

PAPER WORKS



DIANE AYOTT | MEREDITH FIFE DAY | BARBARA GROSSMAN
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Barbara Grossman, *Improvisation*, 21" x 18", monotype

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FIELD OF RECURRENCE

by Jennifer Samet

Presented with an exhibition of works on paper by six women artists, it is difficult not to consider issues of gender, medium, and subject hierarchies. Have we ever arrived at a post-modernist, inclusive place in the art world? Have the notions of toughness, machismo, and heroic, existentialist practice broken down to the point that we are capable of analyzing this work on its own terms, or are we still mired in those values?

A common thread that runs through this group exhibition is an emphasis on pattern, accretion, stacking, and repeating rhythms that create fields and organize space. This way of working signals a break from the paradigm of artist as hero. Instead of the work hinging on a visible history of self-will directed decisions and adjustments, the artist responds to the internal demands of the work. Patterns and rhythms are signifiers of connections between people, the repetitions of daily life.

Earlier this year, a controversy arose when the New York Times published Ken Johnson's review of a Michelle Grabner exhibition. In it, Johnson dismissed the work in terms of the artist's lifestyle, calling it bland - the work of a "soccer mom" and "middle-class tenured university professor," reflecting children's crafts and baking - all without self-reflective investigation or irony. Many called Johnson's review lazy and sexist, pointing out that Grabner's work was influenced more by math than by domestic and familial activities. But, a few, including Grabner herself, asked why those arenas are still not considered valid subjects for investigation.

It is not a new question: we continue to erase an artist like Pierre Bonnard from the art-historical canon for not being "tough" enough. Bonnard committed the double crime of depicting the feminine, domestic arena and letting his own self-portrait and other forms nearly dissolve into fields of color and mark. It is an effacement of self that does not fit within the trajectory of modernism.

The painter and writer Andrew Forge - who was also a teacher to Marlene Rye - spoke about a shift in his work that is echoed by many artists coming out of an existentialist-based art tradition. Influenced by his hero, Giacometti, he was searching for "truth" in art, but eventually reached an impasse, and gave up painting for six months. When he returned to the canvas, he had the epiphany that led him to work with dots of paint, and to explore the

relationships and implied lines of connections between the marks. As Forge stated, “it’s as though the picture is making its own mind up – it’s being made here, on the canvas, instead of in my head as an act of will.”

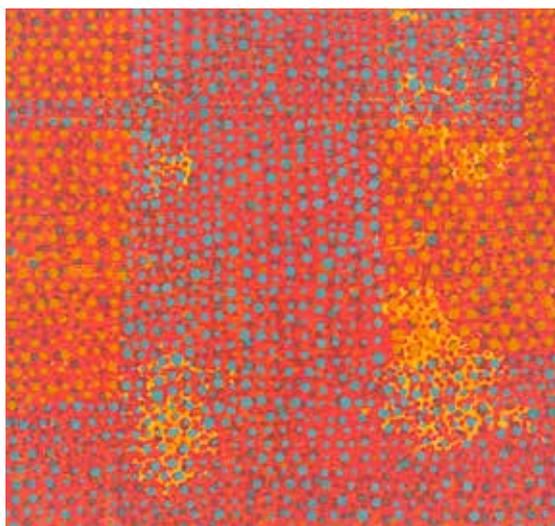
The work in this exhibition all invokes such patterns, the connective tissue that links and binds us to each other. It also refers to spheres of domestic life. Sidney Licht’s abstracted still-lives, often of colored shopping bags, reflect consumption and quotidian activity – the stuff left behind. Meredith Fife Day’s still life collages suggest the tradition of quilt-making. Neither the artist, the subject matter, nor the medium is heroicized; she becomes an organizer of forms, responding to daily patterns.

Diane Ayott’s work employs dots, and other marks, in varying textural density, to create pulsating optical fields. In Barbara Grossman’s oil stick works on paper, the figure in an interior, is synthesized into fields that stem from textile patterns and architectural design.

