

tion of aluminum tubing, perhaps six inches in diameter, as a basic working material is a good choice since it has such an impersonal kind of surface. By filling the tubular elements with sand, they can be bent into desired configurations. The tubes are then truncated at various angles and sprayed a uniform grey color. The sculptures are installed in the gallery without bases and often butt directly into the wall at the top and onto the floor at bottom. Because the work seems so natural in a room it has the quality of a series of indoor vegetables, ready to be picked.

LESLIE KERR's exhibition at DILEXI GALLERY reveals this former Bay Area artist now residing in New York to be occupied with the same visual concerns as in his previous two shows. The almost abstract canvases reveal modeled and highlighted forms enigmatic in their removal yet suggestive in implication.

The painting entitled *Snake* looks like a snake only because it is a coiled form. It could be a depiction of a stuffed satin image of a snake that refers back to the original. It is as if Kerr were trying to reassemble still life painting without losing his essential modernity. ■

— JAMES MONTE

CHICAGO

One aspect of Surrealism, especially where it touches on Romanticism, is the use of fantasy in landscape, either interior or exterior. Fantasy or the proverbial dream-state is the prerequisite for the exploration of this terrain. Undoubtedly landscape allows the greatest latitude to the artist whose means are fantasy. Plausibility is less often a condition than when we view still life or the human figure. Identification with the latter is usually so strong that we are alerted to any distortion; objects with symbolic associations are both more and less open to a fantastic treatment.

The first viewing of the etchings and print collages by VERA BERDICH in the Print Galleries of the ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO leaves one with the strong impression of landscape as the dominant theme. It is rich and varied to be sure, but the evidence belies such a conclusion and in many examples landscape is subordinate to images such as eyes, faces or whole figures which come into focus from time to time. Like apparitions, they inhabit a forest now appearing oversized or moon-faced, dwellers of some dream-made structure now abandoned. These ruins undoubtedly help to create the strong feeling of place, reminiscent of a Cocteau film.

This is a major retrospective exhibition of 85 prints, both etchings and print collages, extending over a 25 year period. The latter, print collages, are an extension of ideas and techniques which were developed in her etchings and it is as a graphic artist that her great importance lies. Her peers are a small number of artists whose most creative efforts occur when they are working with the plate, the stone or the block. The inventiveness of this artist seems to be most evident when she is involved in the various technical processes.

From the beginning there has been a great deal of exploration and invention in the use of the medium, as shown by such prints as *Things To Be Remembered*, 1948, *Through Distorting Spectacles*, 1950, *Pattern For Living*, 1950, or *Renaissance Composite*, 1953. The freshness of discovery has given way to greater richness of texture and a full range of tone in

prints as *Open the Windows*, 1957; *The Doors Were Closed*, 1962; *Pool Of Tears*, 1962; or *Charades*, 1963. The greater elaboration of symbols in some of the later works, is occasionally too much, and it results in a lack of focus of the varied elements. However, her finest examples are of a highly developed personal symbology in which formal elements act as a framework holding the images in balance. It is a handsome exhibition by a fine craftsman and artist.

The first showing of RAY JOHN-SON'S collages in Chicago was held at the RICHARD FEIGEN GALLERY.

This artist is one of the innovators of what is known as the "New York Correspondence School" which involves a Dada-like mail participation of a far flung group of artists. There is a note of Dada in these collages as well, e.g., *The Ice Falls On His Head*, 1965, and *Brigid Rilev's Comb*, 1966, although here it is gentler and more refined than in the original movement. These works are deft and witty; understated and quiet. In their use of whites and pastel colors and the matte, sometimes chalky surfaces they are like Joseph Cornell and like Cornell too, is their aura of restraint and good taste. Admittedly, here they differ from Dada which banned these values and branded them pernicious.

Although collages, neither the idea of chance nor the use of discarded waste, both so prevalent in collage, are prominent. These are essentially paintings although composed of discrete shapes, i.e., pieces with edges and corners sanded down through several layers beneath the pristine surface. Color is limited, surface textures are slight and the cardboard elements are built up to a low, very low relief.

All of these seem like minor distinctions and to be sure they are; however, within this narrow range the artist has exercised the utmost control and only occasionally does his subtlety and his display of good taste deteriorate into the precious. Their appeal to our sensibilities rests at least partly on their contrast with much of today's art, large in scale, bold and direct.

A group of paintings by ROBERT BARNES was shown by the ALLAN FRUMKIN GALLERY. The show included a number of small paintings as well as five medium-to-large-size

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