



Claire Seidl

NEW PAINTINGS



DONT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, 66" x 54" 1988, OIL ON CANVAS

FRONT COVER: WINDUP, 72" x 66" 1988, OIL ON CANVAS



BOAT RIDE, 18" x 24", 1988, OIL ON CANVAS



HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR, 80" x 66", 1988, OIL ON CANVAS

Claire Seidl has come into her own artistic identity, an achievement comparable to finding one's "voice" as a poet or a jazz musician. Such a maturation often entails both a reconciliation with and a freshening of tradition. The tradition with which Seidl finds herself holding a dialogue is that of gestural abstraction, an arena so outside the prevailing art "discourse" that it is at first difficult to believe that any painter in her or his right mind would attempt to enter it. Of course, anything that is "out" in the art world is probably already overdue for a revival; a permanent condition that is not entirely due to the urge for novelty and the need for turnover in a laissez-faire cultural marketplace. Self-disciplined artists such as Seidl can successfully mine the veins of discarded styles and doctrines precisely because they are working away from the distractions of more topical pressures. These artists provide evidence that, in fact, such modes of expression have been discarded prematurely in the face of Modernism's implacable requirements of innovation and self-revision.

The once dominant gestural abstraction of the late fifties and early sixties was enfeebled by an increasing formalization—an encoding of materials, processes, and even gesture itself. Seidl restores a sense of unexpectedness and play. Her work has moved back and forth between emphasizing linear or planar structures but her signature gesture has emerged as a snappy, band-like stroke that can outline flat areas of color or pile up into an area itself in boxy, loosely shifting grid formations. This is one of the ways in which Seidl keeps things open. The shifts in facture describe shifts in associative emphasis between landscape and figuration, just as shifts in the palette of each painting will suggest either interior or exterior and day or night. The stacking of cubist volumes in the center of Don't Even Think About It, for instance, projects a much different spatial feeling and sense of pictorial occasion than the airy, attenuated linear structures and daylight colors of True North and Hopscotch.

The quirks and surprises of association, in fact, seem to be what Seidl's work is all about. Even the changing velocities of brushwork are loaded with sensation enough to excite memories of a place and moment that aren't necessarily connected to a specific image. The bounding diagonal rhythms playing across Boat Ride certainly evoke the experience implied by the title. Seidl isn't an impressionist, however. The painting called Boat Ride exists as an autonomous event, an occasion unto itself. The title becomes funny because it is generated by the artist's own surprise at recognizing a dormant memory in the movement of the paint across a rectangular flat surface. An unlocking of the mind takes place comparable to that generated by Surrealist automatism. And, of course, it is merely an example of a host of recognitions waiting in the same painting. If Seidl thinks "boat ride" what might you find?

Like all good painting, Seidl's images hold a flat surface together in a compelling manner. Look at the teetering balance of the large blocks of color perched on the little sled-like green linear passage on the bottom left of Boat Ride. What makes Seidl special is the specificity of her formalism (each painting is an unusually distinct entity for its belonging to a contemporaneous body of work by one artist) and the range of her associativeness—a range that expands beyond memories of the objective world to include our sense of style and history. At a given moment one might see any aspect of twentieth century painting in her pictures. These glimpses of the visual record of Modern painting are not employed as pastiche, but instead constitute the inevitable surfacing of traits and sources in a broadly inclusive, complex art.

Stephen Westfall
New York City
August, 1988

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

1988—Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1986—Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1985—John Davis Gallery, Akron, Ohio
1984—Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1983—John Davis Gallery, Akron, Ohio
1981—22 Wooster Gallery, New York City

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

1988/89—Contemporary Abstract Painting, Yeshiva University, New York City
1988—"Soho in Bethesda," Partner's Gallery, Bethesda, Maryland
1987—"Michael Chandler, Louis Lieberman, Claire Seidl," Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1986—"One and One: A Study of Scale," Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1986—Collectors Gallery XX, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas
1986—New Faculty, Hunter College Gallery, New York City
1986—Recent Acquisitions, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
1985—The Non-Objective World, Kamikaze Club, New York City
1985—Four Painters, Wallace Wentworth Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1985—Passionate Abstraction, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1985—The Art of the 70's and 80's, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
1985—Painting, 1985, Pam Adler Gallery, New York City
1984—Avida Dollars Gallery, Milan, Italy
1984—John Davis Gallery, Akron, Ohio
1984—Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1983—New Work—New York, Newcastle Polytechnic, England
1983—The Painting Show, Stephen Rosenberg Gallery, New York City
1983—Collector's Gallery, Columbus Museum, Columbus, Ohio
1982—Four New Painters, Soho Center for Visual Arts, New York City
1982—Nature Transformed, Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University
1982—D. Jack Solomon, Biff Elrod, Claire Seidl, Root Art Center, Hamilton College, New York
1982—A Look Forward, A Look Back, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
1980—Art in Public Places, O.I.A. Federal Courthouse, New York City
1980—Arte Fiera—Ten Years of Ten Downtown, Bologna, Italy

REVIEWS AND ARTICLES:

Arts Magazine, Vered Lieb, *One and One: A Study of Scale*, February, 1987
Art in America, Review, Stephen Westfall, January, 1987
The Washington Post, Review, Benjamin Forgey, July 20, 1985
The Akron Beacon Journal, Review, Dorothy Shinn, July 11, 1985
Arts Magazine, Review, Stephen Westfall, February, 1985
Arts Magazine, Review, John Yau, December, 1984
The London Sunday Times, Review, Marina Vaizey, October 30, 1983
The New York Times, Conn. Newspapers, Inc. Review, Jacqueline Moss March 21, 1982
Arts—The Spectator, Review, Glenn C. Tomlinson, February 25, 1982
Arts Magazine, Review, Valentin Tatransky, September, 1978

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

Albright College, Reading, PA
Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
Chermayeff and Geismar, New York City
Citibank, New York City
General Instruments Corporation, New York City
Integrated Resources, Inc., New York City
Sidney and Frances Lewis, Best Products Corporations, Richmond, VA
Miller Anderson Sherrod, Bala Cynwyd, PA
Mobil Oil Corporation, New York City
Needham, Harper and Steers, New York City
Reliance Insurance, New York City
Schwartz Kelin Warren & Rubenstein, Columbus, Ohio
Yankee Resources, Inc., Columbus, Ohio

TEACHING AND EDUCATION:

1985-1988—Teaching Painting and Drawing at Hunter College, CUNY
1982-1986—Visiting Artist, Illinois State University and Syracuse University
1982—M.F.A. Hunter College, CUNY
1973—B.F.A. College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University

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