

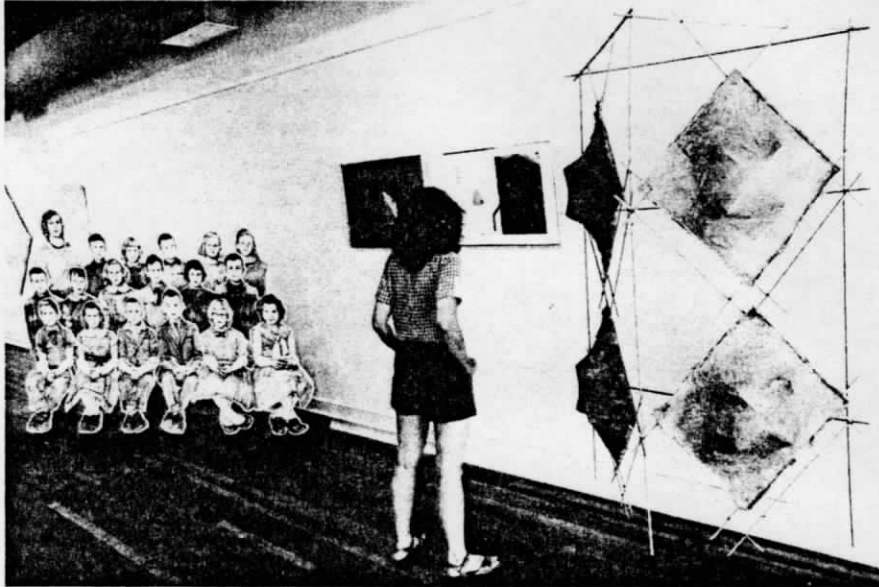
A SAMPLER FROM ATHENS

14 Women Artists from Athens/Gallery One/
Columbus/June 26 - July 1, 1983

By Bonnie Kelm

This exhibition showcased the diverse talents of women artists working in the Athens region and coincided with the National Women's Studies Association conference at Ohio State University (June 26-30). The show, exemplary in its diversity, was also the type which proves inevitably most problematic for the reviewer. Although the only link among the artists was geographic proximity, this assortment provided several outstanding and distinctive pieces.

Left to Right: Molly Alicki, *ENDURING PINK*; Yong Soon Min, mixed media prints; Sara Gilfert, *SKYSCRAPER III*, handmade paper and wood. Photo: John Corriveau. (Installation at 90 N. Court, Depot Gallery, Athens.)



Yong Soon Min's potent mixed media prints provoke the viewer to search for their meanings. Fragments of images and phrases are interwoven through innovative printmaking processes. Min combines a new relief technique of paper on paper printing with an assortment of other printmaking methods. As a result, she achieves a spontaneity which emphasizes both the ambiguity and urgency of her works. Like mystic prophecies, these prints suggest topics of immediate sociopolitical concern, and yet the messages remain undecipherable. Illusive meanings, partially revealed and obscured by the medium, can be brought to light only through the viewer's association. Overall these works suggest walls and kiosks layered with handbills and posters. In such places, either through the passage of time or by direct intent, partially removed layers expose the often dichotomous messages which lie beneath the surface.

Equally arresting was Molly Alicki's *Enduring Pink*. This work consists of a life-sized group of flat cutout figures, which in character and pose are reminiscent of an elementary school class picture of the 50s. However, contrary to the stereotyped conception of that age, this group projects a disturbing, almost ominous quality. Employing contrasts to convey these feelings, Alicki arranges flat, two-dimensional figures four rows deep. With study the group as a whole seems to get increasingly three dimensional. She asserts the physical presence of the figures by making them life-size, yet denies their reality by executing them only in black and white, pen and ink cross-hatching. Characters much like the ghosts of our own memories populate *Enduring Pink*, a vivid mixture of the real, the imagined and the illusionary.

Sara Gilfert's *Skyscraper III* is a delicately balanced large sculptural piece that combines kite-like forms of handmade paper within a network of long, slender sticks. Seemingly weightless, the structure appears to hover rather than stand on its fragile stalks of wood. A precise network surrounds, supports, and counterbalances the roughly formed paper. There were two other small works by Gilfert, *Forgotten Dreams with Lace Covers* Numbers 3 and 4, also included. All this artist's work has the quality of a precious throwaway. These objects seemed destined for swift or random disposal. Yet, there is also a preciousness about their vulnerability which Gilfert enshrines in forms that beseech survival.

Jane Tumas-Serna's pair of expressionistic drawings, *Portrait of My Parents on the Death of My Father*, eloquently express an emotional

void. Strong draughtsmanship and sparse but precise use of color and texture suggest that in death the survivors, also, become ghosts.

The debate between functionality and aesthetic presentation fills the works of Jane Bruce and Jeanee Redmond. Bruce's *Garden of Delights* innovatively fuses podium and art into one clean, striking image. In this glass and mixed media work, a sleek black rectangular stand provides a surprise as its top facade reveals a bird's eye view of a Zen-like garden. Through lively patterning, Redmond's functional ceramic pitchers cleverly meld with their pedestals. Patterns of candy store color and forms, the pitchers' outrageously whimsical proportions, and the fusion between pottery and stand convey the idea that these animistic pieces of tableware are refugees from some Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

Sampler exhibitions often include some lesser works; in this show Carol Thurber's nine acrylic paintings were not of the same caliber.

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reduced photocopy ^{from} Sept/Oct issue of *Dialogue*, Ohio Arts Journal