

cal detail, including the effect of gravity on flesh, shows his admirable mastery of academic drawing.

Joe Houston showed three small pencil drawings with classical idealization. Like his paintings, which are also small and meticulous, he cloaks his realism in a dream-like aloofness that approaches the sentimental. Didier Nolet achieves something very similar in a huge (69" x 97") charcoal that is an almost exact duplicate of one of his signature paintings: a panoramic view of a French countryside scene. Trained in the traditional European discipline of constructing a painting, Nolet does several preliminary studies, gradually increasing in size, before concluding them with an exquisitely resolved painting. He composes clusters of houses, trees, roads, and rivers as marks and directional forces to activate large, sparse fields. His images would function well even if they were nonobjective. A sensitive quality of light permeates the drawing shown here, but one is aware that his beautiful color is missing.

Unlike these drawings, which are more or less studies for paintings, Susanna Coffey and Tom Keese use black and white paint in complete artistic statements that somehow suggest chromatic overtones. Coffey renders architectural spaces defined by short parallel marks that vibrate, producing a shimmering refraction in the same way that metallic surfaces appear colorful. Her themes are composed of the currently fashionable references to Greek mythology that could be called "neo-classical" (if this term weren't already spoken for). Keese, an Indiana artist, does unabashedly Neo-expressionist paintings of domestic drama. In *The Visitation*, the energy of the brushstrokes transforms the value structure of the image into a kind of light with chromatic qualities. As in the work of Van Gogh, expressive exuberance is carefully modulated by an underlying confident handling of the mechanics of picture-making.

Barbara Cooper, the lone sculptor in this exhibition, showed delicate bronze casts of rose vines (with buds and thorns) in ladder-like configurations. Carrie Tuttle showed some delightfully playful semi-surrealist prints. Sung Ok Kwon "took chances" with a wild painting of a couple engaged in a provocative activity. Other artists in the exhibition were Marlene Bauer, Christopher Boyce, Kimble Bromley, Herb Eaton, Dennis Laszuk, Susan Mart, Michael Maszk, Janice Roter, and Barbara Siekowski.

Price range: \$100 to \$3,000.

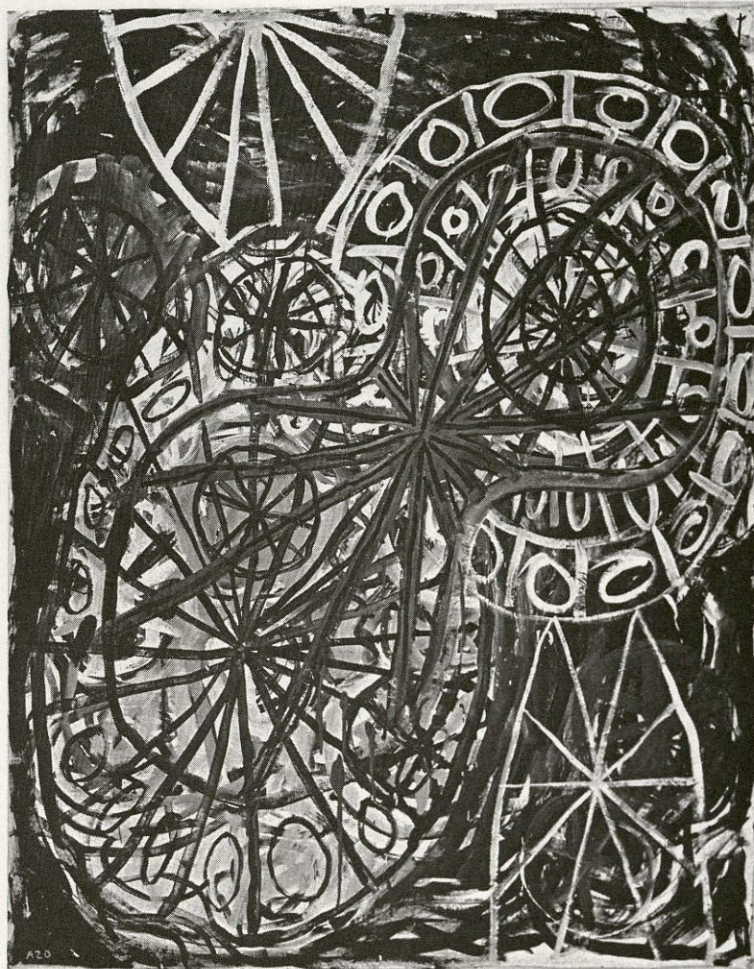
Andy Argy

Four Artists

Randolph Street Gallery
756 N. Milwaukee Ave., 312/666-7737

Bringing to public view significant and interesting unseen or "underseen" artists has long been a strength of Randolph Street Gallery, and this most recent exhibition continued that tradition. The four artists showing here share a tendency towards abstraction and a high degree of competence.

Gary Rattigan adheres ripped pieces of paper on canvas and then paints abstract forms over the resultant tattered surface. The stripped pieces of paper are all near the same size, giving his surfaces a crazy-quilt kind of pattern, almost a braided quality, as something akin to rows result from his application. This surface is much more interesting



ALEX O'NEAL, "The Fairway," acrylic on canvas, 50" x 40", 1985.

than any painting he subsequently does upon it, and is assertive while not pictorial.

There is almost no one in Chicago who works at the scale of Elizabeth Riggle—one of her untitled oil on paper pieces here was 150" x 120"—and no one at all who handles such scale so organically. Her huge pictures, made of casually joined paper stapled directly on the wall, churn like the remarkable pictorial machines they are, animated by an inevitable kind of internal dynamism. Created out of earth-tones and shaded blues, her forms describe nothing quite tangible, nothing quite nameable, but something indefinably present, something which reads as aura and presence. It is an accomplishment of the highest sort.

Art Kleinman exhibited here a sequence of drawings and paintings that chronicle his working method, from small and exact drawings on paper to drawings made with thin tape adhered to grid-paper to final large oil and wax paintings. This documented an exercise in artistic concentration, in the mania that can make up idea, preparation, and execution. The robotic and schematic figures that push-pull in their two-dimensional painted prison betray their origins in grid-paper, in Kleinman's obsessive dialogue with the world of little blue boxes. As is often the case with obsessive work, the viewer is certainly impressed, if a bit non-plussed.

Alex O'Neal's large paintings eschewed the

logic and order of Kleinman for expressive concerns. His pictures are thickly worked, with as many layers of paint as of consciousness, a kind of primal flow as ideas are picked up, pursued, abandoned, forgotten, recalled, reworked, denied, offered up with hope, painted out with impatience, until—until the artist decides the picture is finished. What results looks a bit like huge paramecia crawling over one of Jackson Pollock's 1940s Jungian pictures. This is cave painting for the 1980s, and O'Neal's achievement is a heady testament to the still-present possibilities of Abstract Expressionism.

James Yood

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Robert Arneson

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Smithsonian Institution
900 Jefferson Dr. SW, 202/357-1300

West Coast sculptor Robert Arneson has made a career of questioning art-world "givens" in terms of the subject matter and material of his ceramic and crayoned images.

This well selected, handsomely installed retrospective exhibition, organized by the Des Moines Art Center while James Demetrian was still director, was recently on view at the Hirsh-