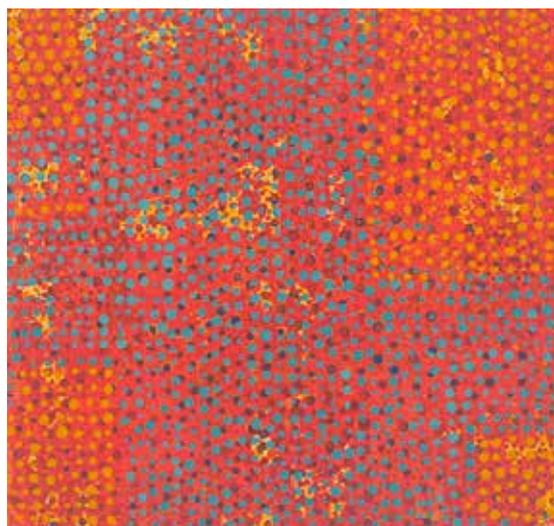
Marlene Rye’s work uses mark, not unlike the Fauvist work of Matisse and Derain, to comprise imagined spaces of nature and woods, from a child’s vantage point. Eve Stockton’s woodcut prints invoke the patterns of micro and macro natural phenomena – cellular structure, flora, ocean waves.

Implicit in this is both tension and repetition – a visual signifier of the monotony of life, punctuated by the unexpected. The two components of experience play off each other visually. In Ayott’s work it is through the irregularly spaced marks and varying textures that stand out and pulsate within the field of dots. In Grossman’s it is the tension between the figures and patterns of the ground. In Rye’s work, a single tree twists among repeating verticals. Licht orchestrates one saturated color among the neutrals. Stockton plays the individual flower or branch against the encompassing scale and patterns of the whole. In Day’s collages, primary, curving objects are twisted back and forth within spaces of abstracted geometries.

This is work that reflects the rhythm and cycles of moving through space, and the flows of daily life. It prioritizes a universal synthesis of recurring experience—one into which we can project ourselves—over the id of the maker.



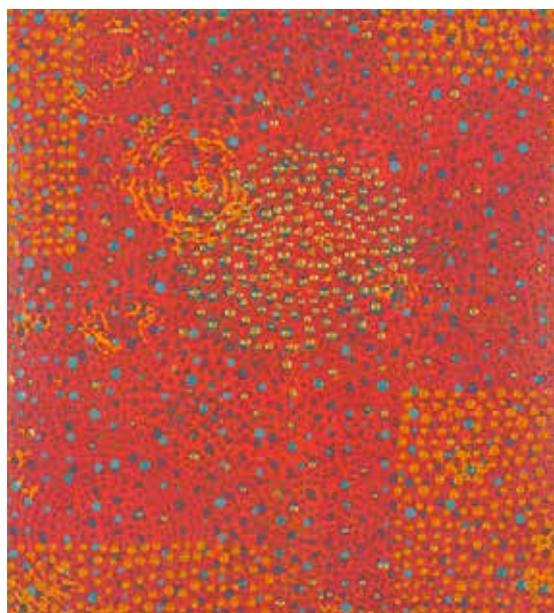
Diane Ayott, *Beautiful Voice May*, 7.25" x 7",
acrylic on paper



Diane Ayott, *Beautiful Voice June*, 7.25" x 7",
acrylic on paper



Diane Ayott, *Beautiful Voice July*, 7.25" x 7",
acrylic on paper



Diane Ayott, *Beautiful Voice August*, 7.25" x 7",
acrylic on paper

DIANE AYOTT

My painting is very complex, both in the layering of information and in the development of color relationships. It involves keen attention to the specific accrual of marks over time and their integration in the overall gestalt of each piece. From a distance, viewers may experience an overall color palette but once close to the work, small bits of distinct, painted information reveal themselves.

I use acrylic and oil paint as well as various collage materials on both paper and panel. In some cases, the repeating patterns and vibrating color allow the mark making to shimmer in space. At other times the work requires a quiet and calmer feeling. I follow the direction of my work and my intention is to express its individual clarity as completely as I can.

In my studio I explore this rich geographical area of color and bits of information as fully as possible. As a result, these pieces invite the viewer to take time, to really look, and to pause in the pleasure of the visual.

