

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## ART REVIEW

# Skeletons of Sweetness And India-Ink Mutants

By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO

**T**HE benefits of placing art museums in regional towns are well known. In just five years, for example, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art has helped revive North Adams, Mass., once an economically depressed mill town. And that's a model the new Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts here looks to.

The brainchild of Douglas Ferrari, a local artist, the institute is a nonprofit devoted to advancing appreciation of contemporary art. The building, the former home of Lincoln Can Manufacturing, will be home both to gallery and studio space.

The institute's "Inaugural Exhibition" was originally scheduled to open earlier this month, but was delayed to meet local building-code standards. Mr. Ferrari expects to open this week.

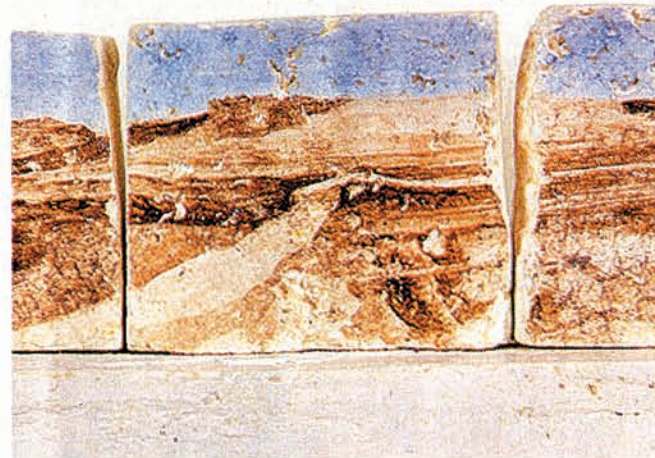
Selected by Mr. Ferrari, the exhibition is a group affair featuring the works of

Una Henry, Karen Giusti, Michael Joo, Gary Kuehn, D. Dominick Lombardi, Rudy Serra, Doug and Mike Starn and Mimi Weinberg. Most are seasoned exhibitors — make no mistake, serious art is showing here.

Ms. Giusti presents a touching installation inspired by the suicide of a friend. It consists of hundreds of little hand-drawn paper skeletons woven together like lace to form a fireman's safety net. Suspended from the ceiling, the net casts a creepy, 18-foot shadow onto the wall behind. The piece is heavy with time and memories, like old family photographs.

Nearly everyone is aware of the dangers of genetic engineering. Mr. Lombardi begins with this premise, inviting viewers to travel forward to when humans have mutated beyond recognition. In this future, the population is divided into drones (two-dozen blobby India-ink drawings) and rulers (a weird, hybrid sculpture). This art is all about how to be somebody in a manufactured world.

By contrast, Ms. Weinberg is preoccu-



pled with the past. Looking back to when the Roman Empire ruled Judea, she has made reproductions in wax and plaster of archaeological remains found near the Dead Sea, accompanied by a panoramic landscape painting of the area. This work is about memory, but also a kind of inquiry into human nature. What is it about us, she seems to ask, that we endlessly fight and destroy?

Less serious intentions are behind Rudy Serra's terra-cotta loaves. Actual-

"Views After the Dead Sea, 1999-2002" by Mimi Weinberg is part of the opening exhibition at the new Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts in Long Branch.

ly, they are fecund, vulva-like forms fired in such a way that the tops have cracked and gone all crispy like bread. Their sensual allure is a marvel. These sculptures, along with the rest of this exhibition, deserve to be seen.

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"Inaugural Exhibition" is at the Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts, 20 Third Avenue, Long Branch, through July 17. For information, call (732) 263-1121 or check [www.sica.org](http://www.sica.org).

# Narratives in Charcoal and Ink

By WILLIAM ZIMMER

**A** POUGHKEEPSIE SATISFYING show of drawings at the Marist College Art Gallery here proves once again that surveys of contemporary drawings can provide the kind of experience that good painting shows do, despite their more humble materials.

The gallery is large and unobstructed by any architectural elements, and the drawings by six artists under the title "Six Approaches" make a procession around the room. In attitude and approach, the show ends almost where it began.

The first artist encountered is Alan Cote, a veteran abstract painter. He shows large drawings from the mid-1980's, and while their main element is bold charcoal line, they demonstrate a limberness and flexibility not found in his hard-edge paintings.

In his accompanying artist statement Mr. Cote likens his drawings to remembered thoughts, and his thoughts take many forms.

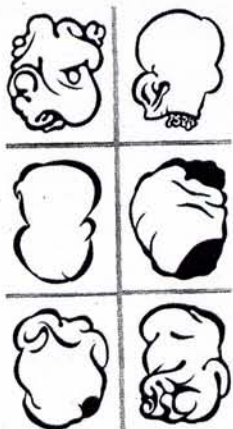
One, "Two Views of the Back," is a sort of rumination on physical being. One ample, back-like rectangle is dense lines while the other is almost a void.

Another drawing, "Bird in a Bush," seems by its title to be about something elusive. This drawing is enlivened by short dashes of pastel color, signifying foliage but also animation and the presence of life.

