

FAMILY LINE

DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS BY

Anne Harvey

Jason Harvey

Steven Harvey

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Anne Harvey, Jason Harvey
and Steven Harvey

ESSAYS BY

Henry Lessoré
Jennifer Samet
David Shapiro

New York Studio School of
Drawing, Painting and Sculpture

Family Line

Steven Harvey

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, my father, Jason Harvey (1919–1982) and I had regular “sessions” where we drew and painted each other. Jason commented that my drawings made him look like he was “on fire”—which was not altogether untrue. With deep furrows in his brow, a thatch of sandy brown hair (rapidly turning salt and pepper), a strong nose that took a couple of wrong turns from having been broken when he was young, he bore a striking resemblance to Giacometti (whom he had known through his family). Drawing Jason could be a little like drawing the desert—almost too dramatic a landscape to wrap oneself around.

In his own drawings, he had a refined, crisp line, partially the result of his training as a commercial artist. He could render easily and directly. It took him until he was forty to commit to being a painter, after a career working in advertising and designing beautiful handmade lamps. His drawings acquired a probing quality, a philosophical uncertainty that seemed to ask: *What is this thing? How is it part of the space around it?* This was a part of the existential imperative that drove Jason’s life in general. He wanted to understand his own nature and his relation to others. The objects in his drawings emerged from a field of cross-hatching, like images out of the fog of consciousness. Mercedes Matter at the Studio School told me how she admired his drawings of the city. Jason had given one to a benefit for the Studio School, that ended up

in the collection of the Weatherspoon Museum of Art.

Jason’s precociously gifted older sister Anne Harvey (1916–1967), whom he very much admired, had blazed an early trail as an artist that left him little room to pursue the same path. His loft was filled with Anne’s work. After her death in December 1967, my father and I went to Paris to collect her things. I had met Anne only once, on a trip to France with my mother when I was five. We stayed in my grandmother Dorothy Dudley’s apartment on the rue de Seine. Anne was a quiet presence whom I can hardly remember. She had already begun a retreat into privacy. Her work, however, was not shy. If Jason’s line was questioning and self-critical, Anne’s line was extravagant and wildly inventive.

In 1971, Jason arranged a memorial exhibition for Anne at the Robert Schoelkopf Gallery. In a review of this exhibition for *Art News*, Lawrence Campbell (who had met Anne in Paris in the sixties) described the dizzying qualities of her line:

In her work one can truly sense what the privacy of the expression “*travailler après la nature*” can mean to an artist as withdrawn and secretive as she was. The act of trying to draw the grain of a board on the studio floor—her studio was wherever she was, indoors or out—unfailingly triggered imaginative responses. She saw patterns inside other patterns, and these hair-like patterns became quirky



TOP: Fig. 1 Brassai, *Anne Harvey*, c. 1963

ABOVE: Fig. 2 Anne Harvey, *Roses*, ink on paper, 17 x 12½ in.

fine ink lines—or in paintings, paint: meandering, eddying, dissolving, disappearing, then coming into focus elsewhere, as though the wood grain pushed her ever deeper into a world she could see as well as invent at the same time. For someone as addicted to drawing as she was, it is astonishing how broadly she was able to paint. But it was always back to the textures which never quite repeat themselves, to the leaf which edges into a wall and a painting hanging on it, from there into a piano, into a tiled floor, into a jungle of line and hatching. No painter was ever freer from the clichés of modern French art (although she invented a few of her own) or of style (which she had in abundance, but it was entirely her own). Her drawings and paintings are filled with half-open doors and windows, but one can escape just as easily through her brick walls or wooden floors.

Anne's work attracted a remarkable group of supporters. The English sculptor Raymond Mason, and his wife Jeanine Hao, were among her closest friends in Paris. Jeanine opened a gallery that showed Raymond's work, and she showed Anne's as well. Once, Giacometti came to see an exhibition of Anne's work at the gallery. Supposedly, he walked in, and after only a brief glance around the room, sat down to talk with Jeanine. Before departing he pointed his thumb behind him and said he'd take "that one." The painting he selected was probably *Plant with Japanese Blind*, 1955 (fig. 18).

John Ashbery, in a 1966 *Art News Annual* article about American painters in Paris, mentioned that her admirers

included Giacometti and Helion, and described her work:

... curious metaphysical still lives . . . of copper pots, flowers and chimney corners, etc. (that) look conventional during the first few seconds of glimpsing, but this effect is quickly replaced by a perception of the probing anguish of an almost Jamesian dissecting eye. . . . A curious anxiety, tempered by the exhilaration of her novel optics is the result.

Partially as a way to deal with all the materials he had inherited from his family, Jason opened up his loft at 33 Cooper Square as an exhibition space, called variously "The Last Sail" and "The Alternative." He showed his work, Anne's work, my work, his girlfriend, Barvara Hush's and that of friends and neighbors. He painted the floor of his loft with a monumental abstracted figure entitled "Homage to Humanity at the Crossroads." He brought together the three dimensional inventiveness of his lights and carpentry, cutting windows into the walls so that he could direct daylight to reflect off suspended pieces of shiny aluminum. Eventually the Cooper Square loft became a kind of fluid and shifting sculptural work of art unto itself.

Many works were sold without adequate record-keeping. This exhibition is a first attempt to track down some of Jason's and Anne's paintings that disappeared in the process. Aside from the exhibitions in his space, Jason rarely showed his work publicly. Anne had a handful of exhibitions during her lifetime. This exhibition is the opportunity to revisit their individual contributions. I am grateful to the New York Studio School for providing the opportunity.



TOP: Fig. 3 Jason Harvey, Cape Cod, 1967

ABOVE: Fig. 4 Jason Harvey, *Tree*, July 1967, ink on paper, 14 x 16 in.



PLATE I Anne Harvey, *Garlic and Wine*, pastel on paper, 25½ x 19¼ in.

Anne Harvey and Her World

Henry Lessoré

THE PUBLIC FIGURE, toughened by exposure to life's bumps and bruises, knowing everyone and whom everyone knows, acquires a protective covering. In the end, what the public knows is only a surface. The private person, on the other hand, remains without such a shell. Anne Harvey was a private person. To know her, one had to meet her through her family and friends. One then found her admirably direct.

An immediate result of her openness, her vulnerability, even, was an appeal to one's sense of chivalry. One was called upon, not to take advantage, but to help. Another, more important thing which went with this lack of protective armour was a corresponding openness of vision. When she looked at something and painted it, there seemed nothing between herself and it. Similarly, in her paintings, there seems nothing between the thing painted and the spectator.

Several comments which capture her characteristic quality, her strangeness, appear in the notes written by her younger brother, Jason, at the time of her memorial show (Schoelkopf, New York, 1971):

She grew up in France in an atmosphere of writers and painters. At eighteen, lovely looking, she gave signs of shyness and peculiarities of behaviour . . . Humorous, and yet seldom laughing . . . strong ideas that stayed for the most part silent . . . yet were she to speak in the noisiest gathering, all would become still.

Anne and Jason were born in Chicago. Their father Henry—or Harry—Harvey, was in the advertising business, but like their mother, Dorothy, was a writer too (it was he who wrote the



TOP: Fig. 5 Harry and Dorothy Harvey

ABOVE: Fig. 6 Anne Harvey, c. 1928

biography of Debussy which Anne later illustrated). Dorothy Harvey—'Dodo'—is remembered as one of 'the Dudley girls', the daughters of the rich gynaecologist Dr. Emelius Clark Dudley of Chicago's Near North Side, who so impressed their contemporaries with their wit, brilliance and talent, and in particular their gift for poetry.

Because these sisters were who they were, the 'atmosphere of writers and painters' in which Anne grew up turns out to consist of some of the best-known names of this century. Anne's original talent alone would have made her remarkable; it is the fact that from almost the beginning it was surrounded and nurtured by genius which made it something more than that.

The schools to which the children were sent were progressive rather than conventional. Jason's notes on his sister go on:

From her earliest years, she was drawing princes and princesses, fairies and kings . . . she had a will of her own . . . at six or seven . . . (in school) . . . she insisted on building a castle when asked to build a farm. Already, a little girl was against the order.

It was primarily through her aunt, Katherine Dudley (second of the four sisters), that Anne was introduced to painting and painters. It is recorded (in a Chicago newspaper at the time of her first show in the United States, 1945) that 'when she was 12, Anne, playing with paint in the New York studio of



Fig. 7 Jules Pascin, *Anne Harvey*, 1929, pencil and charcoal on paper, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 17 in., private collection

her aunt . . . attracted the attention of Jules Pascin, who detected something in her work more than childish daubing,' and that her aunt took Anne with her to France shortly afterwards. Anne was born in November 1916; her twelfth birthday was in 1928. Pascin left New York for Paris in 1928; in the catalogue raisonnée of Pascin's work, his drawing of Anne is dated 1929, and therefore must have been done in Paris.

