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7:30 P.M. at Mitchell Auditorium
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Visual artists in Memphis face a huge problem. It’s not a lack of place to show. It’s not nepotism, and it’s not that every fellow artist is unpatriotic. It’s not even a sanctified or anathematized public, though it is clearly related. No, the biggest problem facing the visual artists in this community is a thoroughly uninterested media.

Local publications and television stations in Memphis devote barely any time to creative endeavors with the exception of music. If you practice the visual arts, you are nearly invisible to our city’s publications, and you don’t even exist in the televised world of sitcoms and restaurant promotion spots.

The situation is shameful. The media in our community have an obligation to educate, inform and entertain. That should be taken seriously. Memphis ever hopes to grow beyond a small town mentality and become an attractive destination for the companies and their employees that are desperately needed to give this community an economic shot in the arm. But the print media outlines this. It’s a duty that should be taken seriously if Memphis ever hopes to grow beyond a small town mentality and become an attractive destination for the companies and their employees that are desperately needed to give this community an economic shot in the arm. But the print media outlines this.

Still, I have to admire even The Fly has a better record of visual arts coverage than The Commercial Appeal. At least it can remember (although the memory is cloudy) when art reviews were printed regularly in the weekly publication. We must hold The Commercial Appeal to a higher standard. It is the only daily in the Mid-South. It serves an audience of around a million people but never includes a weekly visual arts review. Puff-piece listings in its “Fast Beats” column don’t count. The Commercial Appeal’s idea of local art coverage is a few fluff paragraphs chronicling the most recent重大 经过 of the Opelousa. The CA’s attitude is simple. One day while looking through archived albums at the Memphis College of Art, I was shocked to see hundreds of listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count. I mean, thank God for Tim Sampson, but show and gallery listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count. I mean, thank God for Tim Sampson, but show and gallery listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count.

Now, even when it does cover any aspect of the visual arts in Memphis, it is rarely with a savvy opinion that might challenge and stimulate readers. This hinders us, seduces us, lulls us. People in the Mid-South probably receive more community information from this medium than any other, and television has the most desirable place when it comes to local visual arts coverage. While the stations devote countless hours to stories that serve little purpose other than increasing the level of fear and paranoia among their viewers, almost none are devoted to informing or educating. Perhaps the argument will be made that the person of people that Memphis doesn’t care about the visual arts. Maybe, but we will know that people gain interest in what’s presented to them. It must hold The Commercial Appeal to a higher standard. It is the only daily in the Mid-South. It serves an audience of around a million people but never includes a weekly visual arts review. Puff-piece listings in its “Fast Beats” column don’t count. The Commercial Appeal’s idea of local art coverage is a few fluff paragraphs chronicling the most recent重大 经过 of the Opelousa. The CA’s attitude is simple. One day while looking through archived albums at the Memphis College of Art, I was shocked to see hundreds of listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count. I mean, thank God for Tim Sampson, but show and gallery listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count. I mean, thank God for Tim Sampson, but show and gallery listings that must be called in to the paper just don’t count.

In our attempt to inform artist/readers about opportunities, we advise visual artists and film/video artists who read this on or before March 15 to go to http://apply.creativecapital.org to make yourself eligible to apply for 2004 grants in Creative Capital’s generous awards program. Eligible media change from year to year. Performing artists and those involved with emerging media can apply in 2005. Look for much more on design and new media in No. 49, Summer.

Leslie Landis

GIFT EDITOR Paul Brubaker

Introduction to No. 48

Graphic Design: Beth Edwards

CONTENTS

Introduction to No. 48

Dona Angeline, Ciscley Jane Elliott, Fredric Koeppel, Leslie Luebbers

TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSIONS AND GRANTS

No. 48 is the first of two issues supported by a Tennessee Arts Commission’s Art Build Communities grant made through the Greater Memphis Arts Council. The intention of the Commission’s grant process is to focus on design and new artistic media. In this issue, Virginia Overton and Jim Ramsey discuss, respectively, the architectural/philosophical issues of Memphis architecture Calvin Coker and fundamental questions about museum architecture raised by MoMA curator, Terence Riley.

