

other hand, shows varied and individualized male bodies, complete with lovingly painted patterns of hairy fur and sharply differentiated portrait heads. Thus Sleigh's painting makes a wry indirect comment on the male chauvinism hidden in the great works of the past.

Beyond such ideological considerations, Sleigh offers us a feast of color and form. She particularly enjoys patterns, as in rugs, plants, flowers, and leaves—an interest that has made her a close student of Pre-Raphaelite painting. She has been active in the AIR cooperative gallery and is now in Soho 20, believing strongly in the value of such alternative women's spaces. She has painted group portraits of the women in both organizations.

Shirley Gorelick (1924–), a psychological realist who explores relationships between father and daughter, husband and wife, and between siblings, is a good example of the dedicated and talented woman artist who has still not received the full recognition she deserves. Neither a devoted photo-realist nor an expressionist, she uses all sources of information, working both from photos and the live model, and even from her own sculptures made from life, to get as close to the core of her subject as possible.

After receiving an M.A. from Teachers College, Columbia University, and studying with Hans Hofmann, she began as an Abstract Expressionist in the fifties. Becoming more and more uncomfortable with the distortion and fracturing of the figure in modern art, Gorelick worked her way back to realism in a series of reinterpretations of the masters. In 1967 she redid Picasso's *Demoiselles D'Avignon* (1906), using figures with real volume instead of fracturing them into Cubist facets. She included Picasso's portrait on the right, as if to say that he was her model, but she was going to reject his arbitrary reinvention of the figure.

In the early seventies, while working on a series called "The Three Graces," Gorelick decided to do



Fig. 9-13. Shirley Gorelick, *WILLY, BILLY JOE AND LEROY* (1974), acrylic on canvas, 80" × 80"

a *Three Graces* celebrating black women. She became friends with her model and painted a series of interracial families, followed by the powerfully individualized *Willie, Billie Joe, and Leroy* (1972), posed against the background of a previous painting on the easel.

Gorelick paints probing portraits of her friends and their children. *Sid and Lisa* (1976) contrasts the assured strength of a father with the insecurity of his daughter. The figures are presented frontally with contrasting hand gestures. Broad masses of dark and light and a red-and-black color scheme reinforce the strong theme.

Gorelick's study of *Three Sisters II* (1977), based on models ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-one, is a blunt, almost repellently honest portrayal of female adolescence. It is totally different from the stereotype of a nubile Lolita. The young women, robed and nude, in a leaf-patterned garden, are shown filled with varying degrees of pain,

403

American Women Artists

questioning, anger, and confusion, which are communicated by nuances of position, gesture, or facial expression.

Gorelick is a member of the Soho 20 cooperative gallery in New York. She received a 1975 New York State Caps grant for painting.

Abstract Painting

Miriam Schapiro (1923–) expanded the role of abstract art by putting it at the service of women's liberation. By introducing new symbols, metaphors, and sumptuous materials—fabrics and decorative patterns—growing out of women's life experience, she created a new fusion of form and content.

Like many other women artists in history, Schapiro had the support of her father, who encouraged

her and even set weekly drawing assignments from the time she was a small child. She identified with her father, an industrial designer who also ran for Congress on the Socialist Party ticket and served as director of the Rand School of Social Science in New York. Like him, she has combined a life as an artist with a role in public life. But today, as a feminist, she identifies equally with her mother—a warm, capable housewife.

Viewing herself as a professional from early childhood, she took classes at the New York Museum of Modern Art and drew from the nude model in Federal Art Project classes at night while still in high school. She was so proficient when she went to Iowa State University in 1943 for a Master's degree in art, that Mauricio Lasansky made her his first printmaking assistant. She also helped form the Iowa Print Group.



Fig. 9-14. Miriam Schapiro, *MY NOSEGAYS ARE FOR CAPTIVES* (1976), acrylic and fabric on canvas, 40" × 30", collage incorporating embroidered apron and handkerchiefs

404