stations WTVL and WDBX. Another stated goal of the Waterville Art Project is the aesthetic development and awareness of children and, by way of encouragement, the organization has

donated art books to Brookside and Pleasant Street Schools.

Services rendered to professional artists by Waterville Art Project are as varied as its community services. Isgro strongly believes that the many needs of individual artists in the state have not been addressed by a single organization, and he conceived of the project in part to answer these needs. However, WAP's wide-ranging goals have met with occasional snags. Isgro had hoped to collaborate with the Waterville Gallery of Fine Arts to bring about ongoing exhibition opportunities for area artists, but plans were cancelled due to the death of its primary donor. Initially more successful is a communications network with other arts organizations in Maine. Isgro states, "WAP has initiated steps to establish meaningful interchange among art groups. We plan to expand this network as rapidly as possible in order to share information, coordinate projects, avoid duplication of effort. and apply our collective energy more efficiently." With an ambitious eye to the future, Isgro hopes to develop an "art congress," whereby artists around the state could participate in brainstorming sessions to better identify, air, and resolve their needs.

WAP has had an enthusiastic response to its ideas and programs. Corporate sponsors have been most supportive, with a \$2,000 grant from Guy Gannett Foundation and a \$500 grant from Hannaford Brothers. Personnel and promotional services have also been donated by area businesses. In the planning stages for the Waterville Art Project are a benefit package to attract increased membership, workshops for artists, a resource data bank of arts information, and a juried exhibition of works on paper.

Although Isgro has the able assistance of an executive committeeincluding treasurer Anita Ashby, manager of People's Heritage Bank in South Portland; and secretary Abbott Meader, faculty member of the art department at Colby College in Waterville-the many-faceted Waterville Art Project still lacks a unifying theme to define priorities within the organization, a targeted audience, and subordinate goals that can be accomplished after steady growth has taken place. Still, the Waterville Art Project has come a long way in two years, largely through the dauntless energy of Walter Isgro.



Reich was an Austrian-born physician-scientist who is best known for his roversial work on a biological gy he called "orgone" that he believed functions in living matter. Because of the extreme nature of his research he was forced to reestablish himself professionally in five countries throughout Europe and Scandinavia before coming to America in 1939, on the eve of World War II. Reich's visits and eventual move to Maine during the troubled years that followed coincided with his mounting concern about the threat of nuclear disaster. He began researching a means of diminishing the harmful effects of nuclear radiation through orgone energy functions and he labeled the project Oranur (Orgone Anti Nuclear), later crediting Oranur with bringing out the artist in him.

"I began to paint yesterday. The form and color stream right out of my fingers onto the canvas," he wrote in his journal on January 26, 1951. A year later he wrote, "After months of hesitation, I began sculpturing. It's wonderful, even with my lack of technique... form flows out of movement."

His daughter Eva, whose husband William Moise was an artist and illustrator, had given paints and brushes to Reich one Christmas. She recalls that at that time such materials were difficult to come by and she thought they would make a nice present. She could not have anticipated the powerful effect they were to have on her father.

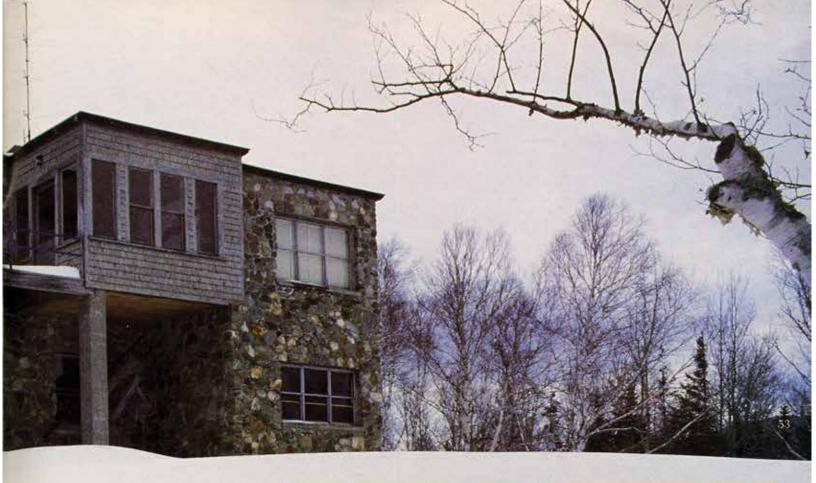
"Eyes and hands, especially fingers, unite and 'it forms' from them while I paint. Somehow, memories of landscapes seen and traveled through long ago are still alive with a special sharpness. These images emerge with formation of shape and harmonic integration of color. I am, of course, no learned artist, but feel I can do it.... Painting of orgone phenomena will, if I acquire the technical skill, save me a lot of writing," he noted in his journal on February 8, 1951.

That was Reich's first winter in Maine. In 1942 he had purchased land in Rangeley overlooking Dodge Pond and several years later supervised the construction of a massive building there. A Bauhaus-like structure, designed by New York architect James B. Bell and built of local stone, it is among Maine's first modernist houses. It was called Organon by Reich and is now Wilhelm Reich Museum.

There he was a protégé of Sigmund Freud at the same time that Viennese artist Oskar Kokoschka was influential in the European art community. Reich's intellectual and emotional bent also led him to German and Scandinavian expressionism. He spent several years in Norway during the period when Edvard Munch was producing his paintings and prints of tormented minds and fiery worlds. Reich's references to landscapes seen long ago and comparisons he made in his journal between the topographies of Rangeley and Oslo obviously have bearing on his style as it evolved at Organon.

Painting for Reich was a stimulating and powerful medium for the expression of orgone energy. Unfortunately, the events of the years following the gift of paints were not only to disrupt his time for developing the artistic skills he hoped for, they were to end his orgone energy research and cut short his life.

In May 1947, an issue of The New Republic contained an article entitled "The Strange Case of Wilhelm Reich." Although by many accounts flawed, it



was controversial enough to attract the attention of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In 1954, following an investigation of nearly seven years, the FDA filed an injunction to ban Reich's books and prevent interstate shipment of "Orgone Energy Accumulators" that he had used in his research and experimentation.

Reich refused to appear in court to answer the complaint. Instead he sent a letter protesting a government agency's authority to pass judgment on basic scientific research, stating that "the word 'freedom' should be more than an empty political slogan."

When one of Reich's students later transported an accumulator from Maine to New York, Reich was charged with criminal contempt. In 1957, having been found guilty and sentenced to two years in prison, Reich died in his cell at the federal penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

Jeffrey Belyea

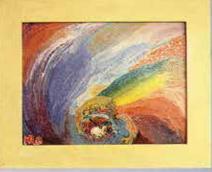
Jeff Belyea is publisher of AM

A special thanks to Mary Boyd Higgins, Trustee of the Wilhelm Reich Estate, for allowing us these first-time reproduction rights for Wilhelm Reich's paintings and sculpture.









Orgonon (originally The Orgone Energy Observatory), now the Wilhelm Reich Museum, Rangeley, Maine, built in 1948–51

Insets:

XX Century, 1953, oil on canvas, 30 x 40° (top left):

The Messenger, clay figure made by Reich in 1952, cast in bronze after his death (bottom left);

Ancestors (The Fishes), 1951, oil on canvas, 18 x 24" (top right);

Spinning Wave, 1951, oil on canvas, 12 x 16" (bottom right)

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