

Despite this minor flaw, Laskowski's work deserved better attention. If done correctly, her showing next year in the gallery's larger space could be a major draw.

—Sandy Thompson

The Box Show and Inya Laskowski: Pages from the Book of Things closed September 3 at Gallery Route One, Point Reyes Station.

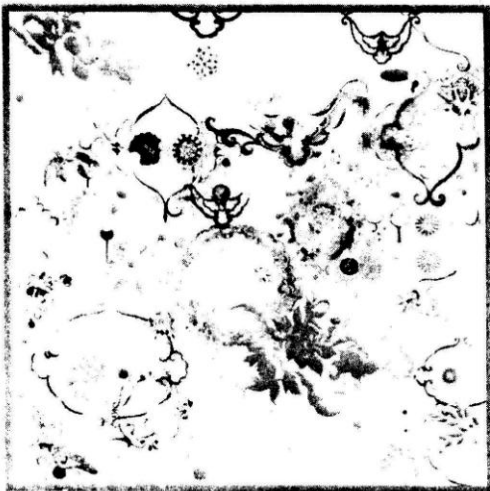
Sandy Thompson is a freelance writer based in Northern California.

'Abstraction: From Raucous to Refined' at the Bedford Gallery

Ever since Kasimir Malevich painted his icon to modern art, *Black Square* in 1915, abstract painting has gone through some significant changes. In 1948, Jackson Pollock broke the limits of abstractionist language by pouring and splattering paint from a wooden stick onto the surface of his canvas. By the 1960s the ideas and practices that artists inflected on abstract painting radically changed the look of the picture forever. In the current exhibition of paintings, *Abstraction: From Raucous to Refined*, one can gain an understanding of the broad range of possibilities that abstraction yields, and also get a sense of what some abstract painters are now doing in California.

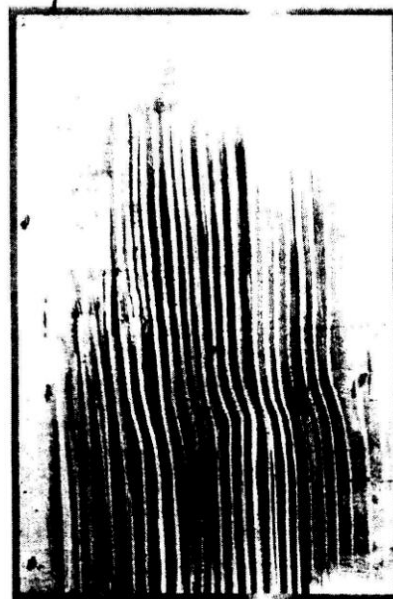
Connie Goldman's minimal, sculptural looking *Metrum*, is suspended within the core tradition of abstraction—similar to Suprematism and minimal art of the 1960s. This painting's real sense of weight seems to be created by the perfect confluence of its deep support and the earthy orange hue that is applied all over the visible surface. Ed Moses also is grounded in tradition with his stained painting in troweled muted colors on an unprimed surface. Moses creates a flat, unbearable tension in his painting by butting a number of shapes against their razor sharp edges.

Some of the other artists in this exhibition fall into the zone of abstract expressionism that is all too familiar. The articulate brushwork of Karen Barbour and Frances McCormack share the same painterly ethos as the great gestural webs



of Philip Guston's abstract paintings of the early '60s. Yet I think the presence of the figure haunts this type of abstraction, and the differences between these painters' efforts and Guston's is that in

modern ideas about art and culture, these paintings reflect the hybridity of picture making that uses images from any source available for reproduction and/or representation by the artist. These painters lift



Clockwise from upper left: Reed Danziger, *Untitled*, 1999, oil pencil, pigment, shellac on paper over wood, 31-1/2" x 31-1/2"; Kim Anno, *Yonder*, 2000, ink, leaf, paper, 42" x 30"; Amy Kaufman, *Tiger*, 1996, oil on canvas, 72" x 60"; Catherine Courtenaye, *Six Wings for Practice*, oil on canvas, 24" x 22", at Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek.

the end he had the courage to take on the risky task of seeing the figure through the brush stroke.

But I find Ann Harrold Taylor's gestural painting especially expressive, even though one critic has given it a devastating critique by saying that it is "semantically empty." She adjusts her paint strokes by applying white paint over a previous color. In the end, there are these pale patches of color interrupting the roping action of her painted grid. The effect makes the painting appear like it's virtually spilling out of its support but held back by a plate of glass, as if it lay inside a transparent box filled with objects.

The idea of painting as a sign, or even a ready-made, is well illustrated by Kara Maria and Rex Ray among others exhibiting here. The intent of these paintings strain the term abstraction and render it almost obsolete. Symptomatic of post-

their images from instructional manuals on penmanship, advertising, decorative patterns, and actual works of art with an occasional sense of wizardry like in the color-conscious work of Maria.

Kim Anno's painting, *Nomad*, stands out here as a balanced inheritor of traditional abstractionist values and of the vitality of disruptive changes. Her painting is a shaped canvas with six sides. One half of the shape is painted in strips, the other a somber solid hue. The painting resembles a constructivist sculpture with interlocking planes in receding

and advancing perspectives. At another moment the instability of the painting gives the impression of that flying plastic bag carried by the wind in a scene from *American Beauty*.

—Juan Rodriguez

Abstraction: From Raucous to Refined through October 1 at Bedford Gallery, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Other artists included in the exhibition are Christopher Brown, Catherine Courtenaye, Reed Danziger, Wynne Hayakawa, Amy Kaufman and Sian Oblak.

Juan Rodriguez is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

Jennifer Faist and David Wooten at Gallery 8

Aspects of the "less is more" reductive astringency of the Minimalist movement of the 1960s—modularity, unitary structure and repetitiveness—provide the core approach to making art for both Jennifer Faist and David Wooten, two artists in an *Introductions 2000* exhibition at Gallery 8. The paintings of Faist consist