

Annie Herron, "Fresh Perspectives," Review, Volume 2, Number 12, March 15, 1997 Jeffrey Coploff Fine Art LTD

Fresh Perspectives

The work in this exhibition was selected to illustrate the premise that because many women sculptors feel (or felt) alienated from the macho sculpture culture of beer drinkers and welders, they came up with alternative methods of making sculptures, and eventually they felt secure enough in their femininity to unabashedly leave tracers of their valiant struggles behind them, and made their "low-tech-ness" an attribute.

Much of the best work in this exhibition revels in its girl-who-just-took-Shop-for-the-first-time freshness. Drew Shiflett's Wraparound Relief, 1996 is a fantastic waterfall or fountain-type structure with the wood 4 x 5s in clear view only adding to its whimsicality. She also uses paper-mache, tile board, polyester stuffing (all things, importantly, she could conceivably lift by herself) and cardboard – what could be more artsy-craftsy, low-tech girlie than cardboard?

Likewise, Wendy Hirschberg's playful Vehicles Nos. 2 & 6, 1997 and Barrie Schwartz' Ecstasy, 1997, all similar volumetric works of welded metal and/or plastic rods, with various odd found things added. They effectively create maximum volume with minimal welding, all the more charming for its simplest possible amalgamation of materials approach. Sometimes it's okay for something to be added simply by placing it there – the fragility of its construction as metaphor. Sculpture doesn't always have to be created in such a way that it would survive an atomic war.

While much of the work in this sprawling group show seems to be rather tenuously connected to its stated theme, I recommend that you see it. Among my favorite works are Hilda Daniel's no fuss construction Good Humor Man, 1996 and Erin Parish's simple minimal sculpture View made of a block of wood with a rectangle carved into it and filled with wax. Most importantly, don't miss Suzan Batu's fabulous "painting" made of pompoms of every imaginable color adhered to a canvas with Crazy Glue. She even builds up the surface with pom-poms to effectively create interesting space. Another painting worth noting is Amanda Church's oil painting of a suppurating hotdog. It's quite funny.

Despite their sometimes apparent flimsiness, these works of indubitably low-tech construction are carefully thought-out and effectively create mass – and what could be more synonymous with maleness than massiveness!

There is a sub-theme going on here, perhaps best described as deceptively-simple, childlike works by adults and, in some cases, actual children. The rationale is that children's works frequently maintain their freshness in a way similar to these sculptures obviously constructed by women because their approach is usually unburdened by restrictions imposed by society and the artworld, i.e., they aren't judged by their "maleness" or lack thereof. **AH**