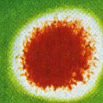
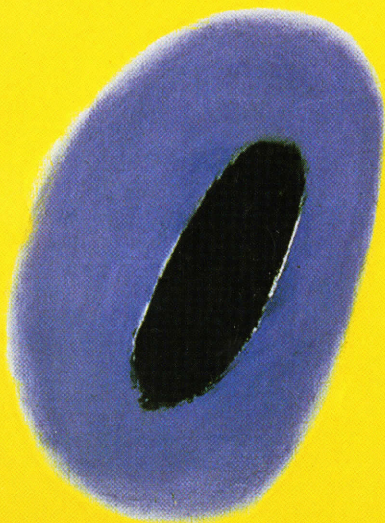


ARTnews

APRIL 2003



JOAN MIRÓ The Unlikely Revolutionary



PLUS

Cartier-Bresson: The Man Behind the Lens
What They're Teaching Art Students These Days
Browsing for Dollars: Can Net Art Make Money?



"Air"

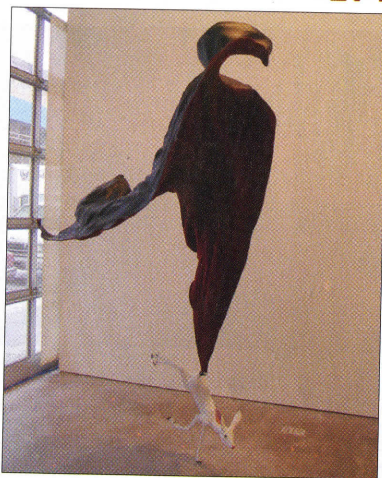
JAMES COHAN

"Air" was a thoughtfully assembled, thoroughly enjoyable group show of 29 artists from three centuries with works that ranged from the retinal to the scientific to the metaphoric.

While most of the participants were familiar contemporary names, many were represented by other than signature works or were refreshed by the aerobicized context. There was something to please everyone, beginning with the glimmering gallery facade refurbished by Howard Goldkrand, featuring sequins that shifted according to air currents and speakers that murmured weather conditions. Hans Haacke's 1965 *Blue Sail* was unexpectedly poetic, a sky blue chiffon square kept in motion by a small fan. It cleverly echoed the famous upward rush of Marilyn Monroe's filmy white dress in Garry Winogrand's nearby 1955 photo.

Erick Swenson's magician's flying cape, suspended in midflight, was another example of air's interaction with fabric, even if this fabric was sculptural. *Sigh*, a new work by Janine Antoni, caught a moment in time as a swell of air rustled crisp white curtains, while upward mobility was contradicted by Yves Klein's tricky, iconic *Leap into the Void* of 1960. Then you could try to hold your breath along with Bill Viola in his video installation *Nine Attempts to Achieve Immortality* (1996)—a heady experience.

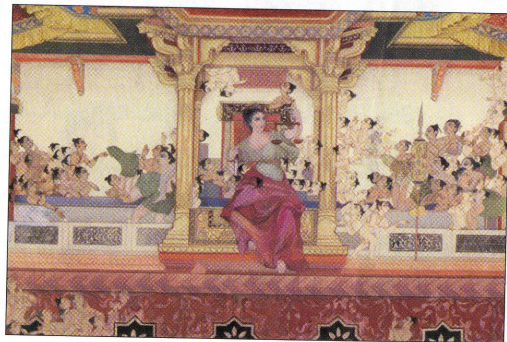
Man Ray's pipe with glass bubble was an exquisite and witty object, while Marcel Duchamp's *Boîte-en-valise* (1938) contained a 50-cubic-foot ampoule of Parisian air. *Prison Window* by Robert Gober, a barred rectangle of luminous blue inset high up on a wall—commented on liberty and on inside versus outside air. Nineteenth-century "air" was represented by small but lovely landscapes by Courbet, Constable, Turner, Arthur Par-ton, R.A. Blakelock, and Thomas Cole, delightfully rounding things out in this show of eng-aging, happy surprises. —Lilly Wei



Erick Swenson, *Untitled*, 2003, mixed media, 91" x 43" x 49". James Cohan.



