

ART REVIEW

WILLIAM ZIMMER

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Seven Galleries Feature Works by 24 Artists

By WILLIAM ZIMMER

COLD SPRING

In its founders' minds, "Collaborative Concepts" is an idea, a belief that artists can work together for the good of all.

The tangible part, at least for the rest of the summer, is a 14,000-square-foot former factory, which has been converted into seven galleries.

In many ways, the building and the energy behind it are reminiscent of lower Manhattan in the late 1970's and 80's when artists seized on almost any large vacant space to display their work. Such situations are usually temporary, and "Collaborative Concepts" has just found a permanent home upriver in Beacon, which it can occupy next spring.

But for the rest of the summer the "Collaborative Concepts Exhibition in Cold Spring" will have to do, and it does quite well in its presentation of works by 24 Hudson Valley artists.

The art is mostly in the established modes: abstract and realist painting, as well as sculpture of an especially hefty sort. Ceramics join the group and fit in well, though they are traditionally regarded as crafts. Even photography gets into the act through Iris prints made with a computer.

The lower-floor galleries are named for the streets they parallel, and visitors enter the show through the Pine Gallery, which provides a solid introduction to the genial mix that characterizes the whole show. Standouts here are the sculptures in the shape of Greek amphoras or urns by Norman Ernsting.

Mr. Ernsting emphasizes the ancientness of his idea by displaying a few of the amphoras in a casual way as if they had just been unearthed in an archaeological dig.

One painting by Susan English, "Pillow," is a preview of others that will be encountered in the show. Ms. English makes her work sublime by a simple maneuver: the painting is essentially monochrome, which works to call attention to its straight edges. Ms. English follows the edges of the painting with a firm but subtly sinuous line, which works to soften them and make an otherwise stern-looking painting buoyant.

The most sprawling work is Alex MacFarlane's relief sculpture "Guggenheim." An image of the museum with its famous curves is on Mr.

McFarlane's massive surface and is one of the few supple lines on the predominately gray work. Attached to it are forms — some of them in cast graphite — that are reminiscent of machines in factory production.

The Pine Gallery leads to the even larger Peekskill Gallery. Colorful Abstract Expressionist-based paintings by Vincent Baldassano are joined by an unusual representational painting by Lesli Uribe called "Cave Dwellers," a composition whose many figures are seemingly built up by many strips of tape. Martee Levi's works might be called paintings, but the staff at Collaborative Concepts calls them "collages of wood."

The most alluring sculptures in this gallery are the many works featuring cows by Anne Huibregtse. One of these, "Kowtow," has an especially fetching face, flattened as if it were pressed against glass. More utilitarian in sensibility are the vessels or containers by Kate Rogovin, an array of beaten-lead bowls, which provide a hint of the many vessels to be seen upstairs.

The Peekskill Gallery is so large that Alex Uribe's "New Wave," a sculpture of many parts that rise and fall like a string of dominoes, can cross it on a diagonal and be a serene, rather than an overwhelming, contributor to the gallery's pleasant visual buzz.

The Upper Peekskill Gallery contains a large offering of clay pieces in all shapes by Edith Ehrlich. Some are very simple, just balls of clay, which is a bracing reminder of the elemental nature of her craft.

Taken singly, these pieces might not add up to much, but the aggregate is a statement about intensity. Visitors are also introduced to the abstract paintings by Richard Bruce, which evoke through delicate, sheeny color, sensations like "Flow," "May Clearing" or "June."

The entire exhibition is well installed, which is a welcome surprise in the ample but rough building.

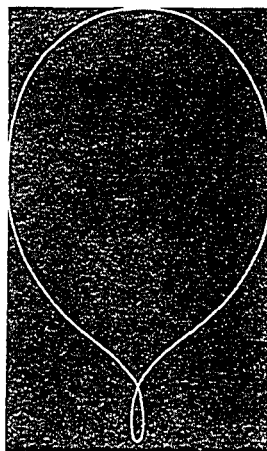
The person responsible for the installation is Tony Moore, who before moving to Cold Spring installed exhibitions at the Guggenheim. When he lived in Brooklyn, Mr. Moore was a painter, but when he moved to the country, he felt that ceramic work was more to his liking.

Several of his colorful drawings hang above his array of ceramics, which are unabashedly utilitarian. There are many attractive small

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Photographs by Phil Heffernan

Above, from left, "In Transition" by Alex Uribe, "Flow," "Spirit Dance" and "May Clearing," all by Richard Bruce, and "Psyche" by Jane Schneider. Top: Tony Moore holds a ceramic bowl in front of "Carolyn's Madonna," also his work. Top left: "Feb. Thaw" by Martee Levi. Below: "Ballon" by Susan English. All are on view in "Collaborative Concepts."



pots and an occasional bowl painted in luminescent glazes.

Sculptures by Augie Della Vecchia might be said to stand like sentinels, but Mr. Della Vecchia has individualized them and gives them plenty of curves. His most remarkable contribution to the exhibition is "Transi-

tion," the passage between the Upper Pine Gallery and what is named the Common Ground Gallery. Using squares of corrugated cardboard, Mr. Della Vecchia has built a whimsical but substantial piece of serendipitous, undulating architecture that rather recalls the spirit of Antonio Gaudi.

Paradoxically, Common Ground Gallery houses the work of a single artist, Peter Clark. This is all right, though, because his work can take on many forms. Essentially the many pieces may be called "manipulated found objects," meaning that Mr. Clark can simply yet convincingly stack pieces of paving stone or fit strips of metal together to form a surface reminiscent of a painting. His installation seems endless, and this is part of Collaborative Concept's mission. What is here is just a taste of the art to be found in Cold Spring.

"Collaborative Concepts Exhibition in Cold Spring" is at McDonnell Atelier, 11 Peekskill Road, Cold Spring, through Oct. 1. The number to call for information is (845) 265-7262.