

Galleries By Edith Newhall

Bradshaw's art highlights chance, indeterminacy

Though Dove Bradshaw's art is all about chance, change, and indeterminacy, it's no accident that her one-person show at Larry Becker Contemporary Art, "Copper, Silver, Fool's Gold" coincides with "Dancing Around the Bride," the current Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibition examining Marcel Duchamp's interactions and exchanges with John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns.

The first artist to influence Bradshaw was Duchamp, whose *Bicycle Wheel* she first saw at the Museum of Modern Art when she was 14. In 1969, while a student at the Boston Museum School of Art, Bradshaw hung a bicycle wheel sideways from the ceiling of her studio as a perch for two live doves that a friend had given her; she then put a Zen archery target on the floor directly beneath the wheel, simultaneously referencing herself, Duchamp, and Johns.

Composer Cage, whom Bradshaw met in 1977 through her longtime partner, the conceptual artist William Anastasi, helped her further refine the concept of indeterminacy that would shape all her future art. Bradshaw also collaborated with Cage on productions for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. And like Rauschenberg, she has tried her hand at a few white paintings.

"Copper, Silver, Fool's Gold" spans four decades of Bradshaw's works using those metals, many of which have been chemically "activated" and are in a constant state



Dove Bradshaw's "Contingency Poplar" (2011), activated August 2011, photographed March 2012, at Larry Becker Contemporary Art.

of flux.

To get a reaction started in *Notation V* (2000), for instance, she dripped ammonium chloride and vinegar onto a small cube of copper atop a larger cube of white Vermont marble, putting in motion a reaction that causes the copper to leach turquoise streaks onto the marble.

In the three rectangular copper wall pieces from her "Without Title" series, Bradshaw created painterly streaks and drips by brushing the copper's surface with vinegar.

For *Indeterminacy* (1995), a piece of pyrite (fool's gold) on a cube of

white marble that has leached veils of reddish brown on the cube's top and sides, Bradshaw simply dripped water onto pyrite (she has also left larger outdoor pieces outside to let the rain do the trick).

Two of the show's most recent works are large paintings on gessoed linen on which the artist painted a background of silver, then drew outlines of branches and leaves with liver of sulfur to activate an ongoing chemical reaction. They have apparently changed even since being hung in the gallery.

The most perfect expression of Bradshaw's ability to conjure change and indeterminacy in this show, though, is its earliest work, *Without Title* (1969), which comprises two tarnished silver casts of the halves of a broken eggshell. It brings to mind Duchamp's erotic bronze (originally plaster) cast *Feuilles de vigne femelle* ("Female Fig Leaf"), Johns' painted cast-bronze *Ale Cans* (a play on Duchamp's ready-mades), and the new life of a dove.

Larry Becker Contemporary Art, 43 N. 2nd St., 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. 215-925-5389 or www.artnet.com/lbecker.html. Through Nov. 17.