It isn't possible, now, to establish exactly which other artists formed part of the circle into which Anne was suddenly plunged in Paris in 1929, but, as the Chicago newspaper (unfortunately its name and date were not noted on the cuttings which survive) goes on: 'Pascin's observation of the little girl was confirmed by the whole circle in which Pascin and Katherine were moving—Survage, Leger, Bran-

cus, Marcoussis, Matisse, Picasso and the rest.'

It does not necessarily follow that Anne met and knew all these artists immediately; in fact, it is unlikely. However, one may assume that Anne had almost certainly already met Brancusi when he came to New York in 1926 for shows of his work at the Wildenstein and Brummer galleries: her mother wrote an appreciation which appeared in *The Dial*, 1927. If not, she certainly must have met him in August 1929, when he came to stay with Dorothy Harvey at the Chateau Mouans-Sartoux (near Grasse) belonging to her younger sister Caroline. (Picabia, staying just down the road at the Chateau de Mai, in Mougins, joined the party too). Although Brancusi travelled as far as Romania, India and the United States, he generally left Paris unwillingly, and this visit shows a depth of friendship already existing between him and Anne's mother.

Another artist whom Katherine, Dorothy and Anne probably met and began to know at about this time was Alexander Calder, later to become one of the family's closest friends. Calder had arrived in Paris in 1926, and is said to have first met Pascin in 1928. (Pascin wrote a short and facetious introduction to Calder's first Paris show in 1929, remarking on Stirling Calder's handsomeness, and his son, Sandy's ugliness; concluding, however, that now he'd seen the son's work, he predicted that he would become as good as an artist as himself, Pascin). Also later to become a close friend was Joan Miro. During the 1920s, Miro divided his time between France and Spain. Calder first met him in the winter of 1928/29, when he called

on him at the suggestion of another American friend. Miro lived mostly in Spain from 1930/37. Anne certainly knew him later; but it is also possible that she first met him in this year, 1929.

It is easier to convey the character and atmosphere of the world—the charmed circle—in which Anne's parents and aunts moved than to determine exactly when the various members of the family began visiting Europe and living there. To do so, one has to go back at least as far as 1910. According to one of Anne's cousins, the grandfather, Emelius Dudley, left his family—presumably his wife and their five children—in France that year while he visited China, apparently to practice his profession.

Of these five children, the three sisters, Katherine, Dorothy and Caroline have already been mentioned. There was a brother, of whom little is known except that he died soon after the war. There was also a fourth Dudley sister, Helen, (the eldest), whose story will come as something of a digression. It is worth telling, however, not only because it is of interest in itself, but because it helps indicate the whole level on which Anne's family moved. It is hardly likely that Anne ever met this aunt, but she must have known her story, and as her own unfolds, elements in common become apparent. Bertrand Russell ends the first part of his autobiography with it, and some of the words he uses to describe Helen Dudley apply almost equally well to Anne herself.

Helen Dudley came to England, probably in 1911, to study Greek under Gilbert Murray at Oxford. She had an introduction (from her English tutor at Bryn Mawr) to Russell's first wife, Alys. Russell met her, although only a few



PLATE II Anne Harvey, *Seine and Two Trees*, oil on canvasboard, 18¼ x 15 in.



Fig. 8
Helen
Dudley,
London,
c. 1916

times, at this point. In the spring of 1914, when he was coming to Chicago, she wrote and invited him to her father's house. He spent two nights there—the second with her. ('Her three sisters mounted guard to give warning if either of the parents approached'). Russell says of Helen Dudley that she 'wrote rather good poetry'; that she had 'a rare and remarkable mind'; that she was 'very delightful, not beautiful in the conventional sense, but passionate, poetic and strange.' 'Her youth had been lonely and unhappy,' he goes on, 'and it seemed that I could give her what she wanted.' He had left his wife, in 1911, for Lady Ottoline Morrell, but this attachment had reached a complicated stage. Russell and Helen Dudley now agreed that she should come to England, that they would live together openly, and if Russell could obtain a divorce, marry. He returned immediately. Helen, with her father (who did not know about the affair), arrived in England in August, just after the outbreak of war. Russell had resolved to speak out as a pacifist. He feared that a private scandal would undermine the force of what he wanted to say, and decided that he could not carry out their plan. Helen Dudley stayed in England. 'I had rela-

tions with her from time to time, but the shock of war killed my passion for her, and I broke her heart,' he says rather callously. According to Russell, she fell victim to a rare disease which first paralysed her, then made her insane. (He last saw her in 1924; she apparently died in a mental hospital).

Anne presumably knew Bertrand Russell; he became a friend of her mother and her aunt. From Russell's own autobiography one learns little about what might seem—after his account of what had happened—an unlikely friendship. He says that he met Katherine Dudley (again) in 1918, when she had come to visit her sister, and entrusted to her the open letter to President Wilson—appealing for peace—which she smuggled to a committee of American pacifists, who then published it. (He mentions that she found 'an ingenious method of concealing it,' but unfortunately does not say what this was).

However, Russell's second wife, Dora, writes that it was in New York in 1927, at the house of Dorothy Harvey and her sister, (probably Katherine), whom she describes as friends of Russell, that she met Griffin Barry, who was to be father of her (Dora's) third child. In a letter years later, during the Second World War, Anne reports confidential news about John, Dora's son by Russell, in a tone appropriate to old family friendship.

In fact, it may be that Russell's behaviour was not so selfish as he makes out; (it is, after all, a mark of intelligence to forestall criticism by painting oneself in a harsher light than may seem necessary when there is question of one's own failings). At any rate, Helen Dudley apparently lived in England some time, seeing

Russell, before she became ill. (The Tate Gallery owns a portrait of her by Vanessa Bell).

A few years after Katherine's 1918 visit to England, she helped Caroline—Caroline Regan, as she was during her first marriage—to bring over the group of performers from Harlem which became the *Revue Nègre*. Dorothy is known to have stayed in France at least as early as 1925, but Harry's work was in America ('he had the Lucky Strike account') and he spent less time abroad than his wife. With her second marriage—to the writer Joseph Delteil—Caroline settled permanently in France. Anne was to make several long stays at their different homes, (which are usually described as chateaux), in the Midi.

It is possible, of course, that Anne came to France when she was 12, and simply stayed there from 1929 for the rest of the decade, but it makes more sense to suppose that for the following two or three years, at least, she went



Fig. 9 Joseph Delteil, Anne Harvey, Caroline Delteil in Paris



PLATE III Anne Harvey, *Balcony*, ink on paper, 14 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

back to school in America some of the time. From 1927 to 1933 (or 1934), the Russells ran Beacon Hill School in Sussex, following their own advanced ideas. There is no evidence that Anne went there, but since her brother Jason did, it does not seem unlikely. (It was Jason who, with another boy, about 1933, trying to immolate a couple of pet rabbits which had been given to a child they disliked, set fire to the woods, and nearly burnt down the school.)

THE FIRST REALLY VIVID glimpse of Anne and her parents in France comes when she was not yet 17, in July 1933 (probably the summer of the same year). They were staying in Villefranche, and invited Matisse, who was nearby in Nice, to call. Dorothy Harvey described the occasion in a long letter to Katherine Dudley, who seems to have been in the south earlier, but to have returned to Paris.

They were evidently not on such close terms with Matisse as—for instance—Brancusi. Matisse’s visit ‘seemed only exciting to me, and not formidable,’ writes Dorothy Harvey, implying that formidable was what it might have been expected to be. She and her sister had already called on him some days previously. Matisse remembered having met them—he searched his memory and thought three: Dorothy Harvey told him that it was eight—years before. On this earlier occasion he had given Katherine Dudley advice about her own painting.

The invitation to call had more than one purpose. Matisse had recently delivered his famous decoration, *La Danse*, to the Barnes Foundation. Barnes had then immediately left, shutting the place up, so that Dorothy Harvey was practi-



Fig. 10 Constantin Brancusi, *Anne Harvey in Brancusi's Studio*, c.1934

cally the only American to have seen it. The first hour of the visit was spent discussing an article she was planning to write about it. (This article appeared in *Hound and Horn*.) On the other hand, at least equally important in the family’s mind was getting Matisse’s opinion of Anne’s abilities, and his advice on her future.

Besides a nude and some still-lives Anne had done illustrations for *Candide*, Poe’s *Tales*, and *Bérénice*. Matisse encouraged her to go on with these drawings. He praised her imagination, her ‘fantaisie,’ and took the view that working from nature, for her, would serve mainly as an exercise on which to base this more important side of her creative faculty. He called her ‘douée’,

repeating the word many times. Another word he used was ‘meublé’; in her drawings for *Candide*, she had ‘furnished’ the page. The main question her parents wanted his advice on—one imagines that they knew, anyway, that she had rare gifts—was whether she should receive formal training. She had been, probably not many times, to a school run by Leger. Matisse’s advice was that she should not continue.

