

JOAN FABIAN *FAITH GAY* CORINNE McMANEMIN

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PAINTERS X 3



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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APRIL 6 - MAY 11, 2002

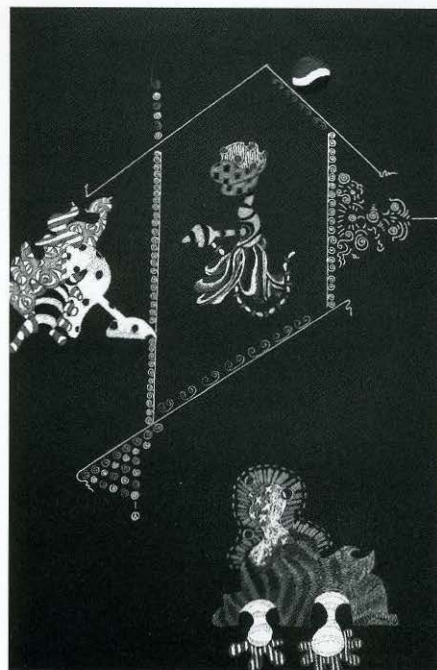
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Displayed together in one gallery space, this art is not tame; the pieces confront each other like so many instinctively wild school children forced to be subdued. *Submission* wheels around swiftly, flashing colors and flexing its single claw. *Oh Behave* admonishes the pink painting (for behavioral reasons, itself already in the corner). *Mushmouth* and *'il Buddy with Four*, however precariously, stands by, just hanging out.

Though disparate, the paintings by Joan Fabian, Corinne McManemin and Faith Gay are all playful, in the way that Lane Relyea described Monique Prieto's paintings: "the forms play with each other and us."<sup>1</sup> Prieto's painted forms face each other more than they face the viewer, Relyea observes, and the relationship between Prieto's forms, within a single painting, recall for him the paintings of the eighteenth century. As theatricality comes into play, time is engaged as a crucial element. Prieto's paintings, as well as the paintings in *Painters x 3*, possess a "presence" similar to what Michael Fried critiqued in his 1967 essay, "Art and Objecthood." "Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theater."<sup>2</sup> In his essay, Fried contested the "objects" with presence made by artists Donald Judd and Robert Morris. According to Fried, Judd's "specific objects" blurred the boundaries between the pure arts. But exactly how does time exist in painting as opposed to what Fried "experienced" with minimal sculpture? How can these non-narrative, abstract forms be actors and what makes them alive? The answer lies in the elements of color and line, built together to form cohesive visual other-worlds.

Marlene Dumas writes that "painting doesn't freeze time. It circulates and recycles time like a wheel that turns."<sup>3</sup> The floating and whirling movement in Fabian's paintings mirrors Dumas' observation; time's cyclical presence also appears in McManemin's round forms as they connect and refer back to one another, and in the melted, morphing nature of Gay's specimen-like compositions. In Dumas' metaphor, time is like water being turned by a wheel. The wheel is the self-reflexivity of these paintings, their existence unto themselves. They are behaving, and behave they must, to work successfully within the discourse of painting today. During the twentieth century, painting became a pluralistic activity, incorporating everything from ready-made objects to photography, so that currently it is common practice to consider certain artists as painters even though they replace the brush with the camera or the screen. Adding to this liberty is the wider selection of material available to contemporary artists and the freedom to include these materials in their paintings.

Color alone has been appropriated by commerce, democratized into systems that are accessible to all. Fabian incorporates an abstracted Pepsi logo into her paintings. McManemin finds an incomparable yellow from kitchen rubber gloves. Gay creates grid-based color studies out of paint chips gleaned from a store display. These artists and the objects they create could be like children let loose in a candy store—their bags could be stuffed! Yet the paintings, however capricious, maintain a perfect tension between indulgence and resistance.



Joan Fabian, *Houseplay*, 2001.  
Opaque watercolor on digital print. 24" x 19"

After all, painting is a matter of behavior, of how the artist conducts herself in the process of creation. And in this behavior is an emphasis on restraint, restraint being a filter through which comes the synthesis of form with color. How do each of the respective artists behave? (What's in their bags)?

Corinne McManemin received her M.F.A., *Summa Cum Laude*, from Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX and her B.F.A., from West Chester University, West Chester, PA. She also had select studies at The Art Student League, and at the National Academy of Design in New York, NY. Exhibiting since 1985, Ms. McManemin has had many one-person exhibitions in Texas and numerous group and juried exhibitions throughout the United States. Ms. McManemin has won several Honors and Awards and has taught at Southern Methodist University, Dallas and Brookhaven College, Farmers Branch, TX.

