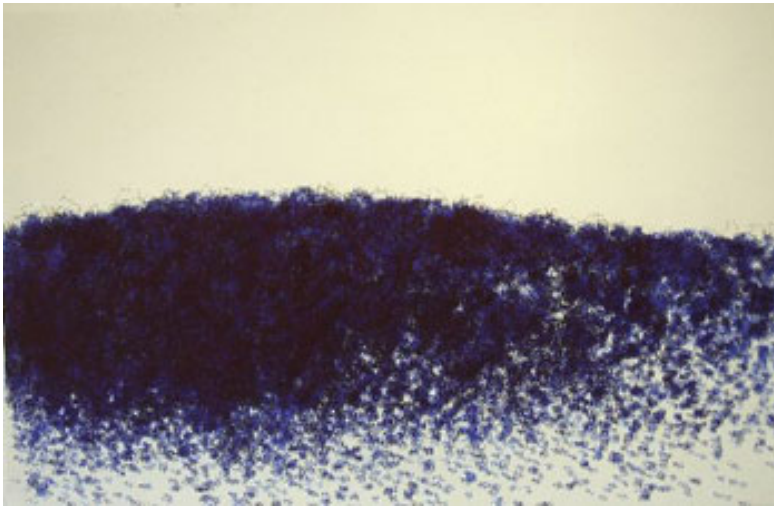


The Dallas Morning News Saturday, January 20, 2007

REWRITING THE RULES - Three new shows, three different visions

John Adelman at Holly Johnson: John Adelman is an artist who plays by the rules. Of course, they are rules he sets for himself with each new work, and so they do not seem too onerous. And although they consistently produce elegant and engaging drawings, some of them seem a little odd.



For *Paint Chip*, John Adelman traced the outlines of paint chips from another artist's defaced painting, then wrote the words "PAINT CHIP" in tiny, block letters until they formed a dense blue landscape at Holly Johnson Gallery.

For *Nails*, he dropped roughly 15,000 nails onto a sheet of paper not quite 4-foot square and then traced each one where it fell. There is some scatter along the perimeter of the paper, but the bulk of the nails form a spiky, teeming mass of black ink. For *Paint Chip*, he traced the outlines of paint chips from another artist's defaced painting, then proceeded to write the words "PAINT CHIP" in tiny block letters until they formed a dense blue landscape.

Such procedures come off as pretty straightforward when you compare them to a description such as this in Mr. Adelman's notes. "Dictionary definitions translated into numbers and catalogued as granola cereal. Entire box traced on drawing surface."

Whatever that means, take the artist at his word when he says that within each work, he follows the logic of his rules through to the end. The results can be beautifully wrought surfaces covered in tiny script that is illegible but leaves a compelling trace of human activity.

Some of Mr. Adelman's smaller pieces become deep-blue, monochromatic fields covered with his distinctive script. Larger works can have a looser, calligraphic quality. *Seating* has been made by tracing a small folding chair hundreds of times.

The final 48-inch-square drawing has been washed and scrubbed until the black gel ink has taken on the quality of graphite. It's the most graceful of Mr. Adelman's output in this impressive, debut showing. Visually it provides the kind of pleasure that he must find in following his eccentric rules to their surprising, sensuous ends.

CHARLES DEE MITCHELL /

Special Contributor

"Drawings" by John Adelman continues through Feb. 10 at Holly Johnson Gallery, 1411 Dragon St. Hours: 10 to 5 pm, Tuesday - Saturday. Free. 214-369-0169, www.hollyjohnsongallery.com.

Brian Fridge at Dunn and Brown Contemporary: Brian Fridge is a Dallas artist best known for a series of abstract videos, the *Vault Sequence*, that he first showed in 2000. Each video, which appeared to record deep space phenomena, involved a camera recording the movement of tiny ice particles inside a freezer. They were enigmatic and mesmerizing, the simple but ingenious technique playing well off the mysterious, at least until explained, images.



An untitled work is among photographs by Dallas artist Brian Fridge on display at Dunn and Brown Contemporary.

This current exhibition consists of one projected video, produced along with Paul Slocum, and 13 new, 16-by-20-inch untitled color photographs. Or rather the prints are new; some previously unexhibited images date from 1992 and 1994. The instant appeal of the earlier work has been replaced by a more cerebral mode. The images range from monochromatic abstractions to recognizable objects, and Mr. Fridge presents them in groups that suggest levels or organization that are going to be known only to himself.

Three of the photographs he refers to as "interfaces," a term that implies both interaction and sets up the abstract references to the human body and face each contains.

There is a concrete wall where steel bolts have left stains that suggest a weeping face. The perforations on an intercom speaker combine with the manufacturer's name, Legion, to make another sort of face. And on a surface that might be blue vinyl, nine rubbed dots lay out a stylized human body. In the video projected near these images, nine white dots on a ocher ground move slowly as though seeking but never, at least while I watched, finding the same pattern they take in the photograph.

A pair of photographs present a scientific model of the inner ear and a horse apple, with its inescapable connotations of the human brain. Then on a final wall are more abstract images, some close-ups of various types of surfaces such as ceramic tile and what might be a gray filling cabinet. There is also a shot depicting a space of undetermined function cut into a wall and what looks like a model of that space floating in the sky like a UFO.

This may be difficult work to warm up to, but the consistency of tone and assured presentation make for a satisfying exhibition.

CHARLES DEE MITCHELL /

Special Contributor

"Brian Fridge: Photographs" continues through Feb. 10 at Dunn and Brown Contemporary, 5020 Tracy St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and by appointment. 214-521-4322, www.dunnandbrown.com.

Joan Miró bronzes at Gerald Peters: It's a fantastic opportunity to see the fantastic: Sixteen bronze Joan Miró sculptures, created during the last three years of his life, are showing at the Gerald Peters Gallery.



Personnage by Joan Miró is on display at the Gerald Peters Gallery.

"They are humanoids and aliens. All with their own personalities," said guest lecturer Steven Nash, director of the Nasher Sculpture Center, at a reception on Jan. 11.

The pieces are cast from collections of objects that Miró found on his frequent walks.

Half of the intrigue is wondering just what those objects are. Some are from nature. Branches become arms. Stones become bodies. Others are man-made. Hooks are heads and kitchen utensils tree branches.

The results, what Dr. Nash called "conversations between objects that don't go together," are magical: dog bird, bird woman, warrior king and a series of "personages."

Their tactile quality makes the temptation to reach out to explore the crooks and crags of each little being almost irresistible. The warm rust gallery walls and the white, white pedestals on which each sculpture is perched contribute to an ideal backdrop for what Miró called "a phantasmagorical world of true monsters."

JENNY BLOCK / Special

Contributor

"Joan Miró: The Last Bronze Sculptures 1981-1983" continues through March 3 at Gerald Peters Gallery, 2913 Fairmount. Hours: 10 - 6 pm Tuesday - Friday, 10 - 5 pm Saturday, and by apPt. Free. 214-969-9410, www.gpgallerydallas.com.