Ayott has exhibited extensively in the New England area and abroad. Venues include: Art Bank Gallery in the US Department of State; Kathryn Markel Fine Art, NYs and OK Harris, both in NYC; the Fitchburg Art Museum in Fitchburg, MA; the Danforth Art Museum in Framingham, MA; the Art Complex Museum in Duxbury, MA; Wheelock College, the Trustman Gallery, Simmons College, and HallSpace Gallery, all in Boston; and the McIninch Gallery at the University of Southern NH in Manchester, NH. Her paintings and works on paper are represented in many private, contemporary collections.



Meredith Fife Day, *Vincent's Chair*, 23" x 20", collage, mixed media,

MEREDITH FIFE DAY

About five years ago, I realized that my delight in color's rich possibilities was causing me to be impatient with drawings and studies I made for paintings. Longing to work things out in color, I began to cut and tear pieces of wallpaper and images apart, then piece them together again for my "drawing". I painted into the assembled fragments to further make my way through the work, and the results seemed to fit with my perception. The process began to feel like a stage of childhood I remembered clearly, when the world of colors and shapes was connected with things around me in an infinitely inviting way.

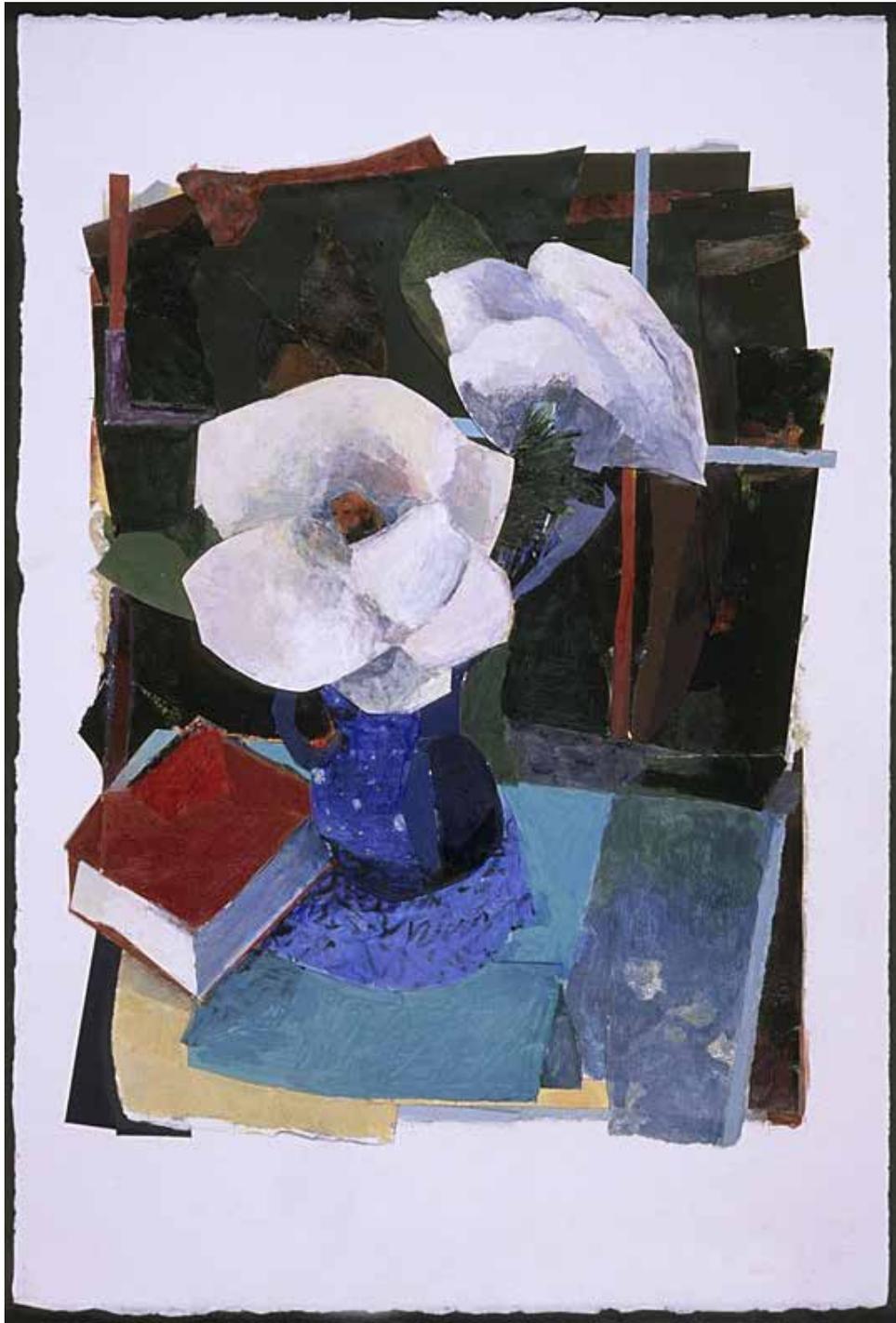
Motivated by anticipation of discovery, I gave intuition free rein. I realized I had studied, analyzed, thought and tried hard for long enough to have internalized my practices and cognitive intent. I wanted to be surprised. The conscious reconsideration of everything I had learned and worked to master was proving restrictive, while intuitive use of the very same knowledge promised to set me free. Who would not choose freedom?