I will occasionally quote the testimony of Raymond Mason, the sculptor, who knew Anne well during the post-war years. The particular point which impressed him about Matisse’s interest in Anne’s work was that it continued, that he came to see her again, and that ‘he climbed up stairs’ to visit her, to see how she was getting on.

What was arranged, it seems, was that Brancusi should take care of her training. There are references to this in a letter Anne wrote just after she had turned 19, and her birthday party had made her late for a session with him. There is also the comment in the Chicago newspaper already quoted that ‘Leger had given her a few formal lessons, but it was Brancusi who made it



Fig. 11 Constantin Brancusi, *Anne Harvey in Brancusi's Studio*, c. 1934

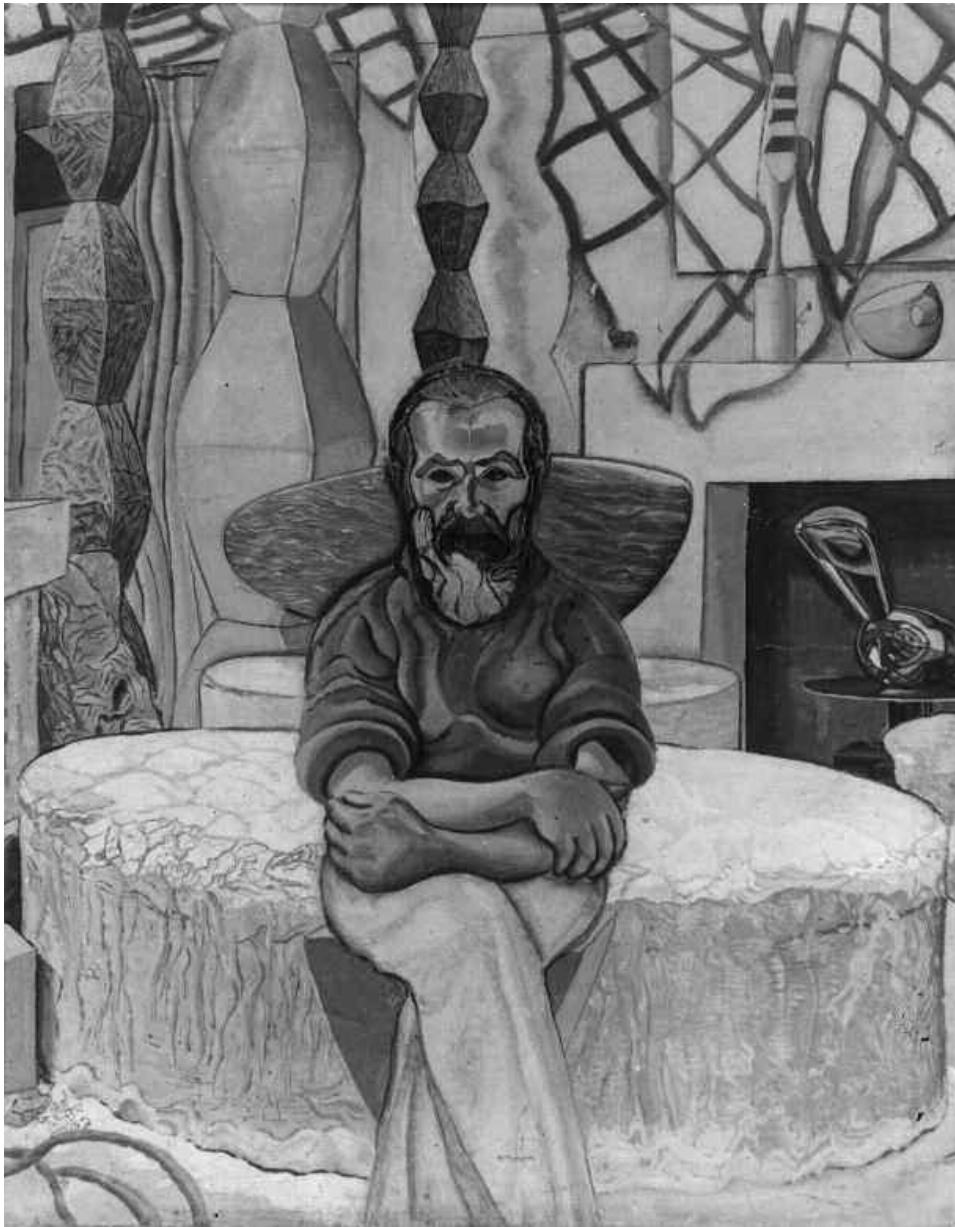


PLATE IV Anne Harvey, *Portrait of Brancusi*, c. 1934, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in.
collection: Pierre and Maria Gaetana Matisse Foundation

his particular business to see that Anne went the way she should go technically.’ The more important evidence is physical: Anne’s portraits of Brancusi, and his photographs of her. The story of Brancusi’s interest in photography is well-known. Dissatisfied with photographs Stieglitz had taken of his work, he bought himself a camera, taught himself to use it, and eventually built himself a darkroom. Brancusi evidently felt affection for his young student. Most of his photographs show only his sculpture and studio; when he photographed people, he almost always showed them at a distance. Those that he took of Anne are especially rare in that they show her close up—some of them just her face—shy and smiling. In some, she is turning away, as though to escape. They give perhaps the most informal glimpse we have into that famous studio which has now itself become a museum. Anne’s 1934 portrait of Brancusi (at present the property of the Pierre Matisse Estate) is very closely based on a self-portrait photograph of his own. (In this photograph one can see the line from his hand to the camera.) Years later, Anne told Raymond Mason that her portrait was done in Brancusi’s studio when she was 18. Since there are several differences between photograph and painting—pieces of sculpture moved and so on—one supposes that Brancusi sat for her a little while, in the pose shown, and that the rest of the time Anne worked from the room itself and the photograph. (Mason himself says that the portrait was also worked on—touched up, or corrected—by Brancusi himself.)

Brancusi, born in 1876, was a good deal older than Anne; when she was 18, he was 58. It is not known for certain



Fig. 12 Anne Harvey, *Still Life with Blue Pitcher*, oil on canvas panel, 21½ x 18 in.

how far their relationship went. According to Sidney Geist, “There was a bond of strong feeling between the girl and the man forty years her senior.” One may reflect that Anne grew up in an extremely liberated atmosphere—more will be said of this later—but that she was also shy, and that shyness, once conquered, runs, in a not particularly surprising enantiodromia, more quickly into deeper intimacy than does self-possessed sophistication. What does seem certain, is that later, in the thirties, Anne had an affair with Miro.

THAT DECADE MUST have seemed to Anne, in retrospect, a golden age. As the Chicago newspaper puts it: ‘a score of Parisian celebrities . . . made her a pet from the time she was 12, until she left Paris just ahead of the Nazi invaders and returned to her home in New York.’ Matisse, Brancusi and Leger have been mentioned; to these must be

added other names, those of Man Ray, for instance, and Giacometti. Anne’s own letters only give sporadic glimpses of things seen and people known. She describes meeting Salvador Dali (evidently not a family friend) and comments on a performance of a play by ‘Jean Coqueteau,’ with designs by Chanel; but for the most part, one’s impression of the life she lived before the war has to be based on what is known of the three remarkable Dudley girls.

The most glamorous world—the world of the spotlight—must have been that of Caroline Delteil and the *Revue Nègre*. It was Leger, at the time designer for the Swedish Ballet company, who persuaded the director to put on an all-black revue, and it was Caroline who, with the help of her sister, found the performers. She and her husband wrote sketches for it (Joseph Delteil’s other writings include the novel *Jeanne D’Arc* on which Carl Dreyer’s film was based); she brought dancers from Africa; she got Langston Hughes to write for it. More than all this, she brought the unknown Josephine Baker over from America—literally paid her fare and brought her over on the boat; and—according to Janet Flanner—the twenties never gave a louder roar than the ecstatic scream which greeted that star’s first entrance (in 1925, right in the middle of the decade) upon the stage of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. The other name one recognises now among that group of performers whom Caroline Delteil brought to France is that of Sidney Bechet: it was largely Bechet’s presence that made Paris the leading city of jazz outside the United States, and second home to so many great jazzmen.



Fig. 13 Dorothy and Anne Harvey, Paris

Paris between the wars was the meeting-place between the old and continuing tradition of French civilisation and the French and foreign artists who flooded in to form the avant-garde. The traffic was not all one way, however; Paris was as fascinated by the New World as the New World was by it. Like their sister, Katherine Dudley and Dorothy Harvey were vital links in the social chain between the two centres of modernism.