The next artist in the lineup, Robin Arnold, couldn't be more different from Mr. Cote. Her large realist drawings are like on-the-spot field reports.

In 2000 and 2001 Ms. Arnold visited 12 factories in Albany, photographed the workers there and turned the photographs into large black-and-white drawings.

The men and women at work seem to be doing arcane tasks, and work for companies



with intriguing and arcane names like Aquatic Development. The workers are presented as heroic but the drawings are rendered so that they look like they're fading, perhaps a comment on heavy industry as subject matter.

D. Dominick Lombardi achieves one large drawing by presenting 60 individually framed small drawings in a grid format. The ink drawings are of heads, reminiscent of a wall of celebrity caricatures fading at Sardi's, the Broadway hangout.

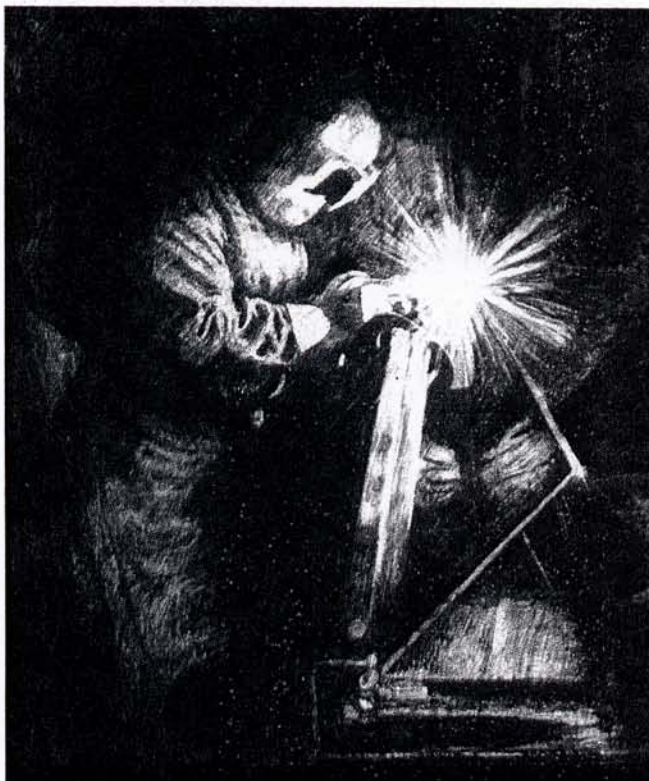
But for the most part the heads are faceless, which is disturbing. A viewer may interpret them as if they were Rorschach blots.

Both Ed Smith and Pamela Dreyfus Smith deal in allegories. They present their drawings in serial form to make a narrative. Mr. Smith's drawings have a strong antiwar theme and skulls predominate. His use of sepia wash with his thin brown drawn ink lines gives them added gravity.

Ms. Dreyfus Smith relates the story of the Tower of Babel: its construction, destruction and the persistent cyclical attempts to build it again. Her ink and wash is a heavy, rather mournful black.

The last artist, Norman Turner, takes the show back to the charcoal line, in surface terms at least.

Mr. Turner's lines, however, are thinner and shorter and are usually complemented by a massing of white pastel lines. His subject matter here is Snug Harbor on



"Work/Force: Welder Aquatic Development," above, by Robin Arnold. "Shapes Beneath the Water," left, by Alan Cote. A detail from "60 Heads," far left, by D. Dominick Lombardi. All the works are in the show "Six Approaches" at the Marist Art Gallery in Poughkeepsie.

Staten Island, a complex of buildings in disparate styles.

Snug Harbor was founded in the early 19th century as a home for sailors and is now an art center. In a largely abstract style, Mr. Turner catches the feel of the place, the buildings and the spacious grounds around them.

At the nearby Dutchess Community College Art Gallery, Benjamin Sears has a show of drawings from the late 1990's along with more recent paintings under the umbrella title "Inner Workings." The title refers to the intricacies of low-tech machines, a persistent subject for Mr. Sears.

The drawings are spacious narratives when compared with the dense baroque piling on of old industrial forms.

Mr. Sears renders these diverse, mostly metallic elements beautifully and with polish, but there is always something disturbing in the composition — a grand monkey wrench.

In his artist's statement, Mr. Sears says

that he is interested in the secrets beneath the surface; sometimes that secret is an unexpected human presence that emerges after careful looking.

The most explicit jarring figure in his paintings is the homunculus in "Little Man."

In "Pilot" the flight captain is to be found crouching, having deserted his post; the skyscrapers in this painting are rendered like limp French fries.

Mr. Sears, who is still in his 20's, has a lustrous style and his narratives will get better with seasoning.

"Six Approaches" is at the Marist Art Gallery, 3399 North Road in Poughkeepsie. Information: (914) 757-3000, ext. 2449. The show continues through Dec. 10.

"Inner Workings" is at Dutchess Community College Art Gallery, 53 Pendell Road in Poughkeepsie. Information: (845) 431-698 or arts.sunydutchess.edu. The exhibition continues through Dec. 11.