
drawings from the
collection of
milton brutten and
helen herrick

introduction

The Ben Shahn Galleries of the department of art at the William Paterson College mount and document exhibitions of contemporary art and make these available to the students, faculty and residents of the northern New Jersey area. It is our conviction that theories learned in the studio classroom must be evaluated against the realities of artistic production outside the academic setting. We wish these exhibitions to reflect the points of view of the practicing artist, dealer, critic and collector and in this vein are grateful to the members of the newly-formed Advisory Council: Milton Butler, Chuck Close, Peter Frank, Barbara Haskell, Nelson Harlick, Juan Pardo, Andy Warhol, Lucio Pozzi, David Shapiro, and John Weber. The Ben Shahn Galleries, with the help of these professionals, can bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The success of the gallery program is due, in large part, to the efforts of Alan Lerner, chairman of the department of art, for his complete support in every aspect of every project. I am also grateful to William Finnegan for getting the catalog material, to my assistant, Chuck Sanchelment, for his patience in handling so many details, and to the Gallery Workshop students for their hard work.

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Exhibition information may be obtained by writing or calling Ben Shahn Gallery, William Paterson College, 300 Pompton Road, Wayne, New Jersey 07470— telephone (201) 595-2654.

Nancy Einvaldner, Gallery Director

conversations

"It was in the old days, you know, when SoHo wasn't so crowded and artists could visit the galleries on a Saturday afternoon. I went to the old Paula Cooper Gallery, but it was closed for an installation. Heading back down the stairs I met this man dressed in a business suit, breathlessly climbing up. He asked me if the gallery was open. 'Closed! Oh no! I've come all the way from Philadelphia to see some good art!' Well, I said, 'You can come to my place. I'll show you some good art.'"

The man in the business suit was Milton Brulian, the artist was Don Cole, and that chance meeting ten years ago was the beginning of their friendship and of a myriad of relationships within the art world that have resulted in the Brulian/Henrick collection of well over 1,000 contemporary paintings and sculptures.

"Milton and I are accumulators," says Helen Henrick, "not only of art but of books, records, information. Each of us had collected art independently before we met, however, it was not until we met that we became involved with contemporary art. Don Cole and Maria Vlasari helped us begin. They were the first to share their work with us, that is, each allowed us to visit his studio to look at a body of work completed over a period of time. This kind of visit enabled us to see

works in a context not always possible for a collector."

The Brulian/Henrick style of collecting, of visiting studios and getting to know the artist as well as the work, established itself early on.

Don Cole gave a party which Helen and Milton attended. There, they were introduced to Mori Levinson, Orlino Giannakis, Frank Owen, Lucio Pozzi and other artists. Studio visits followed, friendships developed and these led to other introductions.

Lucio Pozzi remembers that evening. "I was introduced to them by Harvey Shwartz. At the time no one was interested in my work. Little of consequence had happened despite my efforts. They came to my studio. They were the first people, aside from some artist friends, to come to see my work. They bought a piece. This is very important to your ego for it makes you feel you exist. Artists are made to feel they don't exist, they are nothing."

"Collecting offers an opportunity to lend support to artists who are offered very limited encouragement in this society, who are not recognized by galleries or museums," Helen and Milton understand the system, and are aware of the institutional art hierarchy. "We realize it's worth-

while it will not be recognized widely and served in its time. He also recognizes, frustrating though it may be, that we cannot collect all the good art which we see or are aware of. It gives us pleasure to know that some of the artists whose work we have collected have received recognition. He wish it for all whose work we esteem, knowing this may not occur does not diminish our respect and feeling for the work or for the artist."

Their dedication to and concern for the artists as well as the art is made clear time and again in conversations.

"Maybe my art's a little far-out, nutty," says Don Cole. "It doesn't have a large audience. But Mit and Helen have been my audience and they give straight honest feedback. Over the years they've proven that they have discerning eyes. But it's more than the art. They know my family, they know my children. It's the most emotional relationship I've had in the art world."