A lifelong painter, Meredith Fife Day currently maintains a studio in Lowell, MA, where she was artist-in-residence at the Whistler House Museum of Art from 2003 to 2013. She has exhibited work for almost four decades, including most recently Soprafina Gallery in Boston. She has also shown her work at numerous universities, galleries, and museums throughout New England. In 2008, she was included in an exhibition of work by former fellows at Moulin a Nef in Auvillar, France.

The recipient of a Blanche E. Colman Award, Day has been awarded artist-in-residence fellowships at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in Sweet Briar, Va., and Auvillar, France, and Millay Colony for the Arts in Austerlitz, N.Y. She earned an MFA degree from Boston University after receiving BA and MFA degrees from Louisiana State University in her native Baton Rouge. Day has taught at the universities she attended, as well as at Southwest Missouri University, Springfield.



Meredith Fife Day, *Ginkgo Tree Late Fall*, 17" x 20", collage, mixed media



Meredith Fife Day, *Magnolias at Dark Window*, 24" x 17", collage, mixed media



Barbara Grossman, *Visiting Yellow Dog*, 26" x 19.5", oil stick

BARBARA GROSSMAN

Barbara Grossman is a figurative painter, whose figures in interior paintings explore both space and sharing color with complex patterns and implied narrative. The interaction of color and space is my subject. The paintings, oil pastels and monoprints are about figures in interiors. The figures create their own space and are defined by it. The color both participates in this as well as generates it. It is characteristically bright and luminous.

Barbara Grossman received her BFA from Cooper Union in 1965. She attended the Akademie der Kunst in Munich, Germany while on a Fulbright Hays Grant in 1967-68. Grossman went to the Yale School of Music and Art in 1964. She has been a recipient of an Ingram Merrill Foundation Award in Painting (1982-83), Connecticut Commission on the Arts Awards (1977 and 2002), and the Henry Ward Ranger Fund Purchase Award at the National Academy of Design (2001).

Ms. Grossman exhibits extensively both in solo and group shows throughout the United States and is represented in numerous public and private collections. She was a founder of the Bowery Gallery where she exhibited for 37 years. Grossman is a member of the National Academy of Art. In 2004-05 A Survey of her work traveled to five colleges concluding the tour at the New York Studio School in New York. A long time teacher has taught at the University Pennsylvania, Chautauqua School of Art, Western Carolina University and she has been a visiting artist at Boston University, American University, Brandeis University, and many others. She was Artist in Residence at Dartmouth College, 2002 and Hollins University, 2003. Barbara Grossman has taught at Yale School since 2003.



Barbara Grossman, *Canto Belle*, 21" x 18", monotype



Barbara Grossman, *Pink Tiles*, 26" x 20", oilstick



Sydney Licht, *Still Life with Flowers*, 11" x 7", oil on paper

SYDNEY LIGHT

I am interested in updating the conventions of still life by picturing items that reflect the way we currently live. Remnants of our consumer culture have found their way into my work. Traditionally, still life paintings have portrayed items from the realm of the domestic--food, utensils, dishes, flowers and other elements that celebrate the table. These days, however, our food often arrives at the table packaged up, sealed and sanitized. Table tops become resting places for boxes and other detritus waiting to be sorted or discarded. Boxes are piled high to make room for more clutter.