Before trying to summarise what can be discovered about Dorothy from her own writings and from what has been said about her, it might be worth emphasising the point that Anne was very much brought up by all three sisters. One may note, for instance, that although Dorothy had been visiting France since at least 1925, it was Katherine who first took Anne there.

Dorothy Harvey already had solid achievements as a writer behind her when she came to France. She had published in *Poetry* (edited by Harriet Monroe). Her best known book was *Forgotten Frontiers*, a biography of Theodore Dreiser. She had also written about Rodin (like Dreiser, another of her heroes). Her *Ghosts and Live Wires*, a history of Chicago told through brief lives of Chicagoans, failed to find a publisher. She emerges from her writings as a liberated woman, as a champion of modernism, down-to-earth, and concerned with truth to reality. Her interests were partly political. She contributed articles to the *Nation* and *Vanguard*. When she interviewed Gide—after his return from Russia—on Stalin, it is probable that she already knew him. If not, the contact might have been made in any one of a dozen ways, but the most obvious would have been through her sister.

Katherine Dudley is remembered as a portrait painter (much of her work is in pastel), but like her sisters she had written poetry, and she moved as much in literary and intellectual circles as among artists. Gide knew Sylvia Beach, and Sylvia Beach was one of Katherine Dudley's closest friends.

When Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald met Pascin at one of Caroline Delteil's parties in the winter of 1929, it was no doubt through Katherine that he was there; and their names, too, help indicate the nature of the social world in which Anne found herself.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR was, of course, only a precursor of worse troubles to come. In 1936, Anne was not yet 20. It happened that Anne and her

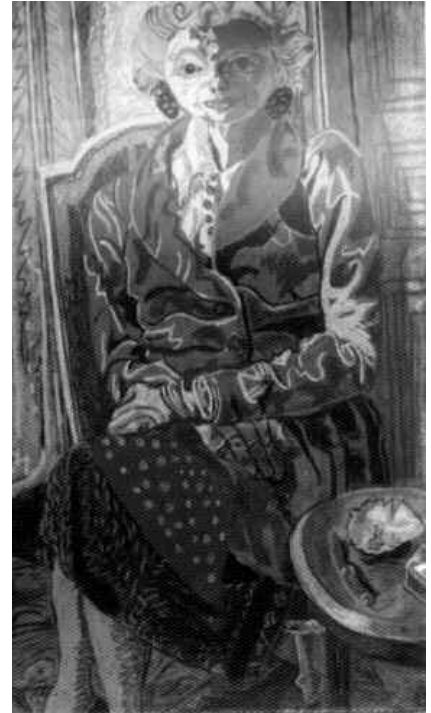


Fig. 14 Anne Harvey, *Portrait of Katherine Dudley*, pastel on paper, location unknown

mother were in Barcelona that summer. (Caroline Delteil was somewhere in the Balearic isles). In a letter to her father, Anne describes the scene: dead bodies in the streets, the sounds of gunfire; groups bustling suspects out of bars . . . and themselves, huddled in their hotel without supplies. In the end, they managed to extricate themselves. In 1939, the even greater crisis faced them. Anne and her parents spent the war years in the United States. Jason served in the army in the South Pacific. Caroline Delteil and Katherine Dudley remained in France. The elder sister is known to have aided her friend Drue Tartière in

the French underground, rescuing Allied airmen shot down over occupied France and smuggling them to safety. Her defiance of the Nazis probably helped save not only lives, but art. Gertrude Stein had to stay out of Paris, and left her home in the rue Christine in her neighbour's care. (Katherine Dudley lived in the rue de Seine.) On one occasion the Gestapo illegally entered the locked apartment, and identifying various paintings—Picasso's famous *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* among them—as 'de la saloperie juive, bon à bruler,' were about to confiscate or destroy them, when the police arrived, and turned them out. Katherine Dudley's own account of this famous incident (in a letter to Stein) is modest about her part in it, and gives the credit for the call to the police station to a girl on the floor below. In other versions of the story, she is said to have played a more central role.

The war years separated Anne Harvey, if not from her immediate family, from her aunts and from many of her friends, and from the country where she now felt most at home. Others of the circle, however—Leger, Calder and André Masson, for instance—crossed the Atlantic. Duchamp, of course, was already established in America. Also in New York for part of the time (it is not clear exactly how much), was the writer Georges Duthuit, whose wife (Marguerite Matisse) had remained behind in France. Duthuit was, among other things, an authority on Byzantine art, which was itself a major influence on the Fauves. Duthuit was a central and important figure in Anne's life after the war and one whose advice she always sought and took.



Fig. 15 Anne Harvey, *Debussy*, c. 1945, ink on paper, location unknown

It is at this point, her early maturity, that one can begin to write about Anne Harvey as a painter. While the Brancusi portrait of 1934 is a remarkable achievement for a girl of 18, the paintings of the war years (shown by Peggy Guggenheim at Art of This Century, and in a solo exhibition at the Roullier Galleries in Chicago in 1945) surpass it. Although it would be surprising if the contact with the major artists whom she knew had not affected her, the influence is in fact not at all pronounced. Unless one looked for it, and knew how to look for it, one would not detect it. It is hardly perceptible, except in the earlier work, and there, only by comparison with the later.

IN HER LATER WORK, Anne Harvey became more herself. Its characteristics remain constant, the two easiest to

identify being a decidedly linear quality, and the quality of sureness and certainty. The strokes of the pen or brush fall without effort in the right place; there are no changes, corrections or after-thoughts.

The earlier work—up to the end of the war—differs, if only to a limited extent, in that it is not so entirely linear: the subject may be reduced or simplified into flat shapes. By comparison with the later work, although certainly not by comparison with the work of Leger or Brancusi, one could call it formalized, or even abstract. Equally, there is a difference from the later work in that one can see that the final result is not arrived at immediately, but by stages: a process of painting and repainting has taken place.

This applies to the paintings exhibited in Chicago: landscapes, still-lives, and four portraits, including one of the Brancusi portraits, one of her uncle Delteil, and one of Duthuit, probably the best example of her work of the time. Also in the show, but a notable exception to these remarks, was a drawing of Debussy which is both linear and strikingly unhesitant and direct. Harry Harvey's life of Debussy came out in 1948, but New York was not Paris, and Anne's drawings for it—flights of the imagination displaying a brilliance in the use of line hardly surpassed by the acknowledged masters of this century—were considered too advanced, and not used.

In October 1945, Anne was nearly 29. She did not travel to Chicago for this, her first important show. (It has not been established whether an exhibition in Paris, planned in 1939, and for which Brancusi wrote an introduction,



Fig. 16 Anne Harvey, *Debussy Playing the Piano*, c. 1945, ink and gouache on paper, 22¼ x 13¼ in.

ever took place, or whether it became an early casualty of the war, but a review of her 1954 Paris exhibition calls it her first in that city.) While all the indications are that she was eager for the Chicago show to be successful—she worked hard finishing paintings and drawings, sending some off, carefully packed, still wet; a photograph of Anne by Walker Evans was sent; André Masson wrote a preface—and was delighted with the degree of success achieved (at least six paintings were sold)—she left most of the practical problems to her brother, who was on the spot, to solve. Anne's chief preoccupation, it appears from her letters, was getting a visa and returning to Europe. This, after some delay, she was able to do.

TO SOME EXTENT, after the war, Anne Harvey and her family picked up life where they left off; but more than that, Anne's story becomes the story of her art. The true artist is, above all, passionate about his work. A sentence from a letter to her aunt Caroline is worth quoting. (Anne's letters are not dated with the year, but this seems to have been written at the end of the war.)

“A painter should first become his model (nude or cabbage) and then the model should be transformed into the painter so as to become impossible to recognise. At least, that's my idea for the moment.” One could hardly find a better way of conveying the quality of absorption in, or identification with, the subject, which is characteristic of Anne Harvey's painting than this apparent over-statement. With some painters, the Cubists, for instance, conventional pictorial space seems broken down; in Anne Harvey's work, space seems dis-



TOP: Fig. 17 Anne Harvey, *Portrait of Dorothy Harvey*, pastel on paper, 26 x 20 in., location unknown

ABOVE: Fig. 18 Anne Harvey, *Plant and Japanese Blind*, c. 1955, oil on canvas, former coll: Alberto Giacometti

solved, as unreal as it is in a dream, with the subject becoming correspondingly more real.

If, after the war, Anne Harvey may have been said to have fulfilled her own promise, life did not fulfil its promise to her. She achieved independence in her work, but not in her emotional life. She could not marry the man she loved, nor even live with him openly. One by one her father, her mother, and her aunt Katherine died.