"They're totally open. They look at all kinds of work and they take time." Ted Stabile remembers their early visits to his studio. "It was the spring of 1973 when Julius Tobias brought them to my studio for the first time; they came back about a month later. It was in the afternoon and we started to talk, and we talked about all

of things, not just art, and before anyone realized, it was eleven o'clock at night! Our friendship began that day after all those hours of talking. They were the first people I'd met who were enthusiastic about WQAR. And you never feel like they're buying a product."

Cynthia Carlson lives in New York and teaches in Philadelphia. "I have a room in their house where I stay one or two nights a week. They call me their artist in residence! They're special people, totally supportive and enthusiastic, but more than that they're obsessed! They spend time on behalf of artists, helping artists, encouraging sales. Their obsession for collecting is like the artist's obsession for creating the work. They are like artists, maybe that's why artists love them. And like most artists, they're always broke, because they spend all their money on art. They are obsessed. Have you seen the house? The art is everywhere!"

The Stables/Harris residence is a three story row house in the Northern Liberties section of Philadelphia. They purchased the house seven years ago for little more than a song, for it was in shambles and not located in what could be termed a prestigious neighborhood. Their renovating has reclaimed all four floors of the twelve rooms, and every nook in every

one of these rooms is covered from floor to ceiling with art. In the hallways, and in the stairwells, in every room and hallway, in every available space, there is art.

Paul Carr, who saw the collection for the first time four years ago, notes some changes. "The emphasis was on aggressive, large pieces then. It's always expanding. There's more interest now in drawings and photography." "Each week when I go there" says Cynthia Carlson, "Mitt has something new to show me."

Collecting has traditionally been an activity of the wealthy for the purpose of investment or status. Not so with Helen and Milton. "They're not rich people" says Cynthia, "and they don't buy art for the prestige or market value."

Milton is a clinical child psychologist and Helen is a specialist in the communication disorders of children, employed by the Philadelphia Board of Education. Their professional lives obviously take a great deal of time, but still they manage trips to New York at least twice a month to visit friends and look at art.

"What my studio?" laughs Lucio, "It's more like a raid! And so pleasing to me. Very few people come who make me feel that I want to work more. Mostly one

works in a void. Now their collection of my work is so large that they must have 40 or 50 pieces. I consider them among the few who I would like to have a complete representation of my work. I know the work will stay together."

Helen writes, "Our collection is visible, tangible evidence of interaction we have had with artists. Each work represents a dialogue in the collecting process at a particular time between us and the artists whose work we have collected. Each represents a moment in the artists' working and in the collector's thinking process."

"The Buffers came to my studio," says Lucio, "and I can see their uncertainty. Their creativity is involved in their selection. Their selection is always a step forward in my understanding of my own work. They have always been more open than my experimental and open. It's so frustrating to be summarized by briefly. It's incredibly important to be surrounded by daring and enthusiasm."

Paul Carr sums up this enthusiasm that Helen and Milton share and that each artist cherishes. "When Mitt shouts it to me instantly responsive manner, 'It's terrific! I love it!' you feel it, like the wind. He means it." They mean it.

Nancy Ehrenhefer







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some notes on collecting art

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Collecting art is a source of pleasure which incorporates a response to art objects or events and a response to dialogue with artists engaged in the creative process. For us, it is a sharing process in the present and the future with a history in the past.

Through recorded and unrecorded time man has responded with emotion and experiential lust to objects he has adored. Humans have collected every imaginable type of object and experience. Collecting represents an act of discovering and attempting to capture new frontiers, of transforming unknown into known, whether it be in rediscovering the past through antiquities, antiques, or in exploring the present through contemporary ideas and events in the arts.

Art, we believe, represents a larger philosophical, social concern rooted in the basic primitive needs of all people for self-expression and communication. That expression emerges from the experience, identity and culture of the individual. We reaffirm the belief that art is an expression of values. It is a

claiming act, a pulse of the time. As such, it can be reassuring, familiar, disturbing, indifferent; a reflection of aspects of the time and place in which we live.

Hidebound, conform egotisms rarely risk any action so vulnerable as serious artistic endeavor. Of those few who do, very few dare commit their life and livelihood to artistic expression and exploration.

