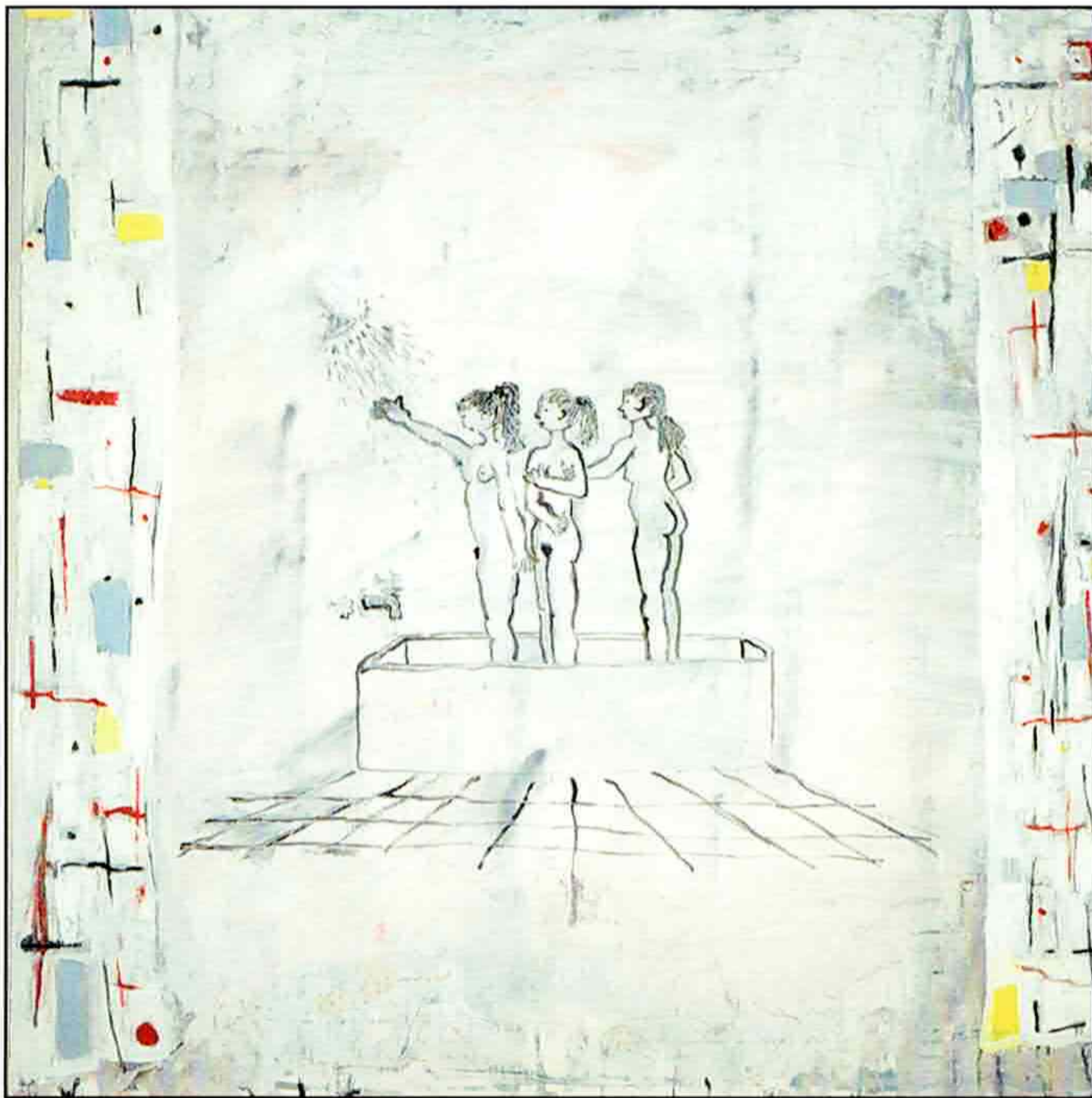




## Nancy Brett

When I first got to know Nancy Brett's work, she was painting landscapes whose tremulous atmospheres were ones in which perception was always being overtaken and eroded by the unsettling overlays of memory. Since then, memory itself has become the subject. Images, once observed perhaps but now conjured, that is, constructed, are revealed to be players in a sometimes comical, sometimes scary, private theatrical.

These are bold, risky, beautiful paintings. The distinction between this play of memory and any merely therapeutic confessional lies in the obliquity of its transcription through the question of how these memories can possibly become art.



*Bathers*, 1996, 36" x 36", Oil on canvas

Cover: *Pony Tail*, 1995, 70" x 73" Ink, Gouache & Oil on canvas



*Little Deaths*, detail, 1995, 40" x 40", Oil on canvas

For Brett measures art by life and life by art—as does any true artist. The artist always wants to find more life in her art and inevitably ends up putting more art into it.

That's because life, or rather any given way of life, is already art, that is, an equilibrated system of aesthetic decisions—the artifice through which existence becomes desirable, if you can bear the artifice. (Red high-heeled shoes of extravagant proportion in *Pony Tail* #2 would constitute one example.)

