

photographic image has traditionally been the result of a one-eyed vision. In focusing on this *sine qua non* of photography, he joins—even as he tweaks—Greenbergian modernism, in which each art seeks to find its own essential nature. Greenberg scorned photography, but his theory is extended and enriched by Dibbets's visual/conceptual delights.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with essays by Erik Verhagen and by Peter Boswell, who curated the exhibition for MAM. —Paula Harper

CHICAGO

William Conger at Roy Boyd

Taking in this show of 21 oils by William Conger, Chicago's senior abstract painter, can feel like squinting at a series of topographical maps or aerial photographs of

sitions strike chords of recognition.

Like the cityscape to which he's responding, Conger's work is both chaotic and oddly serene. The disorder of interrupted lines and broken shapes is balanced by perfect rectangles, triangles and squares, along with organic, perhaps talismanic circles. These last sometimes form concentric rings like the targets of Jasper Johns or the gleaming medallions of contemporary stained-glass art. Vibrant gem colors, which can seem propelled upward from the canvas by dark borders, give way to moody earth tones, often within the same painting. Some of the color fields are monochromatic and flat; others have a mottled quality that transforms them into pictorial spaces faintly evoking skyscrapers and seascapes.

In a few of the paintings, abstraction edges close to the literal. At least one, *Navigato*, vaguely suggests water and sky glimpsed from a boat on Lake Michigan; a curved aperture on the lower right could be a porthole, the vista it frames a horizon. More often, Conger's connection to place is wholly imaginative and emotional. In *Recruit*, for example, there are the usual streetlike lines overlaid with heavier marks like overpasses, but these are secondary elements of a composition dominated by its color scheme, a subtle interplay of nocturnal blue, lavender and purple.

The show's overall impression is of a jangling urban energy brought under control.

—Kevin Nance

KANSAS CITY

Lynus Young at Review Studios

Lynus Young is known for extensive installations as well as conventional paintings and works on paper. In this exhibition, titled "The Necklace," he combined these mediums, tying them together with meandering strands of spray-painted paper pearls affixed to the gallery's walls. The show's centerpiece was an unruly panoply of sculptural and two-dimensional elements assembled into a configuration that suggested a tree or a figure with outstretched arms. Its components included a masklike

face painted on leather and pierced with steel studs, a papier-mâché log with a greenish-gray fungus of spray-painted paper pearls, and a slab of pink-painted Styrofoam pierced with cut-outs. Adding to the fray were sundry little Styrofoam creations wrapped with duct tape, and totems made of stacked and painted wood ovals.

Through his paintings and mixed-medium works on paper, Young envisions what goes on in the fantastical world conjured by his installations. Long loose strokes of the brush join spray painting through stencils and labor-intensive passages of drawing. Many of the scenes camouflage secret inhabitants, including what Young has called "beardly men, dirtily crawling in and out of your closet, whether you see them or not." In the painting *Life's Troubled Bubble Broken Part 2 aka Mountain Man* the visage of a bearded man appears within a teeming landscape of stuttering marks and hypnotic patterns. Framing the scene are leafless white trees that double as the man's craggy hands. The cartoony drawing and comic spirit of the late Lester Goldman, with whom Young studied at the Kansas City Art Institute, is an influence on his work, which also displays affinities with Charles Burchfield's hallucinatory depictions of nature.

This show incorporated Young's contribution to a previous group show at this same gallery, for which he carpeted a large rectangular pit in the gallery space with an overlapping collage of spray-painted and cut paper shapes in various sizes. Small rocks strewn across the surface enhanced the effect of an arrested underwater world of funguslike fecundity.

