

1997

Mark Messersmith: New Mythologies

December 7, 1996 - February 2, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

One of America's important painters, Tallahassee artist Mark Messersmith is an Associate Professor of Painting at Florida State University. Educated at Fontbonne College and Indiana University, Messersmith's paintings are set amid Florida's tropical environment with statements that are both familiar and challenging. A catalog with an essay by Allys Palladino-Craig, Director of the Fine Arts Museum at Florida State University will be produced. In discussing his work, Palladino-Craig has said, "His fresh perspective gives us vivid depictions of Southern vernacular - like brutally clear cut strands of timber burning as wastelands in the heat of night. Our exotic Florida birds and vipers become symbolic opponents, centrally placed on canvases iridescent with color. Dark deeds are done by dark figures in the gleam of eerie headlights . . . Messersmith knows that if you can't smile compassionately at human foibles in this fading century, nobody learns anything - so he has modernized the medieval dance of death. A stranger in an admittedly strange land." Messersmith has received broad recognition with two Ford Foundation Fellowships, two Florida individual Artists Fellowships, and two Southern Arts Federation/National Endowment for the Arts regional fellowship awards. This exhibition will travel to other venues in the state of Florida.

Other Venues:

The Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art, December 2, 1997 - January 25, 1998

The Arts Center Galleries at Okaloosa-Walton Community College, February 6- March 22, 1998

Sponsors:

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Fine Arts Society

Pinellas County Arts Council

Florida Arts Council

Nikolas Morosoff

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Born July 24, 1899 in Moscow, Russia, Nicolas Morosoff became one of the Russia's most important contributions to contemporary art. As a youth, he studied with Kandinsky and graduated from the Moscow Academy of Fine Art. In 1925, to escape political oppression, he moved to Italy, never to return to his homeland. In his own words, "My father was a renowned lithographer in Moscow and my favorite pastime was to watch him working. Russian icons, groping for enlightenment in modern art . . . and then came the great revelation: Matisse, Cezanne, etc., dazzled me." As his career carried him

throughout Italy and France during the 1920s and 1930s, his work and sensibilities were informed by the Modernist passion of the day. This exhibition contains a selection of drawing from this exciting and important artist who came to the United States in 1959 and lived his last years in the Tampa Bay community.

Rocky Bridges: Universal Passages

February 15 - April 13, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

This exhibition of the work of Rocky Bridges, a young Florida artist of immense talent, will be made available for travel throughout the state of Florida. Currently, a faculty member at the Harrison School of Art in Lakeland, Florida, Bridges originally hails from Tarpon Springs. This exhibition examines the work of this gifted artist during the past decade. A graduate of Copper Union in New York, Bridges is a keen observer of our disposable American Culture, often incorporating found objects in his work elevating their essence to a higher plane. He is particularly intrigued with juxtaposing dissimilar discarded objects within his work, leading the viewer to new associations, experience and meaning. In his own words, Bridges has stated, "The found objects that I incorporate into much of my work are all discovered on personal journeys. I appreciate their weathered appearance and physical transitions. Nevertheless, the objects that I select on my journeys all have a magical sense to them they are spiritual icons of our existence this our own transformation into absolute time . . . overall, much of my work is intended to create a concept of universal abstraction, each viewer to their own interpretation."

Lisa Williamson: New Work

February 15 - April 13, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

Lisa Williamson of New Smyrna Beach and Washington, D.C. is trained as a painter and fiber artist. These unique paintings with Procion dyes on fabric reflect the natural world and influence of Florida's environment through a colorful personalized visual language of whimsical figures and forms, not unlike Matisse. Born in Alexandria, Virginia in 1951, Williamson has exhibited broadly throughout the United States and has been included in numerous national exhibitions. She was a Fellow at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida and also received a Fellowship to study at the University of Oslo, Norway. She holds a BA in painting from Eastern Kentucky University and an MFA in fiber arts from Southern Illinois University.