Just as the portraits of the war years surpassed the early Brancusi portrait of 1934, Anne's later portraits mark a further advance. The portrait of her mother, exhibited in the 1954 show at the Galerie Nina Dausset, for instance, has all the force of a Soutine. One of the critics of this exhibition remarks on something he found in common between Anne's work and that of what he delicately calls 'certains aliénés'. The difference, clearly apparent, is Anne's total control. In the rather mysterious world where the artist has become the subject, there is sometimes the danger of the subject taking over. The result is often an obsessive and unnecessary covering of the surface with detail. This is, however, not so with Anne: she knows just where to stop.

By 1963, the date of the last show Anne Harvey held during her lifetime, at the Galerie Janine Hao, her painting had become completely mature, consistent in style, and recognisable as the work of an individual with a character as definitely formed as any other contemporary artist of the School of Paris, although it would be strangely difficult to identify the separate influences.

By then, there were no portraits. People still played an important part in her

life, but they had ceased to appear in her paintings. There, the world was that of the curious ambivalence suggested by the equation of the two expressions ‘nature morte’ and ‘still-life’. Inanimate objects seem to take on a hidden existence of their own. The fire crackles on the hearth—someone must have lit it; the rose radiates its glory from the vase—someone must have picked it and placed it there; reflections move in silver or glass—the room is empty, yet one knows that the artist must have been present, and one searches for a hint of a shadow or a trace of a reflection.

The strokes of the brush and the lines of the pen seem to express a sense of hesitant certainty, of decisions still tentative, as though the line was still being drawn, and there were possibilities that it might go farther; as though its end, might, by itself, extend itself; but that no! the artist had just stopped, there, at the right place. The lines activate the planes: bring them alive. What is seen is imbued with a paradoxical sense, as though the intensity with which it has been stared at was almost painful, yet at the same time relaxed.

ANNE MADE HER LIFE, for the most part, among people older than herself. This older generation sheltered and protected her, and when it was no longer there to do so, her shyness began to turn to reclusiveness. Her death was to some degree foreshadowed by that of her aunt Helen, the eldest of the sisters, nearly half a century before. There was a sadness, a sense of tragedy even, about both. On returning from the United States, her lover (who was a good deal older than herself) had gone back to his wife. He and Anne continued to meet,



Fig. 19 Anne Harvey, *Rose*, ink on paper, location unknown

however, until, in the mid-1960s, he suffered a stroke. For a time, they managed to communicate through an intermediary, a friend who transmitted messages. In the end, though, even this was no longer possible. When her aunt Katherine had died, Anne had given up the apartment in the rue de Seine, and withdrawn to a smaller place on the Quai Voltaire. Deprived of the last, limited contact which meant anything to her, she lost the will to live. Always thin—one had the impression, sometimes, that she subsisted on cigarette-smoke as much as on food—she literally pined away.

In 1951, Anne’s friend, the distinguished critic Patrick Waldberg (it was he, incidentally, who—too late—came to look for her), had written what is

practically a prose-poem about Anne’s fascination with what he calls “the Queen of Flowers,” characterising her roses as “carnal” or “sensual”, “mystic”, “obsessed” or “haunted”, speaking of their “unwonted seduction”, and saying, of the “duel” between painter and subject, that one can no longer tell which of the two, the “plant turned carnivore,” or the “desperately striving painter,” finds itself devoured. Waldberg calls Anne’s roses, opening their petals wide, “palpitating hearts”; he sees their redness as a “rich flow of blood”; to him, they are “bathed in sacrificial water,” and he calls them “tears, rather than flowers.” He pays a powerful tribute to what are themselves powerful paintings.

Brancusi, years before, had seen Anne herself as a flower, and had said of “her looks . . . she wasn’t beautiful, but lovely is the right word . . . the age when a girl is like an opening flower.”

Neither is it too fanciful to compare Anne, in 1967, at the end of her life, to a rose, which, cut, lives for a while, even in a glass of water, but which, inevitably, deprived of the branch on which once it grew, cannot survive.

Anne Harvey’s work did not become widely known to the public in the few shows she held during her lifetime. What is remarkable is that those who did know it and admire it numbered about a dozen of the foremost artists of the twentieth century.



PLATE V Jason Harvey, *Dream*, ink on paper, 13½ x 16 in.

A Home in the Making: The Paintings and Drawings of Jason Harvey

Jennifer Samet

“*THE PICTURES have told me today that my home is in the making,*” Jason Harvey (1919–1982) stated in a journal entry. His artwork functioned as a way to explore and solidify his relationships with people and places. A sense of personal investigation is suspended within quietly nuanced and balanced compositions. The feelings they convey, such as drama and isolation, are contained within a general aura of calm and serenity. His paintings and drawings are of his world: city rooftops, his loft on Cooper Square, the landscape of Cape Cod, portraits of friends, family, and strangers. The work is modest in scale; his preferred format was 14 x 17 inches. Drawings were often executed in ink on Bristol paper, applied with a Pelican fountain pen. The paintings are acrylic on wood panel. His palette is cool and restrained, with harmoniously juxtaposed tonalities. Thin washes of acrylic paint are built up, resulting in delicate, matte surfaces, which resemble those of oil paint. In the drawings, dense cross-hatching of ink creates resonant fields of dark and light. A low horizon line is a recurring feature of the landscape paintings, and the skies become the soul of the work. The English art critic John Ruskin described the sky: “Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful—never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tender-

ness, almost divine in its infinity . . .” While the skies in Jason Harvey’s work do convey the complex moods of the scene, they do this with subtlety, without overdramatization. His is an understated poetics.

In a reversal of typical gender bias, Jason’s older sister Anne was the family member whose artistic talents were nurtured. Anne was treated by their cultured and literary parents as a child prodigy, while Jason felt abandoned in boarding schools for much of his youth. The combination of Jason’s feeling rejected by his parents and his mixed feelings about their attentions to his sister Anne, cast a powerful shadow over the development of his art making. It was not until the last twenty years of his life that Jason began a consistent practice of drawing. And it was only in last twelve to fifteen years of his life that he gave himself over to painting. Jason always searched for profound relationships with people and places. When he began to make art, it, like talking and traveling, became a channel through which to explore these relationships. Jason knew and admired Giacometti (interestingly, he also strikingly resembled Giacometti)—as much for his character and the questioning nature of his project as for the formal characteristics of his art. Jason was interested in all kinds of people and seemed to be able to communicate with almost anyone: a

bodega owner, a Bowery bum, businessmen, or artists. He carried pocket sketch pads to capture the faces he saw in bars or on the subway.

When he was ten years old, at Bertrand Russell’s Beacon Hill School, Jason made a life-size fresco of a tiger attacking a deer, which, as Russell described in a letter to Jason’s parents, had “astonishing artistic merit.” As a young adult, his first formal art training was at a commercial art school, after which he worked as an art director for advertising agencies. Later, he also designed and made objects and furniture. The lights and objects he made were clearly influenced by the work of



Fig. 20 Jason Harvey, *Hanging Lamp*, c. 1958, photo: Scott Hyde

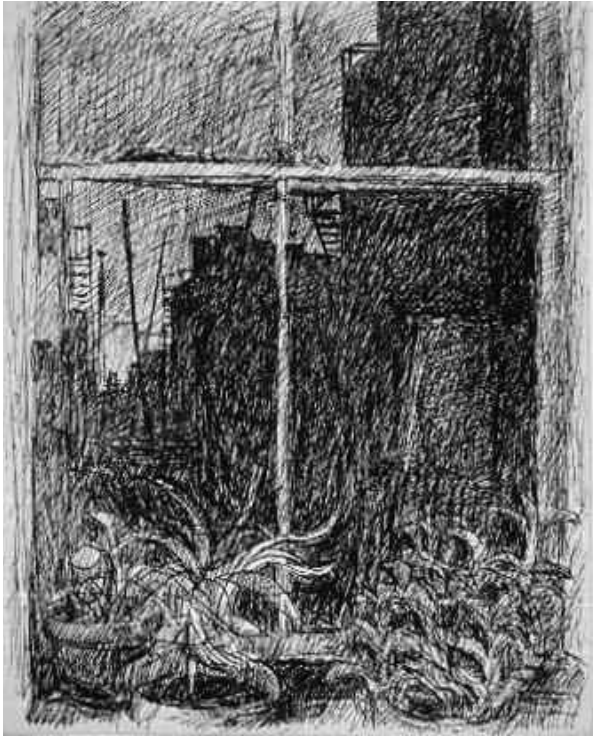


Fig. 21 Jason Harvey, *Window with Houseplants, Cooper Square*, 1965, ink on paper, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 in., coll: Barvara Hush

the classic modernist abstract artists like Mondrian, some of whom, like Calder and Brancusi, were friends of his family.