We respect the integrity of serious artists, pursue the often adverse the resulting work sufficiently to wish to acquire it. Our collecting process is a minor part of the great collecting potential available in this society today. It is one of our greatest pleasures to see other people begin to collect, to enjoy art and to support the efforts of artists.

The long term collecting process juxtaposes an unfolding awareness of the artistic object as it reveals itself and of the mind and soul that created it. The collector's opportunity to absorb the art object has special depth and breadth unavailable to the ordinary viewer; the

ability to see works in one's own home at dawn, daylight, dusk, night is an immediate luxury. We are fans of the visual arts. As fans we can be fanatical in our perception of what we consider to be "good" and what we are bothered by. Early on we found that if we were bothered by a work after we had seen it, that we had better look at it again. This discovery has led us to the confirmed opinion that much "good" art possesses unsettling aspects which may or may not be fully resolved in a particular work. Rather than to dismiss disquieting art works, we prefer to investigate them. Becoming aware of the visual and aesthetic problems artists grapple with is a compelling feature of looking at art. The possible resolutions of these problems as well as failure to resolve them is a source of visual, metaphysical, social provocation.

We feel the most immediate, revealing, direct form of art is found in artists' drawings. Charting an unknown, to be explored in larger works, in sculpture, in paintings, in fantasy is

found in drawings. We love drawings for the unique expression of immediate artistic impulse.

Because we have come to know many artists and dealers who have made their time and efforts freely available to us, it is an increasingly difficult task to collect with the same devotion to artists whose work we wish to follow closely over time, and at the same time to look seriously at the work of artists new to us. We are, indeed, outnumbered and time is against us in the amount of time available from our personal and professional lives to get to studios and galleries. We owe an enormous debt to those artists and artists' representatives, gallery dealers and curators, who persevere in informing us and allowing us to look at work and to acquire it.

It is to the spirit of collecting now, to the people who have participated in our quest, and to the people who have exhibited works from our collection that this show of drawings is dedicated.

Hein Henick August, 1980

works included in :

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1. Peter Feung
"Growing for a Green Painting," 1979, acrylic on board, 30" x 20"
(image 10" x 10")
2. Judith Murray
"Untitled," 1976, acrylic on paper, 24" x 32"
3. Alan Ogden
"Untitled," 1974-5, oil color and pencil on paper, 25" x 19"
4. Cathy Allen
"Bound Strata for the First of October, 1975," 1975, mixed media,
24" x 18"
5. Gil Apter
"Memories," 1988, mixed media on paper 32" x 40"
6. Maria Hall
"Untitled," 1972, pencil on paper, 30 1/2" x 48 1/2"
7. Robert Grosvenor
"Untitled," 1976, graphite on paper, 18" x 26"
8. Sylvia Margold
"22 1/2" of Floor Board," 1974, watercolor pencil and ink on paper,
20" x 34"
9. Patrick Ireland
"Four Cubes," 1975, felt pen on paper, 24 1/2" x 38 1/2"
10. Bryan Hunt
"Untitled," 1978, graphite and paint on paper, 20" x 28 1/2"
11. Ralph Humphrey
"Untitled," 1976, acrylic on paper, 21 1/2" x 27 1/2"
12. Charles Roman
"Study for Paradox," 1972, acrylic on 100% rag paper, 21" x 30"
13. Jim Huntington
"Untitled," 1977, wax, graphite, color pencil on paper, 23" x 21"
14. Patricia Leach
"Untitled," 1974-5, thread and gold leaf on cloth, 12" x 12"
15. Jeremy Gilbert-Ruhe
"Untitled," 1977, gouache on paper, 30 1/2" x 26"
16. Jeff Ray
"Untitled," 1976, crayon, graphite, and pencil on paper, 21" x 27"
17. Gregory Amenoff
"Untitled," 1978, oil on paper, 31" x 35"
18. Gary Kuehn
"Untitled," 1978, mixed media, 28" x 32"
19. Max Simblett
"Untitled," 1978, acrylic on paper, 24" x 34"
20. Judy Petty
"Landscape with Fingers for (Sari) Women," 1979 watercolor and
pencil on paper 34" x 42 1/2"