—Alice Thorson

HOUSTON

Francesca Fuchs at the Contemporary Art Museum

Baby Up Close (2006) dominated the intensely personal body of paintings Fuchs showed here (all 2006 or '07). Working with washes of pastel-colored acrylics, Fuchs depicts an infant's head on an 80-by-120-inch canvas. Too young to be identifiable by gender, the child observed the gallery

with wide-open eyes, almost smiling, one tiny hand pressed into its chin in a gesture that recalls Rodin's *Thinker*. This exhibition contained two more big babies. *Baby with Spotted Shirt* (2007) lies on its back, sprawled across an 81-by-168-inch canvas. The pose suggests the supreme contentment of a baby patiently awaiting the attention it knows is coming. In *Blue Blanket* (2006) an infant is shown interacting with an adult, and the encounter does not seem to be going too well. The baby seems more than a little suspicious of the huge creature that holds it.

Although she has two children of her own, Fuchs based these paintings on photographs of friends' newborns. Her own children just entered school, which may have given her the time to reflect on the profound changes that take place with maternity and parenthood. The scale of the paintings reflects the fact that babies change everything. They dominated the gallery as easily as they fill a person's life. Fuchs's other domestic images scale down to something closer to life size.

Pink Dresser and Green Dresser (both 2006) each shows a simple piece of pine furniture that has been personalized by the respective colors of pastel paint. At 110 inches square, *Kitchen* (2006) presents the viewer with a scene you can imagine the artist encountering dozens of times a day while at home with newborns: a wall of cabinets, a countertop, a sink and, on the adjoining wall, the oven and stove. The arrangement of rectangles provided Fuchs with the opportunity to create both a realistic vision of domesticity and an abstraction of softened geometry, interspersed with several Morandi-style still-life compositions.

Woman in Hospital (Charlotte), of 2007, moves out of the home

and into the institutional space in which we are often forced to say our farewells to friends and family. Although some viewers interpreted this as an image of a woman in labor, her age suggests that she is ill and possibly dying. Her presence in this exhibition of light-filled domestic scenes confirmed the ultimately somber, contemplative nature of Fuchs's practice.

—Charles Dee Mitchell

DENTON, TEX.

Daniel Bozhkov at the University of North Texas Art Gallery

Following a summer at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1990, Bulgarian artist Daniel Bozhkov relocated to New York and received his MFA from Hunter College. His conceptual projects, typically involving pop cultural traditions and often relating to science, have taken him around the globe. Most recently he touched down in Texas, where he produced two elaborate works about water, a precious natural resource in this frequently drought-stricken state.

For Austin's Arthouse, Bozhkov created *Cantata for Twelve Choirs and Several Salamanders* (2006), bringing together singing groups from all over the city [see Austin article this issue]. They sang various versions of the spiritual "Wade in the Water" at Barton Springs, a spring-fed pool in Austin that is the only home of an endangered species of salamander. At the University of North Texas, meanwhile, he designed a rainwater catchment and irrigation system to feed a pond and accompanying gardens. This he accomplished with the assistance of UNT groundskeepers and Richard Heinichen, the inventor of Tank Town, a series of rainwater collectors and filtering systems located in Dripping Springs, Tex. Outside the UNT art building he placed a big baby-blue water tank and a rusted UNT-surplus dump truck, its lifted bed spilling mounds of earth planted with a stunning variety of flowering native plants. Titled *Rainmaker's Workshop* (2007), the piece has already become a popular spot for outdoor studying and has attracted slews of thirsty birds.

The traveling survey of Bozhkov's works that accompanied the Texas projects included documentation of his most widely publicized undertaking, *Learn How to Fly over a Very Large Larry* (2002-03). In a

field in East Madison, Me., the artist selectively crushed the vegetation to create a 300-by-250-foot image of TV talk-show host Larry King, shown head-and-shoulders style. Bozhkov subsequently signed up for flying lessons to view his work from the air. The piece is represented by framed specimens of the seven plant species pressed to the earth by the plywood sheet used to delineate King's image, several paintings, five video monitors playing interviews and documentary footage about the project (including a snippet of the episode of King's program on which Bozhkov's tribute was first revealed). There was also a long green couch that narrowed toward one end to create a built-in perspectival effect. The work sounds so silly that I was prepared for the worst, but the competing voices and points of view issuing from the monitors were in fact strangely compelling.

