Chicago’s Navy Pier Exhibition

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colours that he also used to describe impressions of trees (Spring, 1962) and sky (Summer Sky, 1964). The resultant abstractions herald the maturity of a colourist’s art. Summer Skies (1966) radiates amorphous striations in yellow-filled blues from the bottom line. Only the artificially painted frame contains the rippling currents of colour. Ecstatically arranged rivulets of brilliant reds, blues, and yellows chart a dazzling rhythm on the choreographed surface of Summer Blues (1966). Iskowitz’s fanciful, aerial cartography was confirmed for the artist during helicopter flights out of Churchill, Manitoba in 1967 and an exuberant confidence has characterized his memory-maps ever since. The monumental Upstairs series (1970-1972) with its truncated leviathan forms floating improbably on a cushioned and indistinct horizon line suspends a gentle rhythm in bold and muted colours. In the Upstairs paintings the few distinct forms float out of the gravitational pull. Later canvases intensify these same colour patches and catapult them with compelling velocity through a crowded and active gravitational field (Newscape, 1975) or attempt to contain them with an over-painted and more neutral screen (Nocturne [Great White Bear]). Iskowitz’s present memory is charged with the vibrancy of a bold and personal sense of colour.

If the exhibition is at all flawed, it is by that recurrent art historical imperative to demonstrate the emergence of an artist’s style. The persuasive didactics of the Iskowitz retrospective, the rationalization of the work against post-modernist theory in the handsome catalogue, and even the sight lines created in the hanging of the show continually encourage the interpretation of each more recent work as a maturation of something only hinted at in its precedent. This inevitably evolutionary view can obscure the intrinsic merit of the individual work. And in an exhibition where the artist’s early memory-scenes are as compelling as his recent landscapes are euphoric, each of Iskowitz’s mind-maps charts its terrain with inherent conviction.


3. Jean-Michel BASQUIAT

Paintings by some of the leading new international lights attracted a good deal of attention. From West Germany Georg Baselitz’s strongly painterly, richly impastoed, upside-down figurative work commanded much respect: it was a bold excursion into the art of painting in which representation per se was directly denied, and yet almost literally one could hardly mistake the representation. A.R. Penck, apostle of the decidedly unintentional, yet somehow symbolist (?), New Wave, showed his gingerbread men and out-of-scale parts of objects arrayed seemingly haphazardly against an uninteresting ground. From Italy Sandro Chia’s painting of a reclining figure upon a sofa was more solid than dreamlike and its figural mode evoked comparison with the less interesting Fernando Botero’s portentous larger-than-life sculptures. Chia is unquestionably the star of what Italian critic Achille Bonito Oliva has called the Italian trans-avantgarde. Works of other members of that group, all at once time and contemplation, by artists such as Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, and Mimmo Paladino, were also seen in Chicago. (They and more are arrayed in the Guggenheim Museum’s exhibition of Italian Painting Today.)

Amina Nosei Gallery, one of the brighter prominences of New York’s Soho section, showed paintings that followed those of the Europeans I have already mentioned. Salomé’s Crazy Red, a large (94 1/2 x 79”) loosely painterly figurative work is related to Baselitz’s mode, while Jean-Michel Basquiat’s Untitled goes beyond A.R. Penck to verge deliberately upon the edge of a reappraisal of his CoBra group of the early 50’s and bad painting. This introduces some serious problems that proceed beyond the bounds of this review.

Chicago’s third Annual International Art Exposition held from the 13th through the 18th of May at the huge Navy Pier on Lake Michigan was a resounding success. More than a hundred galleries, mostly of contemporary art, exhibited under one roof for thousands of people who came to see and, surprisingly often in this year of economic distress, also to buy. In only three years the Chicago Navy Pier show has vaulted among some few others, the Amina Nosei Gallery (New York) presenting New Wave figurative work, and Joan Prats-Poligrafia Editions, the distinguished Spanish publisher of contemporary prints. Less familiar but just as deserving of mention were John Berggren (San Francisco) and the new graphic works of lesser known artists—Ben Zaks (Zaks Gallery, Chicago), Michael Mazur (Janus Burnett, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, November 1-December 12, and Canada House, London, U.K., February 23-March 22, 1983).
Yves Le Boulangier, Claude Yvei, Francine Van Hove—all presented by Galerie Alain Blondel, Paris—and Angelo Vadalà (Galleria Berenson, Boca Raton and Florence). Trompe-l'œil realism was evident not only in figural work but also in very witty paintings that were based upon abstract expressionist modes: painting appears for instance to throw shadows upon the surface of the works of James Havard and consequently the impasto appears thick, or the paint itself seems to hover over sections of the surface. In addition to Havard (Hokin Gallery, Chicago), George Green and Michael Gallagher (both also exhibited by Hokin) work in a related idiom.

