

on the current relationship between art and industry.

reals himself as a narrative psychological element of a recent group of six artists against the wall, each of the least measures 72½ inches high. The piece mixes references to the real realms of architecture and the results. The piece is bounded by small investments, 1980, is an approach: bringing together is rich in dramatic relationships, both formal and the parts. There are natural divisions: two primary but separated, the pieces stand upright and their diagonal edges are in perspective—the architectural trapezoidal wood through their suggestion can be read as a floor; in the foreground, a plywood against the gallery wall left raw except for the lines which in trompe l'oeil suggest a stairway, and a miniature chair and steps.

Back "floor" and on the wall is a perspectival surface table. The wall is covered with painted objects, including geometrical things: different-colored triangles and squares are among them; they look as if flying in and descending from an ominous black shadowlike images of objects; the stuff of

When east (India) and San Francisco artist Joan Mitchell of the new paintings inspired by the trip to India, some of the American figures in the paintings, especially, are fresh, bold, and of Indian myths, and the results. It might be an indication of the work to be regarding the half-century that often turn a robe-bedecked,

blue-eyed, light-complexioned woman (very American-looking—she's probably a self-portrait of the artist), and "what's what" in terms of the stories being depicted (*The Taming of the Tiger* and *The Night Vigil* are two titles). But, still, Brown's artworks are intended to be seen and felt and not just read.

Both formal and compositional features make references to the pictorial devices of Indian and other traditional cultures. While the bright, all-over surface colors of Brown's paintings and constructions recall the strong decorative tendencies in Indian art, the register-like reliefs and the stiff frontal and profile poses of the figures bring to mind the conventions of ancient Egyptian art. But the specific and distinctively informative qualities of these images—note the attention to expression and gesture and the dynamic mix of realism and idealism—are intriguingly American. Such features as the blue-eyed woman serve as entry points for the journey of the mind and spirit that Brown invites us to take. Her offer is hard to refuse. As we pass through the constructions (painted pillars and a painted pergola—the passageway, in this exhibition, to the paintings) we enter an atmosphere both contemplative and active which is difficult to leave behind.

—RONNY H. COHEN

Los Angeles

"Young Turks," Downtown Gallery:

This recent exhibition may be one of the first to be named after a film. Los Angeles has been rife with "Turkomania," an electrical storm of media attention drawn to Stephen Seemayer's two-hour *Young Turks*, featuring 13 artists: Bob & Bob (Francis Shishim and Paul Velick), Linda Burnham, James Croak, Woods Davy, Eric (Randy) Johnsen, Marc Kreisel, Jon Peterson, Monique Safford, John Schroeder, Coleen Sterritt, Andrew Wilf, and Seemayer himself. Essentially *Young Turks* is a home movie, a series of brief celluloid portraits of Seemayer's friends strung together without pretense to objectivity. It's entertaining enough as Seemayer's personal production, but hardly sufficient reason to stage this exhibition. As a group of artists the Young Turks have little in common apart from their residency in the industrial zone of downtown Los Angeles. Their individual artwork is predictably uneven. Therefore the exhibition comes off as an advertising gim-

mick, a way to cash in on the phenomenon of "Turkomania"—which in itself is a component of the media's larger interest in the nascent art scene of downtown Los Angeles.

The strongest work in the show has certain roguish qualities suitable to the "Young Turks" moniker. Andrew Wilf exhibited a painting of animal carcasses, imagery drawn from the meat counters of the city's downtown Grand Central Market. The warm, waxy surfaces of these canvases exude the physicality of raw flesh; jumbled compositions of animal parts teeter between inspiring tactile attraction and visceral revulsion. Through this tension Wilf hones direct, brutally beautiful paintings. Coleen Sterritt's architectural sculptures strike a similar balance between allure and aggression. The feisty, turret-shaped structures are fashioned from twisted sticks and metal shards, finished in colors either harsh or metallic or both. The surfaces are seductive, but dangerous and prickly. These are rough-hewn constructions that recall primitive fortresses, yet simultaneously suggest a futuristic environment.

Monique Safford photographs Los Angeles' urban landscape, then fragments the black and white images into vertical strips and captions them with contrasting texts that describe the dreamy delights of exotic lands. The series is poignant, capturing the plight of every city dweller who lives within the boundaries of one reality and seeks relief in the boundless imagination. James Croak's *Vegas Jesus* could have taken the prize as the most startling work in the exhibition: a monumental aluminum omega form sports the motto "Free Men Own Guns," and supports a twisted cross. Crude cutouts of the sun and the moon flank a stuffed sheep chained to the cross, holding an American flag. The statement melds Hell's Angels bike decor with Moral Majority folk art.

Contradiction reigned throughout the exhibition. Performance artists Bob & Bob showed silly pastel drawings inspired by their trek across America, while other artists who had never before attempted performance decided to have a crack at it. Linda Burnham, editor of *High Performance* magazine and a writer for *Artforum*, made her performance debut in *Do What You Will*. Low lights and Latin music suffused the gallery in which three large green-nylon tents were pitched; one was lined with rabbit fur, another with cushions and

marigolds, and a third with a bed of rock salt sprouting dildos. Enclosed in the cozy green nylon, participants listened through earplugs to cassettes of Burnham reading from Anaïs Nin's *Delta Erotica*. Seductively dressed in a formal black gown, Burnham sat at a table among the tents, offering love potions, spells, and reading from tarot cards. It was a corny, yet serious, performance; playing against the common anxiety that surrounds "love," Burnham acted as a shaman, distributing secrets to sensual happiness. At the very least, it was an evening of entertainment.

Another performance artist, Eric "Randy" Johnsen, held a *Cocktail Seminar* to explain his role as an "action critic." Claiming that art should stay in the galleries and museums where it belongs, Johnsen has gained local notoriety by defacing his contemporaries' site-specific public works around downtown Los Angeles. At the conclusion of his talk, the audience followed him out of the gallery to watch as he blacked out a white target symbol painted on the street by Lee Waisler. It was a flimsy performance, an obvious grasp for attention; it was also funny and irrelevant.

I mention this because Johnsen was the only artist in the exhibition to display even the most modestly rebellious tendencies. For all the posturing of the Young Turks, they are for the most part industrious, career-oriented artists, not the radical, experimental, cutting edge that the name implies. Their newly won attention is being taken seriously, most of all by Seemayer himself. His performance opera, *Rise and Fall*, was a pompous dirge; crimson lips on a video monitor sang atonal arias of urban strife, which combined with film projections, special effects, props, and costumed performers to produce an experience of media without message. In a sense, it seems a metaphor for the entire Young Turk phenomenon—an astonishing flurry of apparent activity which supports very little substance.

—HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA

"Young Turks," a film by Stephen Seemayer:

There are rumors of boom in the Los Angeles art world. The development of the Museum of Contemporary Art, with its implications of international sanction, have detonated an already simmering real estate market in the downtown area. Dealers, real estate developers,