Santi Buglioni, *San Giovanni da Capestrano*, ca. 1550, glazed terracotta, 61" x 30" x 14". Salander-O'Reilly.



Shahzia Sikander, *SpiNN*, 2003, detail from DVD with artwork (watercolor and dry pigment on paper), 8" x 11". Brent Sikkema.

"Italian Sculpture from the Gothic to the Baroque"

SALANDER-O'REILLY

This stunning survey offered a succinct lesson in the evolution of Italian sculpture over four centuries, from the subdued pieties of the Neapolitan master Tino di Camaino to the sinuous dramas of Gian Lorenzo Bernini. These artists exploited almost every conceivable sculptural material—terra-cotta, wood, bronze, marble—and exulted in a progressive mastery of the human figure.

Instead of exhibiting the works chronologically, Salander-O'Reilly mixed the sacred with the profane,

so that Bernini's muscular nude shared a gallery with Nino Pisano's gilded tabernacle and Tino's small marble relief of Christ as the Man of Sorrows. Viewers could trace the development of the Renaissance in Valerio Cioli's *Bust of a Humanist*, a 16th-century marble portrait of a gentleman who looks both wise and amused. Angels and Madonnas were also amply represented, with the most lovable being Desiderio da Settignano's polychromed stucco *Madonna and Child*, tenderly human but with patterning that harks back to the International Gothic.

Some of the strongest works, including Bernini's *modello* for the Fountain of the Moor in Rome, were made of terra-cotta, which could be fired to a high glaze or painted to resemble wood, as in Vincenzo de Rossi's fierce bust of a *Warrior Saint*. Equally impressive was an almost life-size freestanding figure of San Giovanni da Capestrano clothed in a vivid purple robe and bearing a yellow banner by 16th-century Tuscan artist Santi Buglioni.

In a nod to the Renaissance fascination with classical lore, the exhibition also included a small frieze by Baccio Bandinelli of *Venus and Mars Caught by Vulcan*, showing the two lovers in a compromising pose and nearly toppling off the wall. —Ann Landi

Shahzia Sikander

BRENT SIKKEMA

Modernity and tradition have always co-existed in Shahzia Sikander's phenomenally meticulous works. Their juxtaposition took on an added twist in this exhibition, which for the first time included DVD animations in addition to paintings, both displaying her mastery of Indo-Persian miniature technique.

The gallery's front room was dominated by two Sheetrock blocks facing one another. Each held an image neatly matted and framed in white—one was a still painting, the other a moving DVD. In the painting, a crowd of tiny nude women cavort around a large enthroned female figure wearing a robe and holding scales and a sword—Justice, perhaps, but not blind. In the DVD, the women disappear, leaving their hairdos rotating in the air like a flock of crows that coalesces to form a black, silhouetted angel. More angels appear, followed by two more large women, one clothed and dark, the other nude and blonde, entwined within a rondelle. Winged demons and a blue figure on a horse are replaced by infinitesimal women, as precious as figures in a tiny puppet theater.

In the back room, there was a range of drawings, whose subjects included Islamic angels superimposed on an American flag; a traditional hunting scene interrupted by a circular formation of silhouetted fighter

planes; and angels accompanied by U.S. maps and an oil derrick—suggesting a traditional paradise defiled. Seamlessly joining Eastern and Western technologies and images through art, Sikhander makes one long for similarly peaceful interactions in reality. —*Elisabeth Kley*

Donald Sultan

KNOEDLER

For a time in the 1980s, Donald Sultan seemed to be moving toward a lushly romantic vision of gritty urban scenes and violent landscapes, realized in materials like tar and Masonite. More recently, he has continued to explore less orthodox painterly media, but has turned his attention to the simplified shapes of fruits, flowers, dominoes, and playing cards. You could say he's gone "decorative" in a big way, with all the pejorative and positive connotations that word carries. As with Matisse's late cutouts, Sultan's huge and small new paintings of poppies depend on shape and brilliant color to produce a ravishing effect.

