

## IS PAINTING DEAD? ARTISTS TALK ON ART MAY 16

Moderator: Burt Chernow, Panelists: Nicholas Krushenick, Stuart Shedletsky, Shirlyann Smith, Bob Wiegand.

The subtitle of this panel, "Is Jerking Off Getting Out of Hand?" could mean "Once you've seen one jerk-off in an art context, you've seen them all, so a painting Renaissance is inevitable." Or, contrarily, "Painting itself is the equivalent of jerking off, so why paint?" In either case, if you've been waiting tensely for the verdict, the panelists agreed that painting is not now, nor is it likely to be dead. (In fact, one assumes that the 4 painters convened in order to reach such a conclusion). It did however take them 3/4 of the evening to start to explain why.

For openers, the now-infamous query was projected onto the screen: "Art Forum wishes to ask you as a painter what you consider to be the prospects of painting in this decade... those understood to be making the 'inevitable next step' now work with any material but paint..." A show of panelists' slides with commentary by each was followed by talk of THE LETTER, THE CRITICS, THE ARTICLE (Tom Wolfe's), OTHER PAINTERS, and THE SITUATION.

THE LETTER--SMITH: It's a love letter from Art Forum--the kind you'd write at the end of a long marriage. But the language is so literary--intellectual ethnic--not words I've ever heard artists use. WIEGAND: Is Art Forum dead? They never had to fish before. They came on BangBang!

THE ARTICLE--KRUSHENICK: I have NEVER been to a party at Ethel Scull's. SHEDLETSKY: It's a tantrum by an essentially literary person who doesn't "get" art. WIEGAND: There was a bit of truth on some levels and that made everybody a little uncomfortable, but he stretched it.

THE CRITICS--KRUSHENICK: I've enjoyed a certain amount of honesty from Harold Rosenberg. He admitted

the critic is finished. Greenberg (apologetic tone) has been a constant champion of the abstract idea in art. SHEDLETSKY: The critics can tie up Brice Marden with Fragonard. WIEGAND: Rosenberg said "It may be time to abandon, not art, but art criticism, which has become little more than a shopping list."

OTHER PAINTERS--CHERNOW: Who are the painters today that keep painting alive? KRUSHENICK: Jasper Johns hasn't given us a new image in years (my wife will kill me for saying this)...Stella is still about making art, and I respect him tremendously for that try, whether it succeeds or fails. A lot of people just give us bricks and bunny rabbits. Noland is still making a fantastic try at making art...Richard Lindner, Alfred Jensen, Yrissary, Jo Baer. WIEGAND: D'arcangelo, Chuck Hinman. AUDIENCE: I don't hear any names of new people keeping painting alive. WIEGAND: There doesn't have to be something new every week. SHEDLETSKY: Heroes don't come along as often as Art Forum would have us think. They change geniuses every week. KRUSHENICK: Work today is all intellect, no passion. Anyway, all artists are not created equal.

THE SITUATION--CHERNOW: Will new technology replace painting, or co-exist? WIEGAND: No one got excited when Rauschenberg got involved with dance. No one's going to get excited when I get into video. SMITH: There's a tendency to want to perform, to go where the action is. SHEDLETSKY: I sit in front of all those tapes and get terribly bored. I want to go home and watch television. AUDIENCE: If painting is dead, it's dead in the colleges. KRUSHENICK: On 50% of any given faculty you have this meatball who makes a (lousy) watercolor every 2 years. And he has an enormous amount of power. AUDIENCE A: Is art dead? AUDIENCE B: That's next week! AUDIENCE C: Art has never been more alive. It's travelling in all directions. They're waiting for that

one direction, but we don't have to offer it to them. SHEDLETSKY: The impulse to make art is a very primal, basic human impulse, since the caves at Lascaux.

AUDIENCE: Is the idea all-important? Are the hands that produce the idea interchangeable, or does art lose in translation? KRUSHENICK: They had assistants 400 years ago. BUT I LOVE THE ACT OF PUTTING PAINT ON CANVAS! I even stretch and prime the canvases myself. There's a delicious, beautiful factor to running a brush across a surface. I don't want to relegate that to someone else.

