

furious potency to spark and ignition the spirit, to bring the soul of the recipient to some quality of the spirit who made it. Art does not evaporate with its maker; it is not subject to the degradation of the earthly. It is an unnatural thing, and it possesses the greatest power attainable on this earth - it remains.

MacIver's works are the candles she has put against the darkness, and from them, we know of her what Millay said elsewhere in the same poem: "More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses of the world." And as well, the light she has put into our eyes. Go and see this exhibition; spend a moment to carry this light the artist has left us.

Think of Loren MacIver.

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UnrePRESSED

Functioning Sculpture: The Press as a Work of Art and Prints Created From It

Atelier A/E through January 30

BY JOEL SILVERSTEIN

NEW YORK OFFERS A wealth of spaces and venues in which challenging exhibitions are presented. We tend to get jaded, expecting the *de rigueur*, white-washed bomb shelter, air plane hanger or automobile showroom functioning as a gallery space, that we often lose contact with the intimacy of a work of art.

Granted, there are times when intimacy or even connection within the context of the art environment is not necessary. Certain kinds of transgressive avant-garde works thrive

on large alienating spaces in which disconnection, ennui and confusion is the rule. Then again, the older idea of large abstract-expressionist pictures requiring large inviting spaces so the bled, poured and scumbled edges of the canvases can embrace and wrap around the viewer. Today, more often than not, however, galleries mimic industrial spaces or impersonal stores. How much remodeling did all those Euro-trash clothing mongers actually have to do in SoHo after they took over the art galleries? The answer is, not much. Look for twelve black dresses hung like a minimalist installation at Chinati and you'll know what I mean.

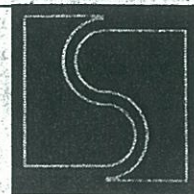
Tucked away within a row of brownstones in Chelsea is Atelier A/E. It's a gallery housed in a beautifully restored living space by artist/curators Anson and Ellen Peckham. This married couple restored the building themselves over twenty five years ago. They began the gallery to connect artists to collectors and organize artist-based exhibitions. What's fascinating is to see intimate works placed in a home and not have them be merely decorative.

There's a staircase, a living room, a solarium and a study. Light floods in from both ends of the brownstone. While the space itself obviously poses challenges and problems, seeing works of art in this environment is highly refreshing. It's a throw-back to early Modernist traditions. Think of Gertrude and Leo Stein, or Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, or even Peggy Guggenheim. The work reflects the environment and visa-versa.

The current exhibition at Atelier A/E begins with a nimble premise: Suppose a sculptor wanted to rethink the artist's printing press? Suppose he wanted to transcend mere functionality

and decided to make it a work of art in itself? A conceptual idea, but one laden with many formal possibilities. The sculptor Micheal Ince is the lynch-pin to this whole plan. Ince spent many years in Asia and has more recently worked restoring boats and building furniture. These skills and experiences have paid off as his wood constructions are truly beautiful. There are smaller models of the presses present at the gallery, but the full-scale models are demonstrated in a videotape directed by Gail Jansen, which can be viewed upon request. In the video, the artist discusses the inspiration for these works, as well as demonstrating them in cooperation with three other artists who used them to make prints.

Ince is drawn to traditional Chinese forms. Not it's so-called high art, but utilitarian objects: the wheelbarrow, which the Chinese used for battle, the mouse-trap, the rocker and the battering ram. Each of Ince's sculptures objects have simple moving parts and are made of jointed wood, rope, hemp and stones for counter weight. Ince's *WHEELBARRROW* is enormous. It must be lifted, pushed forward, while the print is made by striking it's wheel. In *THE MOUSE TRAP*, a counter weight is dropped from a considerable distance, striking the print upon impact. One uses Ince's *ROCKER* to make a print by standing on



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the press, with the artist's body weight applying the pressure. Finally, *THE BATTERING RAM* is suspended by ropes and can strike a print by itself, or in this case, employ the painted foot of one of the artists as a printing plate. The sculptor must stay on track by creating forms that are tied to function. If the press can't make a print, it is useless. On the other hand, the print makers who are collaborating must be willing to be flexible, accept all kinds of unforeseen events and be able to access what is going on. It's not an easy process, but so prosaic, that it deserved to be documented and seen as part of the piece in its own right.

