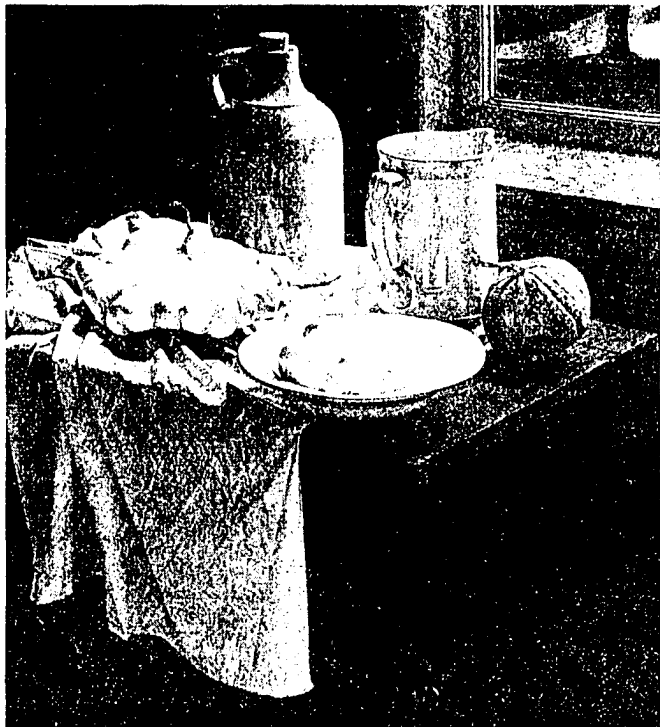


REVIEW | ART



Jane Lund's "Still Life with White Cloth."

Brockton exhibition refreshing, buoyant

BROCKTON MUSEUM TRIENNI-AL, an exhibition selected by Richard G. Minutillo at the Brockton Art Museum, through Jan. 25.

By Robert Taylor
Globe Staff

The 57 pieces by 44 Boston-area artists at the Brockton Art Museum comprise a refreshing and buoyant group show. The keynote is a flowering of canvas figures by Mira Cantor in the middle of the museum's court. "Elevator" bunches them together, suspended by ceiling ropes, slightly larger than life, buckling at the knees, sagging onto each other, weary but absurd manikins forcibly shuttled into conjunction for a time in a public space.

At the opening, characteristically, there was a "happening," as a mime among the group stepped forth from the suggestion of an elevator's vertical space and cables into the party. The mood of Cantor's piece is not dissimilar to a Red Grooms construction, cheerfully infiltrating categories and eluding critics who would like to lasso the possibilities of the work under a heading like "sculpture."

If anything, this emerges as the prevailing theme in the Triennial, a delight in creating art rather than refining the categories of art. To be sure, there are excellent examples of definable modes by such artists as Elizabeth Dworkin, whose sienna, earth-colored and silver-brown abstract "Glyph," indicates she is painting with rare authority, and by James Weeks, whose seascape here is an atmospheric dance of scudding greens and whites, but the range of the show frequently veers away from precise boundaries. It is weighted on the side of realists, still one doesn't get the idea that realism is all; realism is, in fact, treated as one among many possibilities.

Ten years ago, a group of this sort — a survey of artists current on the Boston scene — might have included a preponderance of minimal artists. There are none, as such. Only one conceptual piece is included, Kenneth Bastion's green spray painting of the configuration of the rocks about the museum. The vocabulary of action painting is seldom encountered. All this doesn't mean that past styles are forgotten, only that these are absorbed by artists like Roger Kizik, whose densely orchestrated huge canvases retain the gestural character of the abstract-expressionists while expressing in his chevrons, swashing whorls of paint and patterned overall

expanses a refusal to place the individual mark as an extension of the ego onto canvas.

Kizik's paintings disguise romantic emotions; Miroslav Antic's are classical. He alludes to old master portraiture, splitting a magnified matte image by a band of neon light which runs from the top of the frame to the bottom as if to say art history is an enlargement of a contemporary sensibility. The works of Catherine Bertulli are like her swift, sparkling watercolors pushed into a new dimension: "Krishna Swamp," for instance, is a thicket of scrolled and elastic colors on tussocks of paper swarming across the floor. Despite the elaborate tracery of the decoration and the essential siffness of the paper, the various elements take on a sort of organic life.

Among the realists, several are grouped for mere convenience's sake. Andrew Stevovich's "Solitaire," for instance, in which a sleekly dressed older man staring into the distance seems to be the object of a game played by two women who have turned up Carmen's losing hand, combines menace, oblique humor and mordant observation. Candace Jans' meticulously detailed scene also places us among portents and enigmas. A young man and woman, evidently tourists, have entered a tropical courtyard. The sun filters through overhead vines and brings out disquieting fragments of the somewhat unkempt court. The man, seated, and the woman, background, have turned away from us, mesmerized by an off-stage occurrence. This is unlike the flatly stated rhetoric of Sarah Supple's contemporary highway scenes; Joel Janowitz's refractions of space and color; Jane Lund's illusionistic still life where shapes mirror each other, gleam against porcelain and create textural rhymes and slant-rhymes; and Cynthia Close's figurative "Confrontation" where the rendering of the figures as in a Francis Bacon has less to do with the realistic shapes than it does with the movement of shapes through a psychological dimension.

Several artists ought to be singled out, furthermore — the limestone sculpture of Robin Shores, Morgan Bulkeley and Rebecca Rolke who seem even more vivid here than in their current show at Boston University, the grays and pinks of Ralph Hamilton's abstract oil — but enthusiasm leads to a catalogue. It is the openness of the Brockton Triennial to visual experience that allows the group to make its emotional impact.