Akiko Sugiyama

April 26 - June 22, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

Japanese-American artist Akiko Sugiyama will present her innovative mixed media

constructions in this exhibition. Utilizing parchment paper, crayons, watercolor, matte medium, netting, polyester fiber, and a variety of other materials, Sugiyama creates abstract two-and three-dimensional objects with explore her personal experiences, contemporary social issues, and often primitive Oriental folklore themes. Born in 1949 in Omori Prefecture, Japan, she now maintains a studio in Ormond Beach., Florida. She is a graduate of the Joshi Bijutsu Daigaku University in Tokyo, Japan where she received a BA in painting in 1974.

Mark Lindquist: Revolutions in Wood

April 26 - June 22, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

Organized by the Hand Workshop, Virginia Center for the Craft Arts and curated by Dr. Robert Hobbs, this retrospective exhibition features the innovative work of Mark Lindquist. As the first full scale Lindquist retrospective exhibition, it will focus on forty-two major vessels from the past twenty-five years. Among the pioneers of the studio wood turning movement, Lindquist can be credited with creating the natural top bowl, comprehending the aesthetic potential of spalted wood, which his father first used, rejecting the highly polished surfaces of traditional turning and permitting accidents of bark inclusion and checks in the wood to play important aesthetic roles, as well as developing ways of using the initial corrugated surfaces of gouge marks in his finished works. Lindquist comprehends the metaphoric power of turned wood as the metamorphose of the tree of life symbol. Always recognized as a key innovator in the field that transcends mere technique with visual insight, Lindquist's work spans the time when traditional wood turning techniques were used to his current exploration of primitive robotics. This exhibition is scheduled to travel throughout America and will be presented at the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.

Studioworks 1997

July 8 - 31, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

The annual juried **Studioworks** exhibition presents the work of Art Center's instructors and students. All mediums will be included in the exhibition such as painting, ceramics, photography, metalsmithing, sculpture, mixed media, etc. Artists and instructors who have taught or taken classes or workshops at the Art Center during the previous twelve months will be invited to participate. A juror of statewide recognition will be invited to select the exhibition and the award winners.

Tomas Marais: A Cuban-American Point of View

July 8-31, 1997

Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

Tomas Marais was born in Cuba and educated in Havana at the San Alejandro School of fine arts, as well as the University of Virginia and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris. He now maintains a studio in Tampa, Florida. Marais has exhibited throughout Europe at such prestigious institutions as the Museum of Modern Art, Paris; Lumiere Museum, Tours, France; Ewan Phillips Gallery, London, England; Citadella Gallery, Padova, Italy; and numerous venues in the United States. The highly productive Marais produces colorful surrealist paintings, usually in oil, that reflect his fascination with the real and imagined world he experiences. The works are always insightful, intuitive, and often laced with a wry sense of humor.

Southeastern Fine Crafts Biennial II

September 12 - November 16, 1997
Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

An invitational exhibition, organized by the Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, designed to survey the innovative contemporary art being created by Southeastern artists utilizing traditional craft media. The Art Center will invite a select group of artists, nominated by regional museum directors and curators, from the twelve southeastern states to participate. The exhibition will include works in clay, fiber, metals, glass, wood, and associated mixed media. The works selected for the exhibition will come from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Roxie Thomas: The Gift

September 12 - November 16, 1997
Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Belleair, Florida

This cooperative mail-art project was inspired by Lewis Hyde's book The Gift. Sculptor Roxie Thomas mailed out 140 small handcrafted wooden crates, each containing a ceramic egg, to friends and colleagues throughout America. Each person was free to keep the egg and handcrafted crate, give it away, or embellish it and return it for an exhibition. In her letter to the recipients of the gifts, Thomas said, "The concept for the work is gifts and giving. It is based on my belief that a gift, as an extension of one's self, is offered to enrich not only the individual life of another, but society as a whole."

There were 82 responses to the gift offerings. Most of the returned eggs and/or wooden crates had been embellished in a manner unique to the recipient, and some eggs had been replaced with another gift. Additionally, the project generated a variety of communication, all of which is included in this innovative participatory exhibition centered on the notion of freely giving with no expectation of anything in return.