The presses all have an early or pre-industrial look, like ancient technologies that you read about in the journals of Marco Polo, or the contraptions that Rube Goldberg used to draw. They are jointed and slivered in ways that suggest an awkward poise. The four artists involved, the sculptor himself: (who also contributed prints) Dan Weldon, Bette Winkler and Jennifer Ale don't share a common style or response to the printmaking process. But they share a level of craft and commitment to seriousness that comes across as consistent.

Dan Weldon is a master printer, and he previously assisted de Kooning and Eric Fischl. Apart from the current collaboration, he makes solar-prints without the use of any acid (environmentally friendly). He has contributed a series of small abstractions based on nature, struck from the press and individually hand-colored. Each work in the series is constructed with lines and forms which are scratched out and redefined like little Hans Hoffmans or Paul Klee's.

Bette Winkler is also an abstract artist. She has been moved by her

encounters with butterflies in Peru. She uses iridescent pigments mixed into conventional colors in order to produce a series of geometric reductions that glow at odd angles. It's a way of referring to nature without illustrating it. In the hallway, Ms Winkler has displayed another abstract series. This time it's of leaves, branches and atmosphere rendered in silver and black that has a haunting quality of a Japanese screen.

Jennifer Ale is an English artist whose work is imbued with the spirit of German Expressionists Kathe Kollwitz, Otto Dix and Emil Nolde. Her lino-cuts are sparsely reduced to strong passages of black and white. Finally, Michael Ince contributed a series of boats and processional images heavily indebted to Indonesian art. While his presses are uniquely individual creations, his prints are far less so.

All the prints demonstrate a high level of craft and are very tasteful, but the nature of the project suggests that more caution should have been thrown to the wind. In viewing the prints away from the videotape, I found myself saying "Let 'er rip!" Perhaps more grain of the wood or stone, more random chance, misprints, misfires, more force and incorporated mayhem would have allowed more of the process to find its way into the imagery in a more fundamental way, so that the video wouldn't be necessary as an explanation of the prints.

What are we left with? A gallery that's a home. Some beautiful spaces and odd clutter. A fantastic concept. A cache of handsome prints, the odd one of which catches fire. First rate sculpture, most of which is not there and a great video documenting it all. Sounds like a reason to stop by from your usual haunts. The gallery is open at unusual hours: Friday-Sunday 12:00-6:00. If you call ahead for an appointment, Ellen Peckham, the

curator, can show you around. She's knowledgeable, friendly and will gladly pull other works out of storage for viewing.

When you visit the gallery, make certain to check out Roberto de Lamonica's fabulous lithographs printed in eighteen colors. De Lamonica, now deceased, was an instructor at the Arts Students League for many years and worked in a lush Latin-Expressionist style. It's a good way to cap off your visit.

Valentina Dubasky

Ancient Futures

New Paintings and Monotypes

Cheryl Pelavin Fine Art through March 4

BY JOEL SILVERSTEIN

"It is difficult to think of a single such natural system that has not, for better or worse, been substantially modified by human culture. It has been happening since the days of ancient Mesopotamia. It is coeval with writing, with the entirety of our social existence. And it is this irreversibly modified world, that is all the nature we have".

~ Simon Schama

Landscape and Memory.

SCHAMA'S VIEW OF landscape is totally sympathetic and informed by contemporary philosophy. It is not a place, or a space that exists in and of itself. It differs from those English Empiricists who trekked through cow pastures with fresh dung on their shoes in order to capture an effect or a formal reality that superseded their own existence. Schama's trees only make a noise if someone is there to hear them.