

Art in America

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Cover: David Smith's "Voltri VII," 1962
The '60s Revisited: 14 Artists Comment/New York's "Moral Rights" Law
David Smith/Julio Gonzalez/The Forum Show/Valerie Jaudon
Report from London/Black Photography/Review of Exhibitions



binds his compositions together. Though this painterly vocabulary can be seen as a distillation of expressionism from Rouault to Rothenberg, Hitch's new paintings owe at least as much to the visual cacophony of the contemporary city.

—Ellen Lubell

Edith Schloss at Ingber

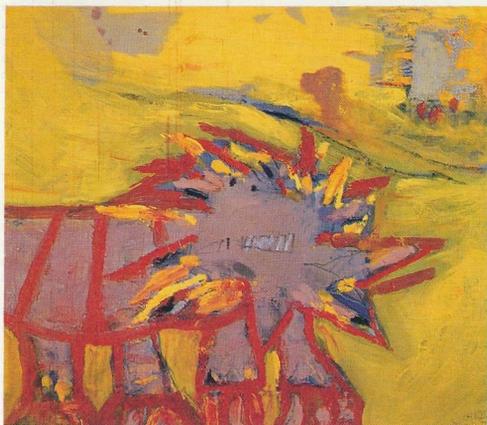
Edith Schloss paints airy pictures of contending spirits and legends of an enchanted island where deities are hidden like locusts in the grass. Sometimes she starts with only paint like mud on the canvas, but in this mud she is able to conceive of "ghoules and ghosts and long-leggity beasties" which her brush skewers, making a mirage of gold or silver out of what was initially a paint-mire.

Another group of paintings—each in four separate sections on the same canvas—she calls *quadritoglios*. One of these is quartered like a medieval shield into monochromatic panels of blue, yellow, green and red, going around the surface clockwise. Each of the four is really a separate work, and presumably they might have been cut up and exhibited in a line. However, there is nothing unpleasing in this arrangement of four.

Schloss also showed a series of watercolors in exquisite colors. Harking back to her work in the 1940s, each is a picture of a window with small things or flowers on the sill and a view through the window of the sea with Merlin's isle and lighthouse in the distance, sometimes a tiny steamer, and often the early morning sun rising in the east. The objects on the sill form a kind of inner landscape and are like notes on the treble staff (even though they are placed at the foot of the picture where, in a sheet of choral music, one would expect to find the bass).

A second group of oils relates in subject to the watercolors; one is a startler called *Shine*, essentially an all yellow painting, but with the sun defined as a circle of red with pink lines notching the disk, which, by some alchemy of color, suggests the sun's afterimage dancing in the viewer's eye.

In these latest works Schloss (who has been living in Italy since 1962 where she is now the art critic covering Italy for the *International Herald Tribune*) pulls together the different strands of her art going back to her earliest work in New York during the '40s and '50s. At that time she was better known for her boxes and assemblages than for her paintings of subjects similar to the ones in her work now—grasses and wildflowers thrust into jars and bottles on



Edith Schloss: *It's Supposed to be a Tiger*, 1982, oil on canvas, 9 by 10 inches, at Ingber.



Neil Anderson: *Ground Painting*, 1983, watercolor, 47 by 94½ inches, at Fischbach.



Wolf Kahn: *Airport*, 1983, oil on canvas, 52 by 80 inches, at Grace Borgenicht.

the shelves and window sills of her cabin in Maine. Although these older paintings and her present work may seem different, the inner content has not changed very much. For Schloss, art has always been the enchanted waters of a

pond fed by a hidden spring deep in the woods. On the surface of this pond she plays ducks and drakes by skipping stones across it, while reaching at the same time for the top brick on the art chimney. She has no concern for cate-

gorizing the particular style or direction of her work, no more than the present reviewer who has admired her work for many years. In reply to an art critic, Schloss once remarked: "What I really do is what any painter worth his salt has always done. I abstract color and line from life around me, and make another life out of it."

—Lawrence Campbell

Neil Anderson at Fischbach

The large watercolors Neil Anderson showed here in June belong to the ongoing series of works (including many in oil on canvas) he calls "Ground Paintings." The title is well chosen. Not only are his images based on projected photographs of the forest floor, but they are also visually dense with jostlings of figure and ground. He may even intend a reference to the early history of his medium, when many watercolorists ground their own pigments from mineral and vegetable matter.

Realism is not at issue in Anderson's work. He photographs areas of leaf-covered earth because they provide an inexhaustible source of uncomposed descriptive patterns. A close look at his pictures reveals that the underdrawing is loose and unfussed, a brisk carving of the page into theaters of painting action. Anderson's painting has never been more relaxed and athletic; indeed, no artist working in watercolor today handles it with greater daring or dexterity. He is not always respectful of his images' verisimilitude, for his aim is apparently to achieve the freshness of surface and transparency of color that only the finest watercolor technique can sustain. Since he is painting fallen leaves for the most part ("leaves on Arches," he says, referring to his chosen brand of paper), he favors the high-keyed reds and yellows of fall foliage, punctuating them with sap green, and even with an icy blue that fits coloristically, though not descriptively. The brilliant colors fill the paintings with light, yet they do not produce illusions of illumination. His handling of watercolor seems to merge light and the things it illumines in a way that we usually associate with oil painting.

There is almost no space in Anderson's watercolors because the images are tight close-ups. The leaf and twig forms are so much larger than life, and so much a pretext for releasing the energies of color, that they seem to flicker between abstraction and figuration with shifts of the viewer's attention.