Brett's art weaves itself out of alternating threads of sophistication and ingenuousness showing us how the rudimentary figures of childhood ripen to assume the magnificent and threatening form and attributes of that severest of mothers, painting. Or, conversely, how painting can reach back to manifest the frail, uncertain step by which a child propels her body into an apparently eternal pattern, the hokey-pokey. That's what it's all about.

**Barry Schwabsky**



*For My Brother*, 1996, 73" x 70", Ink, Gouache & Oil on canvas

Cover: *Pony Tail*, 1995, 70" x 73" Ink, Gouache & Oil on canvas



*Little Deaths*, detail, 1995, 40" x 40", Oil on canvas

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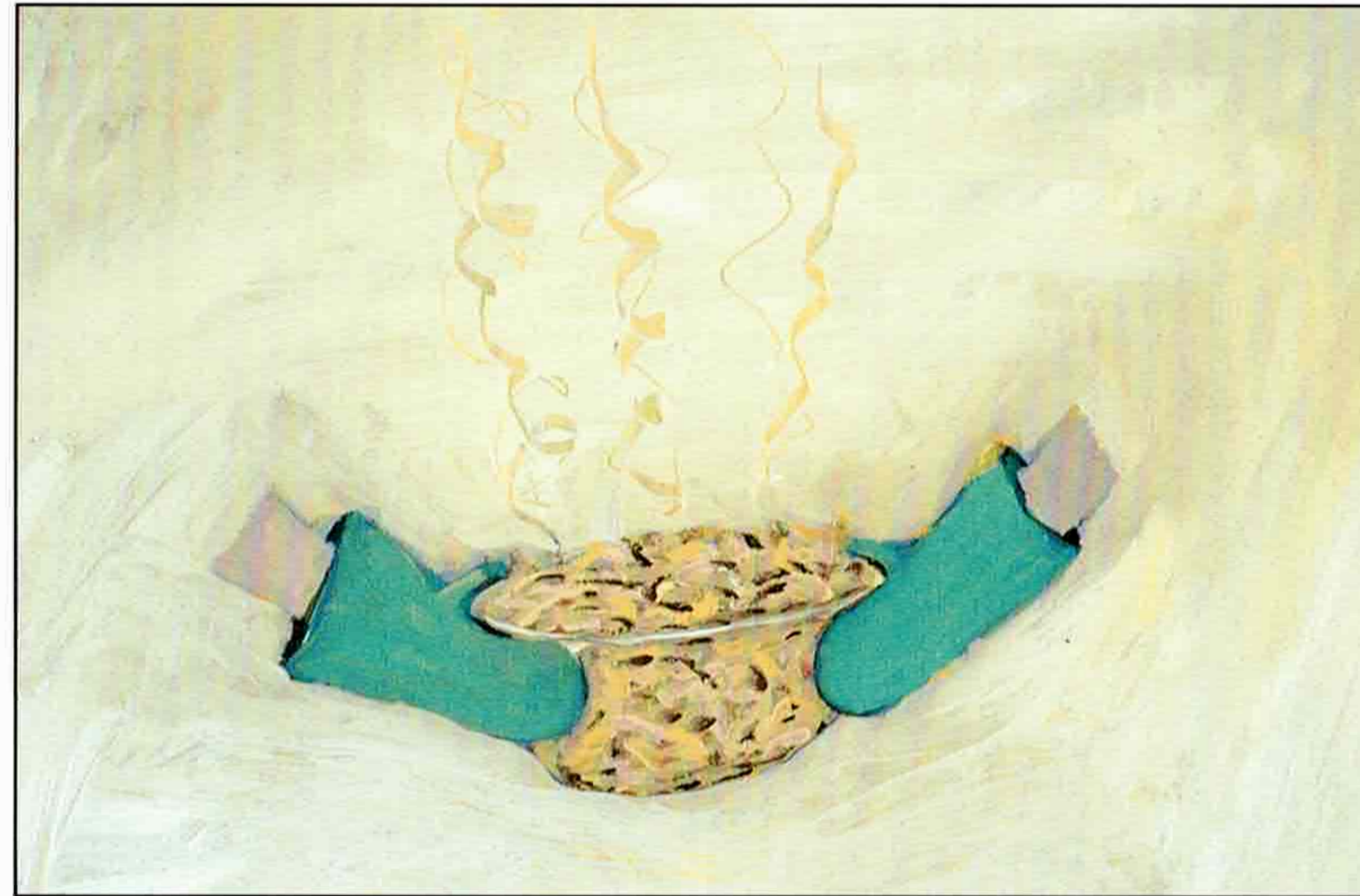
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*For My Brother*, 1996, 73" x 70", Ink, Gouache & Oil on canvas



*For My Brother, detail, 1996*

## **NANCY BRETT**

PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS July 25–August 30, 1996  
Reception for the Artist, 4-6 PM, Saturday, July 27  
The Lake George Arts Project, Courthouse Gallery  
Old County Courthouse, Canada Street, Lake George, NY 12845  
(518) 668-2616