The works of James Havard and consequently very witty paintings that were based upon classicism by Sergio Benvenuto (Galleria Beren­ton, son, Boca Raton, Florence) through some choice small works of Mark Di Suvero (Hansen, Fuller, Goldeen Gallery, San Francisco) to many basically constructivist-inspired wall pieces by David Barr (Donald Morris Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan) and Art Kleinman (Balkin Fine Arts, Chicago) and to various free-standing pieces of the ConStruct Inc. group of Chicago. Though small, the contingent of dealers in photography brought along some well-chosen images, represented for example by New York's Robert Frieden Gallery and Chicago's Allan Frumkin Photography.

After New York's Art Expo of late April and Toronto's International exhibition of early May, printmaking occupied a position of much lesser prominence in Chicago. Often the artists producing prints were painters who had turned to printmaking as a mass medium. Andy Warhol, a prominent printmaker almost from the outset of the 60's and whose prints were displayed at many booths, reversed this trend at least temporarily with a startlingly beautiful large acrylic in which ladies' shoes were composed in an heroic scale upon the canvas, yet in such a way as to encourage a sense of quiet and of luxurious relaxation. And Gabor Peterdi, known particularly for his sensitive and innovative prints, has again turned to large oils with recognizable im-

gery. Among the several outstanding recent prints available were some by Frank Stella that were often huge in scale while retaining their theatrical verve, many by Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Richard Diebenkorn, and Kenneth Noland's relatively small paired monotypes (exhibited at Gemini G.E.L.'s booth, among others). David Hockney's oversized two-colored lithographs were also memorable—but at a stiff $4,000 and $6,000 (US) price tag.

To complete this overview of the Chicago exhibition, mainstream art of the earlier twentieth century, particularly paintings, drawings, and small sculptures, was present in the booths of Galerie Linssen (Bonn), Galerie Folker Skulima (West Berlin), Maxwell Davidson (New York), and James Goodman Gallery (New York) among others; and in a special section of the exhibition halls there were drawings and prints of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The organizer of this International Art Expo­sition at Chicago are to be warmly congratulated upon their highly successful efforts. And perhaps at the next Navy Pier show Canadian artists and Canadian galleries will be appropriately well represented.

ART IN ARCHITECTURE FOR THE BUILDERS

This important book of facts and information presents, explains and answers many questions that have never been easily dealt with, but are illuminated by recent experience. Though the documentation concentrates on the Province of Ontario, it will be of great interest to architects, artists, craftsmen, art consultants and urban planners everywhere in Canada.

Three main themes are covered: Art in Architecture Case Studies examines thirteen projects ranging from government buildings to university complexes, restaurants and redevelopment sites and includes, among others, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, the Toronto Transit Commission's Spadina Subway Art project and the Toronto Eaton Centre. Competitions, Contracts, Government Assistance offers insight into crucial transactions which must be fully evaluated by both client and artist before and during their collaboration on a project. The third section, Index of Artists, covers the broad range of artists competent to carry out commissions in the fields of sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, installations, mixed media, environmental, fibre, glass, furniture, electric art and ceramic.

The criteria for selecting the artists included in the Index were based on the quality and originality of work. An open Jury examined 300 applications and viewed 3000 slides, giving equal attention to new artists with fresh ideas and established professionals already well known.

Author Jeanne Parkin (art consultant and curator) and editor William J. S. Boyle (found and executive director of Visual Arts Ontario) were assisted in their research by a committee of architects, artists, designers and art professionals.

Helen DUFFY

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