

Gladstone exhibit showcases 'Realism' with interesting results in various forms

During the reign of abstract-expressionism in the 1940s and '50s, realistic art fell resoundingly out of favor. It returned to popularity in the following decade, however, and has continued to enjoy at least a modest following ever since.

Through Feb. 2, the Somerset Art Association presents a show by eight "New York Realists" at the Gill-St. Bernard's School, Gladstone. The exhibit has come about at the suggestion of painter Xavier de Callatay, an instructor with the art association for two years.

De Callatay's oils are some of the show's most traditional works, in both subject matter and technique. He offers a dark, intense still life of "Bread and Wine," and a large "Untitled" seascape, both of which could have been painted in almost any era.

More contemporary are the watercolors by Sondra Freckelton. Her colorful composition "Games" centers on a small table bearing roulette chips, playing cards, puzzle pieces and a half-empty teacup. White objects with floral motifs dominate her still life "Garden Charts."

From Robert Kulicke come two small oils, each focusing on a single image. One captures indirect sunlight falling on a "Wedge of Watermelon," the other the fragile textures of a "Pink Peony in Glass Vase."

The viewer can almost catch a whiff of the fish in "Still Life with Sardines," an oil by Lennart Anderson. He also contributes a sunny glimpse of a quaint village, "View of Brunswick with Footbridge."

The late Raphael Soyer is represented by a Depression-era study of unemployed men dozing on piled girders "Under the Williamsburg Bridge," and by an oil of a sad-looking "Woman Seated" in a gray interior.

For his pastel "Afternoon Shadows/Tempe, Arizona," Sigmund Abeles depicts a dark-skinned woman relaxing nude in an armchair. Unglamorous touches, such as a bandaid on the model's finger, add interest to his close-up of "Francine's Smile, Upside-Down."

Edward Schmidt paints figures



Photo by Richard Raska

"Boredom," also by Lisa Yuskavage

which evoke classical times. The two women in his casein work "Pouring Water" wear draped gowns; but even when the characters are nude, as in the gouache "Amorous Scene," their solid bodies and barely-suggested features call to mind old stone sculptures.

Jack Beal uses brilliant green pastel crayon on dark green paper to create a mountain panorama of "Crete, Lassithi"; pastels in various strong hues depict a "Daisy, Poppy and Gladiolus" on black paper. Beal also offers an entertaining "Self Portrait (Temptation)" in black conte, which shows a heavyset man pushing away high-calorie foods, and biting down on a book in frustration.

The show can be seen weekdays from noon to 3:30 p.m. in the Mortimer Gallery, located behind the school's main office, off Mendham Road.

Contemplative oils

Although Hoboken painter Lisa Yuskavage deals with contemporary and personal issues in her works, she sometimes uses figures and settings from the past.

Her current show at the Maurice Pine Library, Fair Lawn, features scenes obviously set in the present day, alongside a few populated by characters in Biblical costumes. She executed the latter paintings, she says, while working in Provincetown on a fellowship grant.

"They were a reaction to what I was doing before, which was small-scale and autobiographical," she explains. "I became interested in the theme of martyrs, people who became important through their deaths. It related to something that happened to a member of my family."

She also sees parallels between her "Biblical" works and the 16th-century

tury church paintings by Giovanni Bellini, such as "Madonna Enthroned with Saints," which Yuskavage once saw in Venice. "Instead of looking at the Madonna and Child," she recalls, "the saints are all facing in different directions, because they are thinking about Christ's death."

A similar mournful and perhaps guilty mood can be seen in her own group scenes, such as "Simpleton." Around a bare interior stand three adults in loose robes, one with eyes blindfolded and hands tied. Two children sit at a table in a shaft of sunlight. The figures could represent members of a family, but they do not relate to one another, and the shades of gray and brown add to a sense of melancholy. The soft, diffused brushstrokes underscore the deliberate ambiguity.

"Imagination of a Martyr" depicts a similar man with a bucket over his head, hands bound to a pole, being led through a crowd of robed characters. In "Tomb" the scene appears to shift to ancient Egypt; a woman leans over a mummy case, while a man holding a small dog looks away sadly.

Although these works catch the visitor's attention for their novelty, Yuskavage maintains, "I never wanted to paint narrative pieces." She sees the costumed scenes as linking her small, earlier paintings, such as "Boredom," with newer ones focusing on one introspective figure apiece. A woman wearing only underpants leans on a dresser to study herself in a mirror in "Red Room"; another leans back on a low bed, in a similar reddish atmosphere, for "In Heat." Subtle spiritual implications return in "Sacred"; a dark door stands ajar on a bedroom where a figure sits alone, in contemplation, bathed in golden sunlight.

The Yuskavage exhibit can be seen at the library through Feb. 20.



Photo by David Scull

"Games," a watercolor by Sondra Freckelton, in the Mortimer Gallery in Gladstone



Photo by Richard Raska

"Simpleton," by Lisa Yuskavage, in the Fair Lawn exhibition

ART OPENINGS

ALLENTOWN (Artful Deposit Gallery, 9 N. Main St.)—"New Jersey Artists" exhibit, featuring works by Hanneke de Neve, Marge Levine, Milt Liebson, Linda Lombardi, Peter Smith and William Vandever, opens tomorrow. Reception Saturday, 7-10 p.m. Through March 31.

CEDAR GROVE (Korby Gallery, 479 Pompton Ave.)—Exhibits of metal sculptures by Robert Federico and paintings by French artist Esther Morisse, open Tuesday. Through Feb. 6: Tue., Wed. and Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu., 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sat., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

HACKETTSTOWN (Centenary College, Ferry Hall)—An exhibit of paintings by Anneke Raymonde Prior, former art editor of New Jersey Suburban Life magazine, opens with a reception today, 3-5 p.m. Through Feb. 28.

JERSEY CITY (Jersey City Museum, 772 Jersey Ave.)—Paintings by Whitfield Lovell,

the first exhibit in the museum's "Meet the Artist" series, opens with a reception Wednesday, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Through Feb. 27: Wed., 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thu.-Sat., 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Free.

LINCROFT (Monmouth Museum)—Monmouth County Arts Council's 1988 Art Exhibit opens today through Feb. 21.

MONTECLAIR (Israel Crane House, 110 Orange Rd.)—Architectural and art work by the late J. Lloyd Berrall, done for the Montclair Historical Society from 1967 to 1987, will be shown today during museum hours, 2-5 p.m.

OCEANVILLE (Noyes Museum, Lily Lake Road)—"Delaware River Working Decoys," the museum's collection of rare, old hunting decoys, will be on exhibit today through May 1. Hours: Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Adults \$1.50, senior citizens \$1, students and children 50 cents.

PARSIPPANY (Art Directions, 60 Baldwin

Rd.)—Abstract works on paper by Nancy Rickert and unique sculpture by Mervine Chianelli on exhibit Saturday through the month of February. Hours: Tue.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat. and evenings by appointment.

RUTHERFORD (Williams Center Art Gallery)—An exhibit of prints, drawings and mixed media works by Roy Luciana opens with a reception Saturday, 2-5 p.m. Through Feb. 24: daily, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

SHREWSBURY (Guild of Creative Art, 620 Broad St.)—Watercolor constructions, sculpture and prints by Sonya Grossman on exhibit Saturday through March 4. Reception Feb. 7, 2-5 p.m.

SUMMIT (New Jersey Center for Visual Arts Members' Gallery, 60 Elm St.)—Expressionist paintings by Traute Wagner-Kosterlitz will be shown Friday through March 3. Hours: weekdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; weekends, 2-4 p.m.