If I did, I'd be standing around all day watching the schmuck. SHEDLETSKY: Works of a certain type, eg. Judd's, don't suffer from fabrication. But you couldn't imagine getting someone else to do a de Kooning.

(Soon thereafter an authentic screaming match between Krushenick and a fellow in the audience who seemed not to care for abstract art attested to the success of the panel and the vigor of the feelings involved). KRUSHENICK AND FELLOW: (Incoherent). KRUSHENICK: Fuck you. FELLOW: Your art lacks passion. It's an intellectual color exercise. It's like wrapping paper. CHERNOW: (calmly): Do any of you ever sneak off into a room a do a little still life, or something? KRUSHENICK: Figurative painting outsells abstract painting 6 to 1. I turned from it and never looked back. I want to die with my finger on the pulse of the 21st century. In a strange way it's the most delectable life style I've ever encountered. If you never get any success in your life, you could say on your deathbed, "I've had a wonderful life!"

Conclusion: Art Forum can't be dead because artists hate it so much (and read it so much), and painting can't be dead because artists love it so much (and do it so much).

--Judy Seigel

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Realist Paintings - Louis Meisel  
Gallery, 141 Prince St., thru July  
31. Audrey Flack, etc.

Environmental Sculpture & Documentation -  
Virginia Zabriskie Gallery, 29 W.  
57 St., thru July 31. Anne Healy,  
Athena Tacha, etc.

Containers - Pipeline Underground  
USA, Hansen Galleries, 72 Wooster St.,  
thru June. Wendy W. Ehlers, Stephanie  
B. Lederman, Brenda Price, Monique  
Recant, Dee Shapiro, Joyce Stillman  
Myers.

### 5 ARTISTS AT WOMEN IN THE ARTS

One of the most rewarding and important aspects of the women's movement is illustrated by the current show at the WIA's loft. Five names pulled out of a hat just happened to select 1 woman in her 20's, one in her 30's, one in her 40's, one in her 50's and one in her 70's! What's more, the work spans contemporary sensibility from conceptual constructions to "framed" paintings. Sari Diene's assemblages, Lin Ehrlich and Judy Seigel's paintings, Myra Gorig's mixed media sculpture, Bernette Rudolph's prints. Continuing at 435 Broome St. on Tues. & Sat., 2-5 pm thru July 14.

### INFORMATION ROUNDUP

Photography Gallery, Slide Registry and Portfolios of Women Photographers at the Sophie Rivera Gallery, 587 Ft. Washington Ave., NYC.

Painting-Construction - slide lecture suitable for fine arts program and adult art education available from Harriet FeBland Studio, Premium Pt., New Rochelle, NY 10801.

National Women's Film Circuit - Iris Films sponsoring a Film Festival starting Aug. 1 in Washington, D.C. to last as long as there are women's films to show. The best of the films to be packaged for a twenty-city tour. Iris Films East, Box 2394, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Shantih preparing special issue on "Women and the Creative Process" in celebration of IWY, welcomes prose, poetry and visual art materials (photographs, graphics, documentations of performances) by Aug. 31. Box 125, Bay Ridge Sta., Brooklyn, 11220.

Women's History Research Center pub. IWY 1975 Supplement to FEMALE ARTISTS PAST AND PRESENT '74 at \$2. ('74 Directory still available at \$5), 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Cal. 94708.

SUMMERART - Free 6 week workshops starting July 8 in painting, sculpture, and print making being offered by the Queens Museum for 8 - 17 year olds. For enrollment information call Janet Phillips, 592-2405.

Needlework, Needlework documentation (photographs, books, patterns, needlework artists' diaries, etc.) and interviewing of needle artists in your community needed for the collection and oral history archives of Center for the History of American Needlework, 5660 Beacon St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217.

ECSTASY - new feminist published non-sexist erotic journal needs graphics, photography, fiction, poetry, fantasy. Fifty percent of their profits will be paid to contributors. New Time Press, Box 921, Half Moon Bay, Calif. 94019.

AFFIRMATIONS - Collecting portraits of American women - verbal or visual, abstract or representational, for book in celebration of IWY and the Bicentennial. Affirmations, Box 134 Shenorock, NY, 10587.