The way these works are put together—especially the big canvases, which run up to 96 by 144 inches—is no minor feat. The large supports are double frameworks composed of standard stretchers bolted together with gas pipes. The individual panels are aligned so that the seams still show, and the whole apparatus juts out forcefully into the viewer's space, providing a weighty counterpart to the flat, vivid contours of the poppies. Somehow tar, spackle, and flocking find their way into the mix to produce a mesmerizing set of contrasts—between figure and ground; between ragged edges and smooth, buoyant shapes; and between the gruffness of the supports and the glorious blowsiness of the flowers.

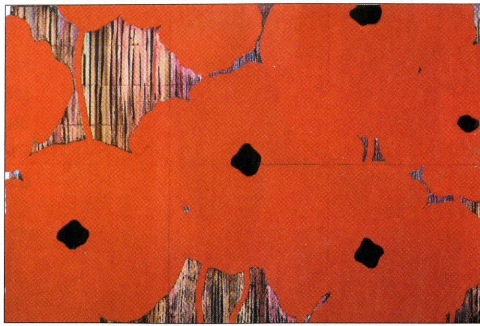
These are massive constructions that appear almost weightless, and in paintings like *Red Poppies Nov 20 2002* and *Aqua Poppies Dec 10 2002*, they flirt with total abstraction, offering the pleasures of intense color, sinuous shape, and almost palpable texture. While these works may not be momentous statements, they are certainly a joy to behold. —*Ann Landi*

—*Ann Landi*

Old Master Paintings

JACK KILGORE

This wonderful show—overwhelmingly Dutch and 17th century with a smattering of French work—offered everything from mythology to portraiture, still lifes, genre scenes, and religious subjects. As to mood, it ran from the humorous to the melancholy,



Donald Sultan, *Red Poppies Oct 30 2002, 2002, enamel, oil, flocking, tar, and spackle on tile over Masonite, 96" x 144"*. Knoedler.



Nicolaes Berchem, *Callisto and Jupiter, ca. 1655, oil on canvas, 50 1/2" x 64 1/2"*. Jack Kilgore.



Tomoko Sawada, *ID-400 (detail), 1998-2001, gelatin silver prints, 49 1/2" x 38 1/2" (overall)*. Zabriskie.

from the psychologically penetrating to the overtly decorative.

Absolutely demanding attention among these museum-quality works was a bizarre portrait by Dirck Santvoort, showing a charming, no-longer-young woman of means, whose gaze immobilizes us. She is richly dressed; her head, seemingly separated from her body, floats on a huge white

ruff; she holds a (perhaps) devotional book in her left hand but stretches out her right one to display her gold bracelets and lace cuffs. She sits in a room that prefigures Mondrian's abstractions with its series of receding perspectives: the tile floor in contrasting shades, the table behind her forming yet another plane, the open door at her rear revealing a courtyard enclosed by a wall. Life is combined with geometry, just as piety is balanced by pride.

Nicolaes Berchem provided a titillating mythological scene. An ultra-voluptuous Callisto (a hunting nymph in the train of Artemis, made pregnant by Zeus and transformed by Hera into a bear) toys with the deer and hare she has just killed while her hounds look anxiously toward the sky where a leering, lascivious Zeus peers down at the nymph. Naturally, it is we who get the best view of Callisto's titanic charms.

In Petrus Saverinus's humorous painting *Old Woman Drinking Wine from a Glass*, psychology and painterly engineering are brilliantly combined. The old lady daintily pours a glass of white wine into her gaping mouth, showing the artist's skill at painting both the vessel and its contents, as she flirts outrageously with the viewer. Like these paintings now entering their fourth century, she is still full of life and up to more than a few tricks. —*Alfred Mac Adam*

"Who? Me?"

ZABRISKIE

Lively and likable, "Who? Me?" explored self-portraiture in photography, extending from the dramatic 19th-century countess of Castiglione to contemporary stars like Iké Udé and Mariko Mori.

These artists generally use the self-portrait to show how the camera can deceive, either by doctored images (Ari Marcopolous distorts his until they look like blurry, reprinted newspaper images of historical figures) or by staging scenes.

Most of the works fell into the latter category, with artists assuming fictional identities to comment, by turns, on social and media constructs and on the unreliability of photographic truth.

Joan Fontcuberta "documented" the existence of a lost Russian cosmonaut through "recently declassified" photographs, while the grande doyenne of the