In 1950 Jason brought his new wife, Jane O'Leary to meet his family in Paris. While there he studied with the cubist teacher Andre Lhote. He also designed a lamp for his Aunt Katherine Dudley's apartment on the rue de Seine. Jason, who still felt in the shadow of his sister Anne's talent, was looking for his own distinct *metier*, which, unlike painting, would be free from familial comparison. His family's praise for the elegant looking light undoubtedly helped him decide

to make lights professionally. The hand-made lights that Jason made over the next several years were certainly artworks in their own right. Constructed of wood and plexiglass, onto which colored Japan paper was glued, they were designed to be beautiful objects that illuminated without the harshness of glare.

In 1962, divorced from his wife and living in a loft on Cooper Square, Jason finally gave himself over to being an artist. He was forty-three years old. He began by drawing what was around him: the objects in his studio and the view from the roof behind his loft, of buildings, water tow-

ers and sky. Two drawings from this period evoke a fragile urban poetry of the empty city at night, yet this aspect is not over-dramatized. Rather, they become comfortable in their unifying fields of diagonal marks.

In *Rooftops, Night*, 1962 (compressed charcoal on paper), he sets a low horizon line. The sky, loosely yet densely drawn, occupies about three-quarters of the page. A small, round moon at the uppermost part of the sheet, hovers centrally and powerfully over the entire drawing. The shape of the skyline creates a wide graceful arc

and the crosshatching of the sky extends down through the buildings and rooftops in the lower portion, melding city and sky. *Window with Houseplants, Cooper Square*, 1965 (ink on paper), combines the stair-step shapes of buildings in silhouette seen through the window, with several lush houseplants inside. The dark rectangles of the Lower East Side tenements are contrasted with the dramatic, curving forms of the houseplants.

These curving forms are echoed in *Tree*, July 1967 (fig. 4, ink on paper). Here, a single tree with half-bare limbs extends its branches out in wiry expressionistic curves. The form of the tree occupies the sheet on which it is drawn, in perfect proportion. The tree becomes a stand-in for an isolated human figure, dramatically stretching its arms. The



Fig. 22 Jason Harvey, *Attica*, 1971, ink on paper, 17 x 14 in.



PLATE VI Jason Harvey, *Rooftops, Night*, 1962, compressed charcoal on paper, 17 x 14 in., coll: Barbara Hush

rythmic extension of the branches of the tree (and the tendrils of the houseplants) remind one of the mythological, multi-limbed Buddhist deities.

In *Attica*, 1971 (fig. 22, ink on paper), it is a crowd of rebellious prisoners who reach out. In his journal, Jason describes making this piece (and other versions on this subject) based on a photograph from a WBAI program guide cover. (He saved newspaper photographs and images that he periodically used to draw from.) In this piece, a dense crowd of prisoners becomes an almost abstract mass of black and white shapes. It is drawn with a brush, as well as the fountain pen, because, as he says in his journal, “the pen will not make things black quick enough.” The dark, imposing prison building hovers ominously above the crowd. The intense feeling of the drawing is reflective of Jason’s own identification with the tragic prisoner’s rebellion and subsequent massacre. The figures raise clenched fists defiantly over the crowd. The viewer is pulled into the maelstrom, yet the outermost edges of the paper are left bare. While we are carried into the image, we are simultaneously made aware that this is just a drawing, a shadow of the terrible real events.

In the early 1970’s, Jason had begun to paint. He spent time on the East End of Long Island, where he painted outdoors. *Beach Road with Barns*, n.d. (acrylic on panel) depicts a desolate coastal area in wintertime; a storm seems likely to pass through. With minimal inflection, the exact temperature of the gray sky is conveyed. A group of structures along the horizon line are reduced to abstract shapes, like Morandi still-life objects. These barns are pale

yellow, reddish-brown, and gray rectangles, squares and triangles. The solidly placed barns give way to a more fluidly undulating road—almost overtaken by a sand-colored reed and grass field. A post and shadow by the side of the road is potently solitary, figure-like.

JASON’S LOFT at 33 Cooper Square was his living space, but also a workshop and studio. He did carpentry for a living and made much of his own furniture. The loft was furnished sparsely, yet aesthetically. His handmade objects, lights, and furniture were combined with African rugs and textiles. His and his sister’s paintings and drawings covered the walls. A Calder mobile of glass and pottery shards hung from the ceiling. Frequent guests passed through the loft throughout the 1970’s, including his son Steven, and Steven’s friends. During a period of cultural ferment, the loft on Cooper Square was a refuge and hang-out for numerous friends and neighbors. A large roof extended out behind it. Jason stretched a canopy over part of the roof, and held dinners there. In the late 1970’s, the loft was opened up to the public, with salon exhibitions called “The Alternative,” or “The Last Sail.” In these exhibitions, Jason displayed his own work, and that of family and friends. He announced these shows with a sculptural figure on the street out front. Work was sold to friends, acquaintances and strangers.

In his journal, Jason asked himself “What is home?” As a child, his family had moved persistently. He deeply desired a real sense of home, a connection to place. He looked for this in travels to France, Mexico, and India. As indicated by his statement, “The pic-

tures have told me today that my home is in the making”—Jason’s painting was a process through which he pursued the creation of home.

In the early to mid-seventies he frequently painted and drew the simple, utilitarian kitchen of his loft. In *Kitchen—Cooper Square*, n.d. (plate VIII, acrylic on panel), a round wooden table (which he made), dotted with objects, is seen in the foreground. Behind this is the large cylindrical shape of a water heater, a white stovetop, covered with dark saucepans, and simple cabinets above. The entire work is carried off in brownish-reds, gray-blues and grayish-whites. Jason constructed the kitchen himself and periodically moved it around within his loft. In this painting the elements are like simple modernist chess pieces—ovals, rectangles and circles. He configures them in the painting with the same unadorned directness with which he arranged the actual appliances.

In *Peace Tree*, 1972 (fig. 23, ink on paper) a tree, planted in a barrel on the roof behind the loft, is seen through an open French door. Behind the tree are the sloped walls of a staircase and a neighboring building. The branches and leaves of the tree, delineated individually, all stemming from a single slender trunk, reach purposefully up and out. The barrel is decorated with a peace sign—a now nostalgic reminder of the time and climate in which the work was made. The free atmosphere of this period is also conveyed through the literal open door, and the blank edges of the sheet.

Dream, n.d. (plate V, ink on paper), is a densely cross-hatched swirling image from a dream. We can make out several

