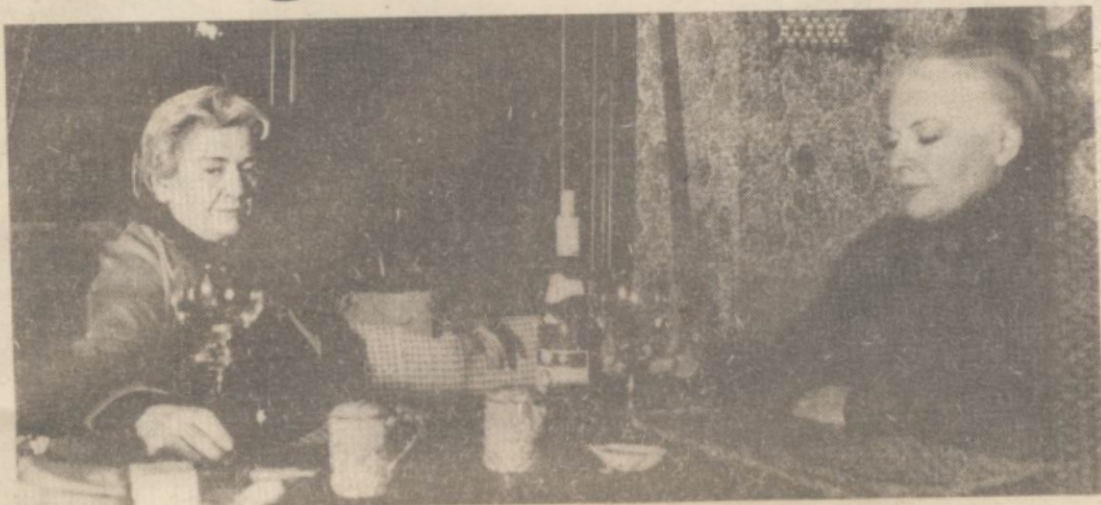


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Mixing Power and Delicacy



Work from the "Sisters" series by Ann Chwatsky

By PHYLLIS BRAFF

WHEN the Nassau County Museum of Fine Art began to devote an annual installation to area talent several years ago, it initiated a series that would become one of the institution's most appealing programs.

This year's exhibition features seven artists in a presentation characterized by power, delicacy and a general spirit of experimentation with technique, imagery, concept and format. In every instance, enough work has been assembled to allow individual goals to emerge quite distinctly.

Most would agree that the power generated by Shirley Gorelick's massive, realistic figures produces an impact that is almost overwhelming. Bodies tilt forward, faces confront us in a direct, straightforward manner and eyes make gripping contact. The work quite obviously comments on photography, using its methods of foreshortening subjects and allowing exaggerated angles to dominate a composition. The six-foot "Tess Three Times" is among the best of these acrylic paintings.

There is also an impressive boldness in Hope Grayson's mixed-media paintings that achieve imaginative and rather dramatic results by using a kind of close focus to direct attention to fragments of figures (most, in this selection, are members of a theater audience). The eye dances over the enlarged patterns filling each generalized body segment, making it

seem flat and two-dimensional, and invoking memories of Vuillard's sparkling paintings that date from turn-of-the-century Paris. Expressive, though purposely disoriented, hands are a leitmotif occurring in many examples, and they give a lively sense of animated motion.

There is also a feeling of fragmented forms in Doris Seidler's abstract print-collages — pieces that have an admirable way of pushing simple shapes to become suggestive of the mood and character of a landscape. The method of combining a diversity of random textures with small, fairly condensed references to newsprint, script and crusty metallic surfaces extends the range for both inventive, abstract design and for more specific — frequently whimsical — effects.

Dee Shapiro demonstrates great respect for the gentleness, softness and luminosity of watercolor in her studies that research the development of color resonances within a regularized grid system. There are chevrons, crosses and a number of conceptual ideas that call ritualism and symbolism to mind. Designs invite a hypnotic concentration, and a type of emotional involvement.

Cooler, more distant feelings are characteristic of Charlotte Brown's paper-layered construction interpreting the Hindu and Near Eastern intricate floral motifs that are heid within a strict surrounding architecture of bands and borders. There is a formal rigidity that balances sensitive, flowing ornamental arabesque patterns. Some works seem more contrived than others, yet the effect is engaging

— at times reaching a spiritual mysticism.

Tony Giordano experiments with incongruities in his unusual two-level paintings that feature an exacting system of slatted, vertical units resting above a background illusion of a deep, Western landscape. The multiple approach intentionally combines crisp edges with loose, energetic paint strokes, and geometrics with soft scenery. The strange optical happenings here are not totally successful, yet the work does have the potential to intrigue. Landscapes with lush tones and intense purples seem to be the most memorable.

The photographer Ann Chwatsky's "Sisters" series proves to be a cohesive theme that provides an opportunity to define the artist's technical, esthetic and philosophical ideas. The results hold up well, and the spell cast has a very warm, very insightful and very human quality.

Photos concentrate on specific, everyday activities as they span the range between young preschoolers and the elderly infirm. There is a tender moment of conversation between two frail, white-haired sisters, and there is a wonderful counterpoint in the adjacent photo revealing whispering teen-agers giggling spontaneously over what seems to be a bit of shared intimacy.

The exhibition will run through Sept. 25. The museum is off Northern Boulevard in Roslyn Harbor and is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Saturdays and Sundays from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. Admission is free.