



Stella Waitzkin's apartment at the Chelsea Hotel.

BOSTON

Jon Imber at Nielsen

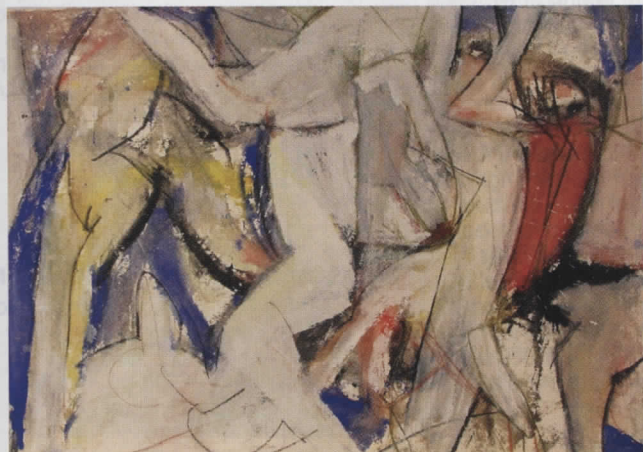
Philip Guston, his mentor, especially on, Jon Imber has no qualms about disturbing his own artistic status quo. Over the years, he has produced notable work in representational, figurative and semi-abstract idioms. He has been as comfortable painting still lifes as rendering landscapes of upstate New York and Maine, where he spends part of each year away from his home on the Boston outskirts. The work in Imber's first solo show at Nielsen marked another turning fork in the road. While continuing his passion for plein-air painting (he starts many canvases outdoors, then may rework them in the studio), Imber has recently shifted his Abstract-Expressionist tendencies to a new level. These mostly medium-size oils on canvas and panel (all works 24-48 by 24-48 inches) combine the gusto of the

Action painters and—where the landscape emerges from dashing brushwork—the dynamics of John Marin and William Kienbusch.

Many of the paintings relate to coastal motifs: littoral and ledge, tide and swell, cove and beach. In *Low Tide #1*, shore, sea and sky are made apparent by shifts in palette, but demarcations are less important than the overall spirit of the Maine coast. The same can be said of *Bob's Ledge*, a relatively large (48 by 24) canvas that renders the water's edge with unbridled strokes of paint. Wide and raw, diagonal, vertical and horizontal, these dashing thrusts of white, sienna and gray (with other color accents) connote the energy of nature.

Those familiar with this artist's work will recognize the subject of *Imber's Hill*. Imber has painted this upstate New York hillside on several occasions over the years, capturing the verdant fields, distant ridge line and a roadway on the right, which is nearly obscured

Nicolas Carone: Untitled, 2005, powdered pigment, charcoal, sepia chalk and mixed mediums on paper, 27 3/4 by 39 1/2 inches; at Lohin Geduld.



composition of traditional Chinese painting. *Sun Bathers* (1932), for example, shows a group of angular nude women on beach chairs—in poses reminiscent of those in Picasso's *Demaiselles d'Avignon*—in a flattened composition within which they seem to rotate pinwheel-fashion around a central post. Another canvas of the same year, *Merry-Go-Round*, displays a rotation of carousel horses around a central axis, but the circular platform has been tipped up—as in a Cubist still life—to be nearly parallel to the vertical picture plane. These two works, along with a third, were included in a significant exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, "Murals by American Painters and Photographers."

The most striking work in the show at Marlborough was the 1932 *Wheels: Industrial New York* (I), a painting that suggests less of the European avant-garde and more of the influence of American Regionalism and the Ashcan School. In it, grubby tenements, church domes, an imposing bridge, soot-spewing smokestacks and soaring skyscrapers are all pressed together in a densely packed mass below a bright orange and green evening sky. If such works suggest that Gee had partly relinquished his aim of integrating Western and Chinese modernism, his commitment to Chinese painting survived in a series of delicate ink and gouache drawings of flowers from around 1940. Here, the work's ostensible pictorial subject is less significant than its graceful and self-assured calligraphic line, and the expressive power of that line's gesture, speed and movement within the paper's empty field.

—Jonathan Gilmore

Nicolas Carone at Lohin Geduld

Classically trained at the National Academy of Design and the Art Students League, and familiar with Italian art from first-hand contact during his long part-time residence in the country, painter and sculptor Nicolas Carone has always been deeply involved with the human figure. His studies with Hans Hofmann in the early 1940s engendered an exploratory approach to organizing the picture plane, and his contact with Matta, a few years later, sparked an interest in archetypal imagery, automatism and the subconscious. These forces shaped Carone's work, which was familiar to New York gallery-goers in the 1950s from solo shows at

the Stable and Staempfli galleries. The artist taught for many years, notably at the New York Studio School. This exhibition ranged from closely observed studies, often in pencil or sepia chalk, to mixed-medium improvisations bordering on abstraction.

All untitled, and dating from the 1950s to the present, they are at once robust and intimate. The best works employ line unfettered from its function of reiterating the division between areas of color. This redundancy hampers some of the larger works, in which a programmatic concept of "rhythm" seems to be illustrated. More convincing, delicate and genuinely autographic is, for example, a 12-by-15-inch watercolor from 2004, dominated by blue, white and a fleshy pink, where the brittle weight of pencil lines suggests limbs akimbo. Line and color are largely independent, as if pursuing different objectives. The work's compact size contributes to the dynamic tension of forms pressing against one another and outward to the edges.

Three 19-by-25-inch charcoal drawings (dated "1950s") are strongly reminiscent of the dog-leg panhandle shapes of "Excavation"-era de Kooning, and of Matta's animated architecture. The copious, conspicuous erasing in the early-'60s work documents a stylistic crutch of the day; with their descriptions of bulging eyes and contorted mouths, a couple of figure studies (one dated "1960s," the other 1971) veer toward illustration.

But the bulk of the work is from the last few years, and shows an accomplished artist trusting his instincts and training. In works such as a 7-by-9-inch charcoal from 2003, the figure is not simplified or generalized but shredded into a flurry of discontinuous strokes that suggests a cluster of straining limbs, or sequential views of a figure in motion. Sex, combat and athletics are equally possible subjects in this evocation of musculature under stress. The ability to achieve such complexity with such seeming effortlessness is the reward of decades spent looking at, responding to and thinking about the figure.

—Stephen Maine

Stella Waitzkin at Robert Steele and the Chelsea Hotel

One of a kind, the remarkable Stella Waitzkin (1920-2003) began her life's work as an Abstract-Expressionist painter,