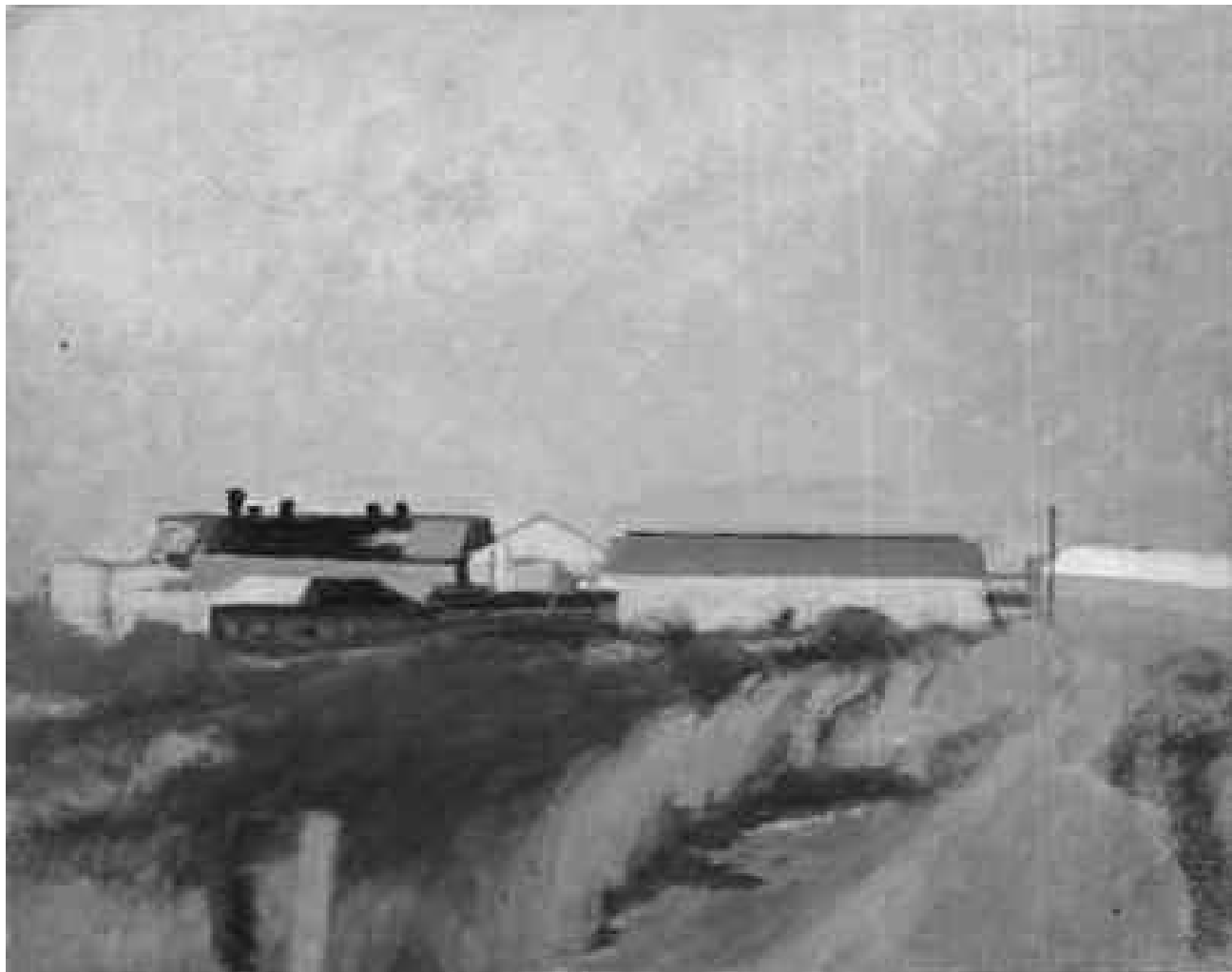


PLATE VII Jason Harvey, *Beach Roads with Barns*, acrylic on panel, 14 x 17 in.

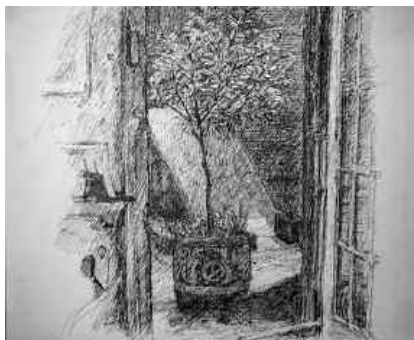


Fig. 23 Jason Harvey, *Peace Tree*, 1972, ink on paper, 14 x 17 in.

things. On the low horizon are two shapes—one like a tower, one like a pedestal, and, perhaps, some hills. In the foreground is another slight bump of a hill, dotted with either tiny figures or more towers. Shapes, like clouds, dance through the sky. Energy radiates from the center, as lines give way on the edges to dashes, like sunrays. The image in the densely layered mass of line is like an obscured, clouded memory.



Fig. 24 Jason Harvey, *Figure in Bar (with Self-Portrait Reflection)*, ink on paper, 5 x 7 in.

Similarly, in a smaller work, *Figure in Bar (With Self-Portrait Reflection)*, n.d. (ink on paper), only the varying direction of the cross-hatching delineates separate forms. Drawn in a downtown bar (perhaps Fanelli's on Prince Street), this piece is executed in ball-point pen on a small sheet from a pocket pad. A light figure huddles with his hands partially covering his mask-like face in the foreground. The rest of the drawing is darker. The darkest shape is a self-portrait of the artist seen in reflection, a silhouetted form. The representation of the artist as a shadow figure reoccurs in many of Jason's subway drawings. This poignant portrayal of self depicts presence as absence.

IN 1967, Jason began renting a shack by the ocean, on the tip of Cape Cod for a few weeks each summer. The shack was owned by Hazel Hawthorne Werner and was situated in the undeveloped and protected area called the National Seashore, near Provincetown. Here, each year that he returned, Jason quite palpably felt the deep connection to place that he was looking for. And it was here that he made some of his most lucid paintings. He describes in his journal:

Intensity of Provincetown painting has to do with love of shack, of Hazel and dunes. It always felt good to come into that shack, no matter how 'lonely' I might have felt—Also there was a drive to record all this—Had been from the start . . . No question of being loved or not loved . . . Love of place—like it was my own—What is one's own place?

THE CAPE COD paintings often follow a similar compositional structure, in which the dunes only occupy the lowermost portion of the work, while the rest is devoted to a wide expanse of sky. The skies convey different times of day, different cloud formations, and, accordingly, different moods. The palette used in each of these works is, as always, quite restrained. The movement and undulation of the dunes echo the colors and formations of the sky and clouds, giving them their sense of balance and symmetry, despite their moodiness. In *Dunes and Storm Clouds*, n.d. (fig. 26, acrylic on paper), massed dark storm clouds bump up against lighter gray



Fig. 25 Jason Harvey, *Cooper Square*

ones. The shape of the dunes is also echoed in the pattern of the beach grass below. The clash of light and dark captures the dramatic dance of the coming storm.

Dune, Shack, Sea and Sky, Cape Cod, n.d. (fig. 27, acrylic on panel), radiates the empty natural wonder that Jason found there. It is a perfectly balanced and composed picture. A deep, medium-toned blue sky fills much of the painting. The dunes curve gracefully over the



PLATE VIII Jason Harvey, *Kitchen, Cooper Square*, acrylic on panel, 17 x 21 in.



LEFT: Fig. 26 Jason Harvey, *Dune and Storm Clouds*, 1975, acrylic on paper, 10½ x 7 in.

ABOVE: Fig. 27 Jason Harvey, *Dune, Shack, Sea and Sky, Cape Cod*, acrylic on panel, 14 x 17 in., coll: Scott Hyde

bottom of the panel. The shack and its outhouse are simple, isolated forms set on the horizon, against the blue of the sea and the massive feathery sky.

IN 1981, Jason decided to give up his loft on Cooper Square and travel to France. While he was gone, he organized his possessions. He made a series of books of his life—which contained photographs and correspondence, organized chronologically and thematically into sections. After living for some time in the tower his family owned in the south of France, Jason traveled with his girlfriend Barbara Hush to India and eventually Australia. In Australia, in April of 1982, Jason died suddenly and tragically: he had fallen from a cliff.

An old friend of Jason’s family, the dress designer Charles James, wrote in a letter to him:

Yes: we must all make our way and mark on our own, and family tradition can make this a very difficult task. More so if the tradition is unique. Your own work does not seem to be influenced by family at all. Nor does it seem in any way a rebellion. You must find it in your heart, however, to understand how your family—if they disregarding you (as they say) as a young person of rebellious temperament—LIBERATED [you] from parental tyranny. I am nearly 14 years your elder and I am more than most people familiar with the struggle to find one’s individuality and true

self. Keep as an insurance your true (not false in any way) PRIDE of self, which is an Herculean task.

Jason Harvey attempted to achieve this personal liberation, through the seemingly Herculean task of painting. At once clear and complex, his paintings achieve beauty through their simplicity of means and understated virtuosity.

Jason’s own words suggest that making his artwork became a metaphor for making his home. The elements—sky, rooftops, tabletops, figures—are ordered on the picture plane as shapes. Through this process, they are invested with a personal poetics. Jason Harvey asks, “What is home? What is one’s own place?” His artwork becomes the answer to these questions.



PLATE IX Jason Harvey, *Dunes, Cape Cod*, acrylic on panel, 14 x 17 in.



PLATE X Steven Harvey, *Seated Figure, Reflection and Paintings*, 2001, charcoal on paper, 25½ x 19½ in.

Against Death: The Nudes of Steven Harvey

David Shapiro

Perhaps the best image of the human mind is the human body.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

THE BODY IS the place of promise, an image of hope, and its mortal fate has a bright shadow: immortality and Paradise. This meditation is intimately bound up, it seems to me, with one of art's most insistent themes, its erotic impulse and the possibilities in which the represented body creates a species of resurrection. It is not for nothing that anthropologists have suggested that art takes its impulse from the reliquary of the body. The skull is the first sculpture, as Francesco Pellizzi has adumbrated elsewhere. The body and its remains haunt us, and we who have lived through the recent traumata of mass destruction here and elsewhere know the particular horror of the disintegration of the human body, its mutilation, and the substantial nightmare of the city as a place for bodies and parts of bodies. No one can estimate the effect that the human body *in extremis* has in our time as a symbol for all crises. And the strong (fireman's) body a fiery hope.

In the work of Steven Harvey, one recalls Spinoza's suggestion that one does not know the possibilities of the human body. The human body in Harvey is the body emaciated, twisted in Picassoid stances, represented as the site of love, and refracted often as a learned discourse on desire. He has emerged from a family of almost genetic predisposition to art, to an insistent art that

denies mere facility. I have seen early drawings, from his teenaged years of filial aesthetic rapport, in which his quick studies reveal the almost naturalist wit of the social scenes of, say, Issac Bashevis Singer. He has had patience and detailed academic and anti-academic knowledge, as he grew up early in a "bohemian" tradition. No doubt his years of curatorial study and his devotion to painters such as Eilshemius and Bonnard have taught him to approach the human body without reservation but with the sacral sense of it as a privileged site.



