

ART REVIEW/*Large scale with differences*

By Malcolm Preston

Except for the fact that both Shirley Gorelick and Lorie Alexander work on a large scale, their work has little in common. Nonetheless, they are sharing space at the Central Hall Gallery in Port Washington. Unfortunately, that space does little to enhance the two-person exhibition, now on view.

The current show is Gorelick's fourth at the Port Washington co-op, and, as in her previous outings, she continues her development as a realistic painter, exploring the human condition. While the three canvases on display still deal in life-size, or larger, images, Gorelick now sets her people in more of a genre environment.

"The Bensons," for example, are seen in a pleasant, sunny interior. The male figure is posed rather casually on the arm of a sofa, while Mrs. Benson is seated, a bit more sedately. The placement of the figures, the sofa itself, and the interior details all combine to say something about the couple's relationship. In "Gunny and Lee" we are shown the one figure seated in her wheelchair, while the other stands supportively alongside. Again, we are made to sense something about their relationship.

Stylistically, Gorelick gives us sharp, realistic, carefully detailed and strongly lit paintings. The everyday backgrounds in the two newer works tell us more about the sitters than does the over all, ambiguous foliage in which the two nudes are seen in "The Sisters," which, I believe, is an older canvas.

In addition to the paintings, Gorelick shows several fine silverpoint drawings, mostly portrait

heads, along with several nude torsos and some exploratory studies.

These drawings, with that special silvery gray softness that comes from the oxidization of the silverpoint medium, show Gorelick's skill as a draftsman. And one sees, too, her rather gentle, sympathetic view of her models. "Frida and Diego" and "Frida Kahlo II" are outstanding. In "Lee," done on canvas, the texture of the linen further softens and diffuses the gray silverpoint image. Among the female nudes, "Beth Standing" is my favorite, although it seems a bit overly dramatic in lighting.

In the rear of the Central Hall's one large gallery are Lorie Alexander's "Aons." While they are nicely spotlighted and every attempt has been made to isolate them, the space does not really do them justice.

"Aons," by the way, is the German word (Alexander was born in Germany) for eons. And these 10-foot tall sculptures with their gravestone-like form, wrapped with strips of treated canvas, much like an Egyptian mummy, seem to belong to the ages. Yet the funereal notion is somewhat inhibited by the juxtaposition of the sculptures with Gorelick's bright canvases which celebrate the living.

Still, one comes away from "Aons" with feelings of death and of being in the presence of an eternal catacomb. But a more suitable space, darker walls and the absence of colorful canvases would greatly increase the power of Alexander's work.

The show will remain on view through Feb. 26. Gallery hours are from noon until 5 PM, Wednesday through Sunday. ■