

"6 Paintings & Back

Steven Harvey presents "6 Paintings," an exhibition of significant works by six 20th century painters: Romare Bearden, Anne Harvey, Lester Johnson, Gandy Brodie, and Fairfield Porter and Gregory Gillespie.

Romare Bearden (1911-1988) is known for his collages and paintings, Bearden's work draws on the African American iconography, mixing influences from Cubism, social realism, and African American folk traditions. His improvisational approach plays with the rhythms of jazz and blues. Bearden's late work, made here with watercolor and collage, the year before his death, scrambles his music portraits with cubism. Bearden said in an interview with Myron Schwartzman: "One day these people came walking into my work and seemed to know just where to go within the painting."

Anne Harvey (1916-1967) emerged from the artistic milieu of Paris in the 1930s, Precocious, she studied with both Fernand Léger and Constantin Brancusi by the time she was 18. Her work was first recognized in Peggy Guggenheim's groundbreaking 1945 "Exhibition by 31 Women,".In his essay from the catalog for *In Paris*, Henry Lefebvre writes "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."

Lester Johnson (1918-2010) was the leading figure painter among the second generation of Abstract Expressionists. Known for brooding, thickly painted images of crowds and confrontational street scenes. Johnson belonged to a group of artists who emerged during the rise of abstraction but formed a niche of their own as expressionist figurative painters. In 1961, Lester told Lawrence Campbell: "It is as though I had fought my way out from behind my own personality, and was able at last to expand and express myself in a completely fresh way. When the painting is finished, I realize I can never repeat it. It came from a moment of absolute freedom."

Like Johnson, Gandy Brodie (1924-1975) brought a unique image based sensibility to Abstract Expressionists experiential process, infusing dense, layered canvases with stark, recurring subjects - trees, lamp posts, tenements. Self-taught, Brodie was inspired by Van Gogh, Klee, and Picasso, Brodie's work was supported by Meyer Shapiro for the emotional depth of his painterly innovation. Shapiro said of his work: "He painted not only dark slum walls, and strata of hard rock but also the little bird, the eggs in the nest, the young deer, the fallen branch. In a long patient effort to realize their mysterious qualities through a painter surface as material and as exposed to time as the object themselves"

Fairfield Porter (1907-1975) was a painter and art critic who maintained a representational style amidst the rise of Abstract Expressionism. His luminous landscapes, interiors, and portraits, often set in Maine and Southampton, reveal the extraordinary within the everyday, influenced by the intimist French masters Bonnard and Vuillard.

Gregory Gillespie (1936-2000) was one of the great eccentric talents of postwar American painting. He artfully employed renaissance painting techniques in order to develop his extreme persona; vision. He stated, "My childhood was quite unusual — an unusual blend of having a crazy mother (institutionalized for the rest of her life when I was five years old) and a severely alcoholic father. [...] I look around at the images I paint now and I see Catholicism, insanity, chaos, weirdness. It's natural for me to create these images. It's almost as if, since there was so much chaos in my childhood, my job as an artist is to make it beautiful, to give it back some order and stability, and to make a living from it. So my job is to turn the chaos and pain into art."

In *Back* the rear gallery presents a group of mostly 21st century paintings. This group of marvelous works span generations of painterly acuity from youthful artists such as Abigail Dudley and Giordanne Salley to senior talents like Mary Frank and the mid career master Kyle Staver. There are significant small scale ceramic works by Beth Kaminstein, Margie Hughto and Stanley Rosen.

Together the two rooms are a rich wunderkammer of miraculous objects.