

From The Studio

ROSE C.S. SLIVKA

"Ten Artists," Guild Hall Museum's annual invitational exhibit of young unknown (and older, under-known) artists, this year features eight painters and two sculptors, of whom the youngest is 33 and the eldest is 47, all appropriately seasoned in age and practice. Selected by Helen A. Harrison, the Museum's curator, the show is sponsored for the third year by the Republic National Bank of New York, and includes three purchase prizes for the Bank's corporate art collection, chosen by the painter Larry Rivers of Southampton.

This year's showing seems particularly fresh, charged as it is with what appears to be a new freedom in personal narrative and image. Artistic invention is historically unique to this region, rich in the tradition of fine artists who live and work here.

With the exception of the abstract painter McCrady Axon of Greenport and the two geometric sculptors, Warren Padula of Bridgehampton and Alexander C. Bainbridge of East Hampton, each painter reaches for an individual figurative and landscape vision that is both narrative and autobiographical, incorporating myth, symbol, and dream as well as atmospheric, suggestive visual scraps and fragments. This seems to be a time for meanings and metaphor, rather than bodily sweep and visceral action, conveying the story between art and the artist.

First Prize: McCrady Axon

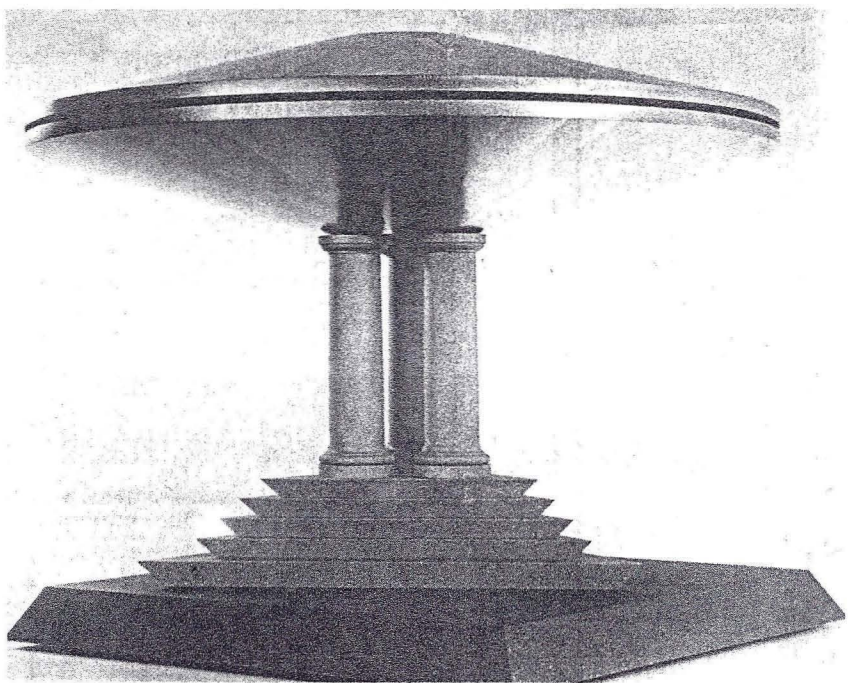
The first-prize winner, Ms. Axon, at

37, seems to be more related to the Abstract Expressionists and European Modernism than any other of her fellow painters in this group exhibit. The velocity of her drawing and brushwork, combining a circular sweep of long and short strokes, drives to a vortex that scribes around a series of short directional daubs, high and cool color; reds, greens, blacks, yellow, blue, white. The sheer force of her charcoal drawing, incorporated in the acrylic color — as in "Landings on Four," done in 1987 — as well as in her purchase award-winning oil on canvas, "Straight, No Chaser," done in 1988, have so much energy in the movement and agitation of the surface, it is a pleasure to see this aspect of Modernism receiving a fresh infusion of talent.

On the other hand, the 32-year-old Ann Sherwood Brown's acrylics on wood and on paper split images on pieced panels like large quilt patches, the entire surface buckling and wavy as if seen through a haze of time and memory. In "MSWJ," her latest work, done in 1988, an aging woman, properly dressed in her little black suit with her little white hat and pearls, sits in the center of the painting, as if in a hotel lobby, clutching her handbag in one hand and her cocktail glass on the paper napkin over her folded legs, looking as if she were expecting something to happen.

Time And Timelessness

Around her is a mirage of tropical swamp with marsh grass growing in



"Reverse Archaeology" By Warren Padula

front of her legs; a river and unspecified landscape in the background, a long-leaved vine significantly obliterating part of the background landscape in its forefront prominence and delineation on canvas. It shares presence with its human cohabitant. There is a narrative of time and timelessness, embodied and disembodied place and placelessness, fragrances deep in the psyche, and griefs. How does one tell such a story in a paint-

ing?

The figures of the second-prize winner, John Frohnhoefer of Hampton Bays, encompass sweeps of the brush in darks and lights, planes of color, such as in his purchase award winning "Figure on a Bamboo Couch," with its black-blue-rust-flesh tones contrasting with an orange-blue-gray-mauve-ochre passage. He gives the figure a skeletal intention, a transparent, otherworldly presence.

Third prize-winner was Jonathan Waite of Southampton whose surreal images in oil and wax on canvas spell out a cuneiform language of symbols that are reminiscent of Joan Miro, as in "Poetical Contraption" 1988, in which black symbols, almost like stick figures with a calligraphic swing, dance their way through the pale textured beige ground.

A Tie For Third Award

"Nocturne," an oil and wax on canvas, received the third purchase award, splitting it with "Northwest Creek," by Randall Rosenthal of Springs. "Northwest Creek" is an acrylic on canvas water study, from a series for which the painter is known. His paintings of the surface of rippling water and the patterns it creates through light reflections, wind, and rain, are now amplified in third dimension by his most recent work, a basswood carving of leaves in tiers, edged with acrylic color, stressing both the repetitive and erratic patterns of nature, a painting in relief.

"Landscape with Bats," by Diane Mayo of Montauk, an oil on linen of greens and browns in meticulous small strokes, is a place of inevitable

fate after the long curved road in the woods. Her recent still life constructions in white clay, "Morandi Still Life," of small vessels in tribute to Morandi, capture the spirit of stillness and the form that holds its arrival.

Natural Concerns

In Mary Stubelek's (Southampton) loose brushwork, delicate tonal balances in the pink, blue, white, ochre, and elementary simplified images in oil stick and pastel, her concerns are for the natural environment — the sea, the earth, the animals. But it is her delicate roseate pink-blue glow, as in "Sea, Early Morning," made in 1987, and "Barn #2" which suggest, even when she deals in values of transient light, that her subject matter is forever and fixed.

Pat Pickett of Shinnecock Hills investigates the sources of line as its own being, the imagery and calligraphy of line embedded in color, as in the graphite, charcoal, and oil on paper, "The Undying Difference in a Corner of the Field," scratched into the dark, crosshatched scribble on one side and on the other, a ladder in the middle of a white ground.

Alexander C. Bainbridge's (East Hampton) enamel painted sheet metal bendings and foldings of copper, galvanized steel, and aluminum, ride their balances with curves, angles and color. Small abstract forms, they are altogether pleasant as designs and intimate exercises of pure form.

The aluminum blocks and rods by Warren Padula of Bridgehampton, machined and surfaced for a smoothly textured, industrial moderne finish, resemble miniature monuments with pillars, classical temples with a modern industrial look.



"Straight, No Chaser" By McCrady Axon

Martin Brett Axon