Sydney Licht paints the store boxes and bags that are the leftovers of our consumer culture. She dramatizes them, and with a careful juxtaposition, creates a theatrical architecture out of the ordinary. This monumentality contrasts not only with the surprising small scale of the paintings but also with the rich creaminess of the paint surfaces. Licht loves the sensuality of paint, the contrast of a stringent surface with a buttery one, unexpected color combinations and compositions, tipped and unbalanced. For Licht, the abstraction of the painted surface is an integral part of the actual subject matter.

Sydney Licht is a painter based in New York. Ms. Licht studied at Smith College and received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Licht has exhibited in galleries around the country. She recently completed a Yaddo residency and was a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome.



Sydney Licht, *Untitled*, 7" x 5", gouache



Sydney Licht, *Stacked*, 6.5" x 5", gouache



Sydney Licht, *Still Life with Orange Box*, 8.5" x 6", gouache



Sydney Licht, *Still Life with Orange Bowl*, 5.5" x 6", oil on paper



Marlene Rye, *Density*, 16" x 20", pastel on paper

MARLENE RYE

Return to a time when nature was more than a backdrop that you walked through or drove by, a time in your childhood where all the fairy tales had not been outgrown or explained away. Then imagination ran free, yet unacquainted with the adult world of 'facts'. Here was a world not yet defined, not yet labeled and categorized. Remember finding that magical tree where anything and everything was possible, that secret space where trees became circus performers, magicians, dancers, and all things fantastical. It was a world so charged, so brimming with possibility that you could close your eyes and see the space through your whole body, with all your senses. It was a child's world and only children can truly live there. I have explored this world throughout my life and work.

The scenes I depict do not exist in the physical world. Each piece is an invention born out of the process but like a newborn child, always a surprise. Through pouring and wiping, the application of brayer, palette knife, and sander, and sometimes the stroke of an actual brush each piece emerges from the white canvas. What coalesces there is an image where time and season, scale and shape become indefinite and fluid. The works are always full of wonderment of nature through a child's eye. As in dreams or memories, everything is brighter, more fanciful, surprising, and magical. The world of the child will always belong to children but I invite you to visit it with me anew.

Marlene Rye has an A.B. from Smith College and an M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. She has studied under Andrew Forge, Barbara Grossman, John Moore, and Martha Armstrong. Her work has been shown nationally and has been accepted into juried shows with distinguished curators from the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim.



Marlene Rye, *Criss Cross*, 11" x 14", pastel on paper



Marlene Rye, *Sweet Spot*, 11" x 14", pastel on paper



Marlene Rye, *Heart Song*, 19" x 25", pastel on paper



Eve Stockton, *Green Bloom var. 32*, 36" x 36", woodcut,

EVE STOCKTON

Eve Stockton's woodcut prints are inspired by close observation of nature and an eclectic interest in science. Her woodcuts depict nature at different scales, often simultaneously. Whether micro or macro in scope, nature's energy is evoked by abstracted shapes and chromatic layering.

The presentation of certain prints in series helps to enlarge on themes of variation and emergence. For example, the large-scale woodcuts from the "Bloom" series explore change and transition in the natural world, as well as in individual forms and phenomena. Within her variable groupings, colors shift to suggest the passage of time or the process of evolution.

Utilizing a multifaceted background in architecture and art, Eve is able to engage the variables of printmaking, allowing her to produce an ongoing body of dynamic, graphic images. The artist has degrees in architecture from Yale and Princeton University and it follows that the study of structures in nature is evident in her work.

A winner of many awards, Eve recently received a Juror's Award from Katherine Blood, Curator of Fine Prints, Library of Congress in the Maryland Federation of Art Art on Paper exhibition. She also received Second Prize in a National Prints Americas Juried Competition. Her artwork has been regularly featured on the cover of Nature Genetics Magazine. Her prints are in many corporate, university, and private collections.



Eve Stockton, *Bloom var. 32*, 36" x 36", woodcut,



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