



"Every Sue, Sis and Sally of Us" by Dove Bradshaw, 1987.

Bradshaw works show 2 years of experiments

Dove Bradshaw does interesting things with letters and visual images, but sometimes she goes too far.

An exhibit of 22 works by this New York City artist is on display at the Edith Barrett Art Gallery of Utica College through Sept. 28.

The art is neo-expressionistic primitive, brilliantly hued childlike portraits or abstract expressionist pieces, with letters and scrawls and blotches of paint replacing figures, on white background. All are executed with fierce movement, brash brush strokes and luscious texture.

The carefree forms and free-floating images are different from the single piece that shows Bradshaw's alter ego as artistic advisor and designer for the Merce Cunningham Modern Dance Troupe. There, precise circles, columns and rectangles define a dance setting. Perhaps the empty area is a key to her other side, but without the accompanying slide show, it would be comparatively dry.

The expressionist mode infuses the large paper she works with — vellum, 52-inches-by-36 inches — with a emotional element.

The exhibit encompasses two years of experiments and transformations for Bradshaw.

Parts of several series are represented, allowing only a partial glimpse of the artist's message.

In "Biograph IV, VII and XIII," Bradshaw created a brilliantly colored monster that resembles a huge skull riding a scooter. The pictures are loose, with flashes of movement and feathery textures. Each picture seems to be an enlargement of a previous work, but without the entire series you can't be sure.

The Biographs are one of three figurative series that employ an abundance of color.

In the next set of works, Bradshaw lightens up visually, but tightens up intellectually. Dominant areas are whitened, color diminishes and letters, backward numbers, scrawls or script appear.

Leading and perhaps introducing this transformation is her Birth series — intelligent and delicate.

The picture represents a sort of a visual cogito — "I think therefore I am," showing the birth of a human through language.

A similar "cogito" could be the theme for the rest of Bradshaw's art — "I make you think, therefore I am art" — but it would be incorrect.

Most of the mixing of the literal and the visual is exciting, but a few works appear to be unbalanced. They resemble scrawls seen in empty advertising spaces on subway stations and offer little meat.

In some series, alphabets and numbers are reversed and smeared in and around heads and figures.

After that, she replaces figures with color that adds form, content and excitement once again.

In going from strong colorful pictorial depictions to bare letters, scribbles and splotches, Bradshaw sparks a debate on what an artwork is. She does it in a manner that cannot help but create emotions.

The gallery is open from 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday through Friday.

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