Among the artist's other projects is a fresco he painted in a Walmart layaway department, and *Simit/Gevrek* (2003), for which the artist learned to create *simits* (sesame pretzels popular in Turkey) shaped to resemble Turkish words recently taught to him by his mother. (Bulgaria was long ruled by the Ottomans, so its language has many works in common with old Turkish.) The *simits* he then sold on the streets of Istanbul. While staying at the Istanbul hotel where Hemingway lived in 1922, Bozhkov conceived *Eau d'Ernest* (2005). Based on a survey of Hemingway look-alikes in a Key West, Fla., annual contest, he developed a scented oil, characterized by an "earthy masculinity," which was mixed with alcohol, bottled as a perfume, labeled with a passport photograph of the young Hemingway and promoted on TV and on posters in Turkey.

Bozhkov's systems-oriented esthetic at times resembles that of such 1960s Conceptualists as Dennis Oppenheim and Hans Haacke, with a good-spirited sense of humor replacing their

powerful, pointed critiques. [*"Daniel Bozhkov: Recent Works"* was jointly organized by Arthouse and the University of North Texas Art Gallery. It also traveled to the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (Jan. 5-Feb. 24), and is accompanied by a catalogue.]

—Frances Colpitt

SCOTTSDALE

Jorge Fick at Eric Firestone

The painter Jorge Fick (1932-2004) began his art education in his hometown of Detroit but soon departed for an art school in Ajijic, Guadalajara. There, he changed his name from George to Jorge in homage to Hispanic culture. Returning to the U.S., he enrolled in the premier institution of the postwar avant-garde, Black Mountain College.

He is one of its few students to have officially received a degree (BFA, 1955).

In New York, Franz Kline, his "outside examiner" at Black Mountain, introduced Fick to most of the Abstract Expressionists. In San Francisco, Fick met many of the Beat poets through Robert Creeley. After a sojourn in Europe, Fick shared a studio with John Chamberlain in Santa Fe in 1962 and ultimately settled in the region.

Rena Rosequist, who also attended Black Mountain, started the famous Mission Gallery in Taos, showing a number of modernist painters, including Fick. This group, influenced by eastern religions such as Zen Buddhism and by the culture of the Pueblo Indians, sought new visual imagery and tended toward abstraction.

The first show at Firestone's Scottsdale location, which is devoted to Southwest abstraction, was



Daniel Bozhkov: *Rainmaker's Workshop*, 2007, truck, tank and mixed mediums; at the University of North Texas Art Gallery.

"Jorge Fick: A Generative Life"; it focused on his "Pod" series. "What I am trying to do is heal the soul of the culture with these little ironic paintings," Fick once said. The majority of them are vertically oriented oils on canvas (around 63 by 45 inches) depicting semi-abstract symbols of growth and regeneration. Fick utilized flatly emblematic figural shapes that synthesized elements from post-painterly abstraction, cartoons, Pop art and the Arizona landscape.

God Tree (ca. 1970), for example, is a single abstract figure that would not look too out of place in a Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoon. Composed of quasi-cactus shapes with spindly armlike protrusions reaching out of the canvas at mid-stem, it has marked differences in paint application between figure and ground. The black background is done in flat oil paint that sets off the pattern in the figural area, which is somewhat reminiscent of a piece of linoleum. It seems to have been made by allowing dark purple pigment to separate into whorls of cloudy patterns in liquid medium while the support was laid flat.

A number of paintings depict a stem that comes up from the bottom of the canvas and expands into the soft curves and hard geometries of an abstracted pod. Fick was an outstanding colorist, as is indicated in *La Bamba* (1973), striking in its combination

Francesca Fuchs: *Baby with Spotted Shirt*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 6¼ by 14 feet; at the Contemporary Art Museum.