## JOAN FABIAN

*Resides in San Antonio, Texas*

Fabian's art is influenced by her experience at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan, and by *mughal* miniature painting, a style of painting made from the 16th to 18th century that blends Indian, Persian and Asian influences. "Swirl" often comes up when Fabian describes her observations of Pakistan: the way Pakistanis wear their clothes, the way they pile their families and possessions upon their motor scooters, the way that unusual combinations of camels, donkeys, trucks, rickshaws, scooters and people chaotically mix together on the streets. But "swirl" can also reference the mystical traditions of this land, such as the Sufi whirling dervishes.

Corinne McManemin, *Hello, Vicar*, 2001.

Fur, plastic, powderpuff, oil, acrylic, and photograph on wood 13-1/2" x 9" x 3-1/2"



In fact, this mystical practice recalls Fabian's observations of the street, of so many disparate parts of man and nature coming together, one giant vibrating aliveness. Combining this concept of whirling movement with form, or the gestalt, produces a dizzying experience; Fabian throws her disorientation into a whorl and her paintings and "scribble recordings" are the end result. In *Houseplay*, (2001), Fabian's brilliantly colored and patterned abstract forms play amidst decorative lines that imply an architectural space. Though not figurative in a familiar sense, these forms appear somehow clothed, and seem to be pointing, standing, and arching. The spatial composition of these forms upon the paper or vinyl gives them a confrontational sense; they appear

designed to be hovering and facing one another. Like the atmospheric spaces in other paintings by Fabian, *Houseplay's* tableau recalls the space inside a video game, the semblance of characters moving inside a fictional space that is in fact simply the monitor's screen producing abstractions of colored pixels. The player of the game can move the characters in this floating, ethereal space, so that the images can whirl around; there's a detachment between the easy quick movement on the screen and the body of the player. This physical disconnect also simulates the visual ambiguity of Fabian's forms in which one recognizes the familiar within the unfamiliar.

## CORINNE McMANEMIN

*Resides in Guilford, Connecticut*

Departing from her traditional framed canvas paintings that featured colors inspired by nature, McManemin's latest work, constructed from wood, paint, and found objects, employs color and optics. Color enters these paintings through the objects of McManemin's daily life: the cap of a vanilla bottle, an image from a baby shampoo bottle, a powder puff. The round wooden discs join together in two ways—first, they are cut so that they are not always separate but rather stacked on top of one another to form a shape reminiscent of a snowman; and secondly, they are also layered upon one another. McManemin paints and collages these piles and layers so that they form a system of lenses, or spots for reflections, like mirrors, the object of reflection being the painting itself. *Indeed* (2001) acts as a vehicle through which to consider aspects of painting itself. It is a form used by McManemin through which she may examine her concerns with painting: a physical space lacking the traditional

Joan Fabian received her B.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago and her M.F.A. from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Exhibiting since 1981, Fabian has had many one-person exhibitions, and numerous group and juried exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad. In the year 2000 she had a one-person exhibit at the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan, where she was a visiting lecturer. Ms. Fabian has won many grants and honorariums, most notably as a Fulbright Scholar Award to Pakistan. She is currently an Art Instructor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, and has been a Visiting Artist and Instructor at several universities in Texas and in Pakistan. Last year she gave a lecture at San Antonio College with Shahzia Sikander, a Pakistan/New York artist on the influence of the culture of Pakistan on both their works.

frame, whereby she may explore color, the actual application of paint, design, and drawing. A musical comparison to the painting *Indeed* would be a fugue, variations on a theme. McManemin devises a system of colors to work with in her painting, so that they appear and reappear through different modes of application: spraying, painting by hand, and color photography. McManemin creates the patterns by spraying paint through paper doilies, and hand-paints lines that echo the doilies' contours. Collaged onto *Indeed* is an out-of-focus color photo of the painting itself, bringing into play the phenomenological implications of the painting's completeness. *Oh Behave* (2002) spans the corner fostering the painting's reflection upon itself.

#### FAITH GAY

*Resides in Austin, Texas*

In paintings like *Innocent Eruptions* (2001), Gay makes the wall her canvas by pinning her delicately-made forms against it. Gay's media consists of plastic beads from a craft store that she arranges into intricate designs of color and then melts with an iron. Gay shapes the multicolored beads into bizarre, unpredictable shapes sometimes inspired by botanical forms. The melted plastic and the small scale of the beads allow Gay to create what seem like tiny insect track forays out into space. Grouping together beads with wildly colorful palettes, Gay designs amoeba-like blobs that look like live specimens under a microscope. The contrast of their curves and colors pulse and vibrate as the beads' collective shape mimics their (synthetic) cellular nature. In contrast to her work with beads, which is conspicuously out-of-bounds, Gay works within a defined system to create her square paintings. The grid-based



Faith Gay, *Innocent Eruptions*, 2001. Plastic.  
Installation approximately 36" x 48"

targets, comprised of seemingly random color selections, create a lively vibrating field. Despite the complex systems and arrangements Gay devises for her art, it has simple foundations. She seeks out ready-made, found objects which she manipulates. The vibrant paint colors are not painted at all; but are paint chips transformed from the lines of ascending colors in a store display unit, reordered and made into art. The perfectly shaped circles are made with hole punchers, another appropriated use of craft store merchandise. Gay slyly undermines the rational use of materials, rejecting their marketable, prescribed usages in order to surprise, and create the unexpected.