- 21 Barbara Juster "Untitled," 1978, tempera and charcoal on paper, 37 1/8" x 22 1/2"
- 22 Stephen Jurek "840 Fragments of a Circle," 1977, color pencil on paper, 18 1/2" x 12 1/2"
- 23 Andrew Jurek "Untitled," 1978, watercolor on paper, 14" x 17 1/2"
- 24 Marc Kishaly "At the Park," 1977, oil crayon on paper, 23" x 23"
- 25 Paul Koss "Untitled," 1977, mixed media, 21" x 16 1/2"
- 26 Don Koss "Untitled," 1978, mixed media collage, 26" x 26"
- 27 Dennis Kordon "Untitled," 1978, ink on paper, 34 1/2" x 22"
- 28 Lynn Kunkel "June," 1978, pencil and feather on paper, 27 1/2" x 27"
- 29 Gary Lachan "Thomas Browning," 1978, gouache on paper, 42" x 34"
- 30 Bob Stanley "Garbage," 1979-81, ink on paper, 28" x 22"
- 31 Rex Martin "Untitled," 1977, mixed media, 20 1/2" x 40"
- 32 Bill Beckley "Jungle Entail," 1978, mixed media, 32" x 44"
- 33 Michael Boyd "Untitled," 1978, graphite on paper, 22" x 28"
- 34 Nicholas Hensinger "Untitled," 1980, color photograph, 22" x 22"
- 35 Robert Allen "Where everything in the World ...," 1980, black and white photo; ink on paper, 18 1/2" x 18"
- 36 Michael Goldberg "Goodies Come Pade/Vicentina," 1980, chalks and charcoal on paper, 42 1/8" x 38 5/8"
- 37 Ted Gamm "O' Bodger—L," 1978, graphite on paper, 22 1/2" x 30"
- 38 Walter Blawie "Untitled," 1973, cornmedium and dry pigment on Arches paper, 48 3/4" x 25 1/2"
- 39 Jack Sonnenberg "Perimeter," 1977, graphite on paper, 31 3/4" x 24"

40. Ben Ficker "Untitled," 1977, red lead/upsam board, 25" x 48 3/4"
41. Michele Hunt "Untitled," 1972, graphite, pastel and crayon on paper, 23 3/4" x 31 1/2"
42. Suzanne Tager "Untitled," 1977, graphite, oil pastel and crayon on paper, 14 1/2" x 17 1/2"
43. Rocky Coston "Untitled," 1978, acrylic paint, wood, charcoal on cardboard, 8" x 10"
44. Luis Pueli "Melancholia," 1980, watercolor on ragboard, 40" x 60"
45. Alex Lewison "Tangent to Acid Spawns in the Fourth Dimension," 1988 paper, ink, acrylic and staples, 28 1/2" x 42"
46. William J. Suttner "Untitled," 1975, charcoal on paper, 17" x 14"
47. Robert Haudic "Untitled," 1974, mixed media, 34" x 34"
48. Paul Mogensen "Untitled," no date, watercolor on paper, 19" x 23"
49. Drake Glatfelter "Untitled," 1980, mixed media, 11" x 18 1/2"
50. Connie Buckley "Untitled," 1978, collage, 22" x 30"
51. Linda Francis "Untitled," 1977, encaustic on paper, 22 1/2" x 26 1/2"
52. Cynthia Carlson "Have Drea," 1978, acrylic, oilstick and oil paint on paper, 30" x 22"
53. Doug Sanderson "Untitled #7," 1971, wax and enamel on vellum, 8" x 12"
54. Stuart Shashoua "Untitled," 1977, oil on paper, 22 1/2" x 17 1/2"
55. Frank Green "Untitled," 1975, graphite and crayon on paper, 28" x 40"
56. David Ramon "Untitled," 1975, watercolor on paper, 30" x 22 1/2"
57. Robert Nuckas "Have Yerk," 1976, color pencil, 26 1/2" x 22 1/2"
58. Bernard Krichenbaum "Untitled," 1978, India ink on paper, 34 3/4" x 34 1/2"
59. Dale Henry "Study for an Acid Painting: Framed, Varnished and Cracked," 1971-88, emulsions and pencil on paper, 33 1/2" x 50 1/2"

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