Fig. 28 Steven Harvey, *Standing Figure with Mirror*, 1998, charcoal on paper, 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Meyer Schapiro always insisted that the drawing of the human body was the primary territory of art. In one of his most moving lectures ("Art Schools: Drawing from the Figure, 1967, NY Studio School") on the body as fundamental, he investigated the strategies of teaching in an age of "abstract" art. Since Schapiro had already developed the significant theme of the "humanity" of all abstract art elsewhere, it becomes a lecture on risk: "All art is a risk." What the great medievalist underlines is the fact that the human body is "the most complex, the most articulated, the most subtle, the most interesting, and most difficult object in the world. Nothing else begins to approach it . . . More than that, the nude human figure presents itself to us as a natural form that is self-adjusting . . . At the same time it is an individual object and not only a reproduction of something else." This is a profound appreciation of the aesthetic of "fullness" that the scholar was drawing conceptually. He is essentially underlining a philosophy of uncertainty. He emphasizes the conception that, "you do not know a figure until you have drawn it." Harvey concurs, saying that painting with mirrors is an experience of not knowing. In all of this, there is the binding of the painter to the model, the binding of the intense eros of the figure. And though the painter once ironically stated that the model was important to him because the situation forced him to be pragmatic and work-a-day, there is no doubt that what is



Fig. 29 Steven Harvey, *Model, Reflection and Painter's Arm*, 1998, oil on canvas, 16 x 12 in.

Fig. 30 Steven Harvey, *Night*, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 12 in., coll: Christopher Bartle and Eve Gardner

expressive in Harvey conforms to what Schapiro suggested: marks of the infinite subtlety of the human figure as a self-adjusting object of inordinately privileged emotional fate.

In *Night*, 1996, one sees a careful integration of landscape and nude. The woman faces away into a nature that has become godly, with a yellow branching tree that is dazzling in its sculptural zest. The woman is shadowed, and the window is open as a Matisse icon. The Caspar David Friedrich pose is transformed by the frankness of the marks of her hair and spine and lower back. The impression is not just of an occultation of the gaze, but of the conflict between the body, our own gaze, and the expanse beyond.

A student once joked to me that the "same-sex" companions in a Friedrich were considering a crime. It was a tactless hypothesis but had a German Romantic truth to it, after all. The couples in Friedrich, like the models and reflections in Harvey, are in their own way considering psychic crimes and obsessions.

It is in Harvey's drawings one finds the understated traits that are the investigatory philosophy behind the paintings. In many, there is the balletic grace one remembers in the "broken wrists" of Suzanne Farrell, as she danced her anti-classical imperfections at the heart of Balanchine's *Tzigane* or *Duo Concertante*. Harvey knows that each nude is a stilled dancer, and it is not for nothing that one poses heel to knee, and another is vertiginously "Upside Down," and another has shadows electrically emitted from her feet, and another has arms as etiolated as Rose Period acrobats, and others are turning,

praying, leaning. Everything moves, almost out of our visual field. Wittgenstein said, this is the true end of death, that there is no end to our visual field. Cézanne had said each inch produced a new motif, but here it is a new body, a new part of the dance. Each dancer is specific, with a specificity loved by Meyer Schapiro, who once told me that Merleau-Ponty's essay on Cézanne was the best except that it lacked the particularity of the painter. He also agreed with David Hockney that Cézanne's marks changed with the object they described. In Harvey, the models are clearly differentiated, one as androgynous as a boy, another cascading over the decorative blanket like an odalisque of pleasure. The body is celebrated in these drawings, but calmly with a lightness that reminds one of Williams's naturalistic poems in which a woman is compared to a flower. A critic once teased me for finding the presumably over-Freudian connection between Mondrian's flowers and nudes, but the truth is that this is a commonplace and one that Mondrian knew very well, when he said he kept a single flower in his rooms as a feminine presence. I reiterate that the flower is the true nude in Mondrian, and the nudes of Harvey are his true landscape. (And I say this knowing that it has become a political commonplace that woman should not be regarded as natural to the male cultural.) The opposition does not need to stain these achievements.

The pleasure one takes in the sensuality of the *Model, Reflection and Painter's Arm* (1998) resides in the opposition between dark context and the refulgent flesh tones. The work has been too often compared to Beckmann,



PLATE XI Steven Harvey, *The Look*, 2001, oil on canvas, 51 x 38 in



Fig. 31 Steven Harvey, *Reclining Figure (after The Hermaphrodite)*, 1998, oil on canvas, 20 x 40 in.



Fig. 32 Steven Harvey, *Seated Figure and Reflection*, 1998, oil on canvas, 24 x 12 in.

where Harvey's accomplishment is a synthesis of many conditions, from Rouault to Matisse. Harvey's pictorial index keeps building, and his "voice" is now his own. There has always been a bizarre comedy in his earlier monochromatic nudes, and his palette and his marks are vivid and idiosyncratic. I love the humor of a very vivid breast in the foreground, lit up like a melody. On the other hand, perhaps the most important theme is what Gilbert-Rolfe finds lacking in American culture generally: frivolity itself. It seems as if the intercepting planes of, say, *Seated Figure and Reflection* (1998) are recent meditations, not just on part and whole, but on the sweet bitterness of the fragile body celebrated by Sappho. She idealized not the beauty of a military ship but the body of the beloved. We are not just "facts on the ground," nor are we sim-

ply social, we are also discovered here in our own "mirror-stage." Lacan's jargon is not needed however; everything in these paintings is as simple as a prop or household appliance. The great mirrors are, doubtless, the eyes themselves, here comically cropped from the painter. What can be more learned than this cancellation of the artist's fundamental instrument.

Why do I prefer Harvey's nudes to many of his generation? First, I do not find him a reactionary using the figure to prop up a neoclassicism. He can be chic, but he is mostly elegant. There is a wild strength to *Figure on Cushion with Reflection* (1998) where the painter's hand interrupts the opulent world of the nude with the profile of a cobra. His comforts are apparently not those of Matisse's famous armchair for the tired businessman. He is active, and at the core of his drawings and paintings is a praxis of work that is more akin to Rodin's sensualism than to the "naughty" neo-expressionism that surrounds us from the 1980's. There is a wise sublimation of the deKooning carnival of vulgarity, but where it does enter, I affirm it, as above the model in *Reclining Figure (after The Hermaphrodite)* one is given a parade of the everyday. Isn't it John Ashbery, in his essay "Growing Up Surreal," who spoke of American painting and poetics triumphing over French surrealism as a re-familiarizing of the marvelous in the everyday? The sanity of Harvey's vessel, to appropriate an O'Hara phrase, is that these nudes are workaday, privileged but at ease with palette, painter, odds and ends, tins and brooms, chairs and stools. What lights them up is still the marvelous, but it is discovered almost



PLATE XII Steven Harvey, *Figure on Cushion with Reflection*, 1998, oil on canvas, 27 x 23 in.



ABOVE, LEFT: Fig. 33 Steven Harvey, *Touching Foot*, 1992, charcoal on paper, 12 x 9 in.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Fig. 34, Steven Harvey, *Leaning Torso*, 1992, charcoal on paper, 22½ x 14½ in.

by accident as part of the weekday in Brooklyn, not as a world of excess and transgression. The umbrella meets the sewing machine on a surgical table, but here translated as man and woman, after all, with a simple assignation to work together in the production not of passion but of pictures of passionate calm. The correct architectural space should save us from death, as Madeleine Gins has asserted elsewhere in a radical mode. Not mere medical progress or amelioration of a bad dream, or even women whose spit, as the Islamic tradition has it, would sweeten the ocean, but Paradise as something that happens everyday.

The *Reclining Figure* (2001) does indeed tumble over a red and golden couch, but because she is uncannily doubled, and because she seems to smirk throughout, the effect is more of Chaplinesque collapse than any overblown ecstasy. She is and is not a Titian. Something of a frivolity of the rococo is often going on, in which there is a mordant contraction of space. What John Hejduk loved in architecture and still life, in architecture as still life, was this compaction. And we find it in Harvey's paintings everywhere, as the models model for themselves, not teenagers primping, but adults looking at what the scholar has presumed as the most

complex, subtle, and "interesting" thing in the world, a thing not exactly a thing, but the living menace of our selves decked with hair. Even if the Jewish tradition is largely quiet about resurrection, it remains a bright imageless hope, and in the beloved's body and face it finds an end to longing. Such a body of hope seems, almost, a temporary resolution of everything. Let us not forget that for Harvey, for us, for the dermatologists and for the philosophers, the skin is the living organ of the largest size. The mind is also large, and the dream of unity of flesh and thought provokes the seething surfaces of Harvey's disquieting art.



PLATE XIII Steven Harvey, *Reclining Figure*, 2001, oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in.

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Dedicated to my family. In memory of Mercedes Matter
(1914-2001) and Irving Shapiro, M.D. (1914-2001).

—S. H.

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