Wendy Weil Atwell  
April 2002  
San Antonio, Texas

<sup>1</sup> All references to Lane Relyea's discussion of painting are taken from a lecture he delivered at ArtPace. Lane Relyea, "Is There A Place for Painting In (or Outside of) Today's Art Leviathan?" February 20, 2002, ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *ArtForum* 5 (June 1967), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Marlene Dumas, "Women and Painting (1993)," *Painting at the Edge of the World*, ed. Douglas Fogle. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2001), p. 172.

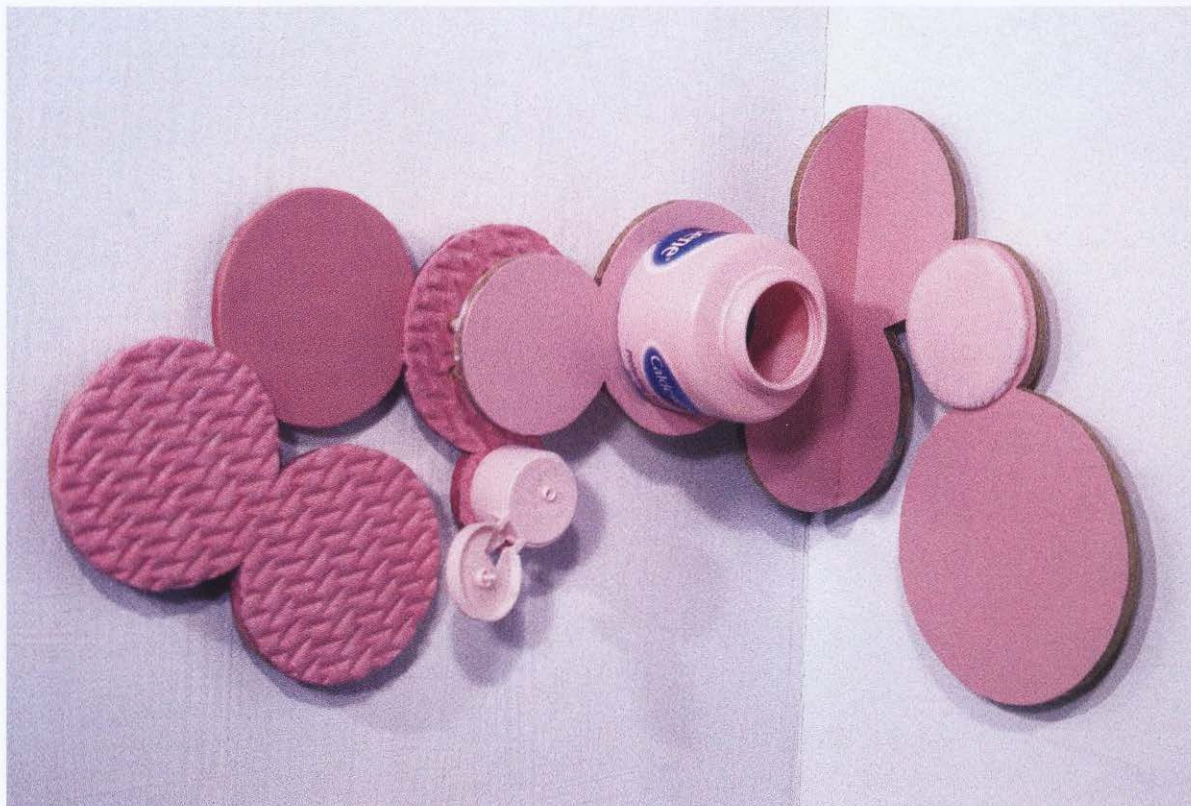
*Faith Gay received her B.F.A., in Sculpture, from the University of Texas at Austin, TX. Exhibiting since 1995, Faith has had numerous group and juried exhibitions in Texas and one in Switzerland. Ms. Gay has also had several installations and performances in Austin, Texas with Ariel Dance Theatre and Frontera Fest.*



Cover Panel: Joan Fabian, *Floating Motif*, 2001. Opaque watercolor on digital print. 11" x 14"

This Panel: Faith Gay, *Pinkfaced Sodaris*, 2002. Plastic. Installation approximately 36"

Back Panel: Corinne McManemin, *Oh Behave*, 2002. Plastic, powderpuff, oil, acrylic, sponge, and photograph on wood. 14" x 8" x 3-1/2"



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WOMEN & THEIR WORK

1710 LAVACA ST.

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

(512) 477-1064

wtw@texas.net

www.womenandtheirwork.org