In this issue, Jes Owings presents a discussion with Charlotta Westergren on her exhibit at David Lusk Gallery: “2001: A Tale of Two Cultures.” The exhibit raises profound questions about artistic media. In this issue, Jes Owings presents a discussion with Charlotta Westergren on her exhibit at David Lusk Gallery: “2001: A Tale of Two Cultures.” The exhibit raises profound questions about artistic media.
Since winning Best Local Feature at the 2003 Indie Memphis Film Festival with Blue Citrus Hearts, Morgan Jon Fox and his partners at the Media Co-Op have been on a bit of a roll. The gritty, realistic story of a high school student’s process of sexual awakening in a less-than-friendly environment has won awards at three out of the last four film festivals it has been in, including an honorable mention at the Berkeley Video and Film Festival (Best Feature at Racing 2002). The 22nd Annual Chicago Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. It has since been shown on television in New Zealand and has been in, including an honorable mention at the Berkeley Video and Film Festival and Best Feature at Reeling 2003: Video and Film Festival and Best Feature at Reeling 2003: The 22nd Annual Chicago Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. It has since been shown on television in New Zealand and

Morgan Jon Fox standing in front of the Chicago skyline. Chris McCoy is a writer living in Memphis. He can be contacted at mccoy@midsouth.rr.com
Andrew Kaufman and Donna Stack’s joint multi-media installation at Ruby Green consists of five works, four of which include video. While the Spinning screen is meant to be viewed together, they are separate creations. Stack’s “Three Marriages” and Kaufman’s “Containment/Contamination” occupy Ruby Green’s front gallery, while the larger rear gallery holds “Stairs” and “Mama Dyce” by Stack and “Samenessing” by Kaufman. The work is best viewed with several other people to further activate the space.

Stack erected “Three Marriages” by selecting off the right half of the front gallery with three wood-framed panels held together with large, heavy C-clamps. A framed one-way mirror sits inside the middle panel revealing two television monitors in the room created by the temporary partition. Harsh light and mint green walls greet these willing to stare past the thin area between the gallery and divider panels. Once inside, the viewer, if interested enough to find the proper viewing angle, can watch two video monitors. A plastic magnifying sheet placed in front of each screen distorts the images. The left screen features an older white man. The right monitor shows a white woman. The sound set to a barely audible level, the couple talks about marriage. If viewers are tempted to check out their reflections in the mirror, people on the other side of the wall—unseen to those inside the room—can watch every move.

Kaufman’s “Containment/Contamination” occupies the left corner of the front gallery space. His piece features the upper torso of a thin black man. Wearing nothing but a patch on his chest, he picks up a glass, drinks from it and then spits out the clear liquid. While doing that, he looks directly into the camera without expression. An acrylic cube around the monitor forms his brittle little house. 144 bar glasses stacked in four sets of 36, sit on top of it. Each set rests on top of a sheet of rubber. Water and condensation fill the glasses. On a podium at the corner of the front gallery space, a framed one-way mirror helps the decision. After removing my shoes, I tentatively enter the room and sit on the floor. A slit in the front forms a small opening that, once again, makes entering a carefully considered move. A pair of soft cotton slippers on a bamboo mat helps the decision. After removing my shoes, I tentatively enter the room and sit on the floor.

The work is best viewed with several other people to further activate the space. Synergy


Because of the power cords on the floor, I had to look up to move from incubator to incubator. When doing so, I couldn’t help but appreciate how Stack’s beautifully slant-cut and inviting tent-like room contrasted with Kaufman’s stark space.

Stack’s well-constructed poplar “Stairs” is against the back gallery wall and glows under a soft spotlight. The edges show with clear-cut. White-lavender dulls the treads. This is the one piece I would not dare touch as the stairs are not anchored to the gallery, and the first of the treads is about two-feet tall.

However, I enjoy thinking about climbing the set and wondering where the piece could take its participants. Stack’s “Mama Dyce” occupies a large area of the gallery. Her white lyra tent stretches from a wooden frame to form a soft room. Blush-green light flickers from inside. A slit in the front forms a small opening that, once again, makes entering a carefully considered move. A pair of soft cotton slippers on a bamboo mat helps the decision. After removing my shoes, I tentatively enter the room and sit on the floor.

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The pieces in Synergy relate to each other remarkably well while retaining their individuality, which is particularly interesting knowing that the artists are married. Both Kaufman and Stack seem to be dealing with relationships of all kinds and especially with issues of communication. By inviting the viewer into their respective lives (the men and women in the videos feature Stack, Stack’s parents, Kaufman’s parents, and Kaufman’s friend while keeping them at a distance, their work allows viewers to think about their own relationships and how they change from infancy to death. What is it like to get married? What kind of chances exist now? How may people process the conflicting messages received throughout life? What was it like to be shown while watching and being observed? Kauffman and Stock raise interesting and thoughtful questions that deserve to be pondered.

Synergy


What is an architect’s job? If you ask Coleman Coker, he’ll probably begin with what his wife refers to as one of his “sermons” about building. He was in the congregation and heard Coker’s words as he spoke at the Brooks Museum, February 8, as part of the lecture series accompanying the exhibition US Design: 1975-2000.

Coker opened his comments with a disclaimer about speaking on the activity of building. The architectural group of which he is a part, buildingstudio, ascribes to an “affirmation of the real” and desires that talking about the methodology and results of building is a limited, if not completely insufficient, endeavor. Coleman believes that building is an ongoing process, that the real “interference” with each other and with the background, creating waves of things rising together in a shared world. For more information about buildingstudio, visit their website at www.buildingstudio.net.

Virginia Overton
Virginia Overton’s work is characterized by shapes that are fluid and ever-changing, shifting, moldable, flexible, and easily transformed. Her work explores ideas related to perception, space, and form, often incorporate a sense of motion and transformation. Overton’s art practice involves a range of materials and processes, including clay, wood, paper, and photographic images.

Coker and his team due to an oddly shaped lot in an older inner-city neighborhood. The clients’ desires and modest funds were elemental in the design process, as was the presence of two large, mature trees on the lot. An appropriate structure evolved itself to the design team and ultimately made its way into the biannual style neighborhood striving to be a “good neighbor.” Formally, the success of the building emerges from the very constraints presented by the site and the situation. These problems offered Coker and his collaborators an opportunity to engage in what he calls the “interconnected field of energy,” a force that simultaneously grounds and uplifts human endeavors.

When talking about this “field of energy,” Coker first seems to diverge from architecture, leading his audience toward a philosophical view of the world, a way of seeing and being in the world. In a literal sense, the interconnectedness of all things rises together. That may sound like an awful lot for us to be human” and can see ourselves functioning as a “part of the greater whole.” But in a more holistic approach in mind, Coker goes on to explain the various meanings of building: it is a process of measuring and making a presence; it is hopeful; and it offers us a sense of reflection, so we can be reminded of “what it is to be human” and can see ourselves functioning as a “part of the greater whole.”

Coker illustrates the basic philosophy that undergirds his architectural work by using an analogy of droplets hitting a pond. These droplets, either nature made or human made, hit the pond causing a series of ripples, which overlap, creating “interference” with each other and with the background, which is the pond itself. What Coker seems to be saying here is that, like the pond, the “interconnected field of energy” is actually the primary location where building happens. It is in this field where concentric circles of natural and human activity collide, creating waves of things rising together dependently, or multiple superposes. If we are mindful builders, he suggests, we can make choices about our building activities, so that we are responsive and responsible actors in the larger field of interconnectedness.

The result of this mindful and energetic exertion is not a thing but a process—Coker’s case, the process of building and the process of building. In this way, Coker returns to his ideas about building, which emphasizes that the word “building” is both a noun and a verb, it is simultaneously an evolving “enclosure for habitance” and the ongoing “activity of humans while on the earth.” He believes that building is a common thread that connects human activities and experiences; for him, all of us are builders, participants in a shared world.
Having recently completed a semester as an artist in residence with the University of Tennessee’s art department, Charlotta Westergren is featured from December 13, 2003, to April 4, 2004, in the Knoxville Museum of Art’s new SubUrban series that presents emerging artists in their first solo American museum exhibitions. A Swedish citizen educated in both the United States and Sweden, Westergren is known for her vivid and imaginative paintings and installations that explore theme of memory and the construction of personal identity. Her second installation in the exhibition, “Marcillia Mutica,” involves the audience in the creation of an environment that highlights the tension between contemporary art and the institutions within which it is often housed.

Westergren’s work is strongly rooted in her childhood experiences. She was raised in a Swedish family that lived on the Baltic Sea at Ahus, which served as a resting place for her family when they were visiting her relatives in Stockholm. The family’s colorful experiences with nature, especially the natural beauty of the forests and the ocean, left an indelible impression on her. These childhood memories serve as a foundation for her artistic practice, as she explores themes of memory, place, and identity in her work.

Westergren’s paintings are a visual representation of her memories, often depicting scenes from her childhood in Sweden and other places she has lived. Her work is characterized by a vibrant color palette and a sense of nostalgia, capturing the essence of the past in a way that invites the viewer to reminisce about their own memories. Through her use of color and composition, Westergren creates a sense of timelessness that bridges the past and present, inviting the audience to reflect on their own experiences.

The exhibition in Knoxville is part of a larger series that Westergren has been developing over the past few years. The series, called “SubUrban,” presents emerging artists in their first solo American museum exhibitions. Westergren’s work is a testament to the power of memory and the importance of place, as she explores the ways in which these elements shape our identity and influence our artistic practice.

Westergren’s work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums in both Europe and the United States. She has received critical acclaim for her unique approach to art-making and her ability to engage the audience in a meaningful way. Her work is a celebration of the human experience, as she invites the viewer to explore their own memories and connect with the themes of place and identity that are central to her practice.

**Jes Owings**

Jes Owings is a graduate student in the printmaking department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She is interested in the tension between contemporary art and the institutions within which it is often housed. Owings’ work explores themes of memory, place, and identity, as she invites the audience to reflect on their own experiences. Her installations are a visual representation of her memories, often depicting scenes from her childhood in Sweden and other places she has lived. Owings’ work is characterized by a vibrant color palette and a sense of nostalgia, capturing the essence of the past in a way that invites the viewer to reminisce about their own memories. Through her use of color and composition, Owings creates a sense of timelessness that bridges the past and present, inviting the audience to reflect on their own experiences.

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Using funds derived from grants and “percent for art” legislation for certain publicly funded projects, the non-profit organization has worked with other agencies in commissioning local and national artists to produce site-specific art for public places. Venues have included the Riverwalk, Cooper-Young, several public schools, AutoZone Park, Ballet Memphis and the Hope and Healing Center. Other prominent public buildings such as the Memphis/Shelby County Public Library and the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts have brought together larger groups of artists to create works. Installations in these projects have sparked the type of thought-provoking discussions that are essential in a culturally vital community. One major public project currently under construction, however, has decided not to include public art in its plans. Despite being publicly financed, the intricacy of the funding structure for the new downtown sports arena apparently has provided a means for the project to opt out of the program. It is unfortunate that such a potentially significant project has decided not to capitalize on the value that can be added to it by integrating public art into the program. Doing so in such a high profile location would do much to bring the community closer to balancing its entertainment and cultural needs.

Jim Lutz

Jim Lutz is an assistant professor of architecture and the history of architecture at the University of Memphis.

Editors note: The Acconci piece is one of the works commissioned by UAC for the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts.

Christopher Cook: against the grain
March 13–April 17, 2004
Opening reception Friday, March 12, 5-7:30 p.m.

Several years ago I read an article by the Italian designer Massimo Vignelli in which he shared his perception of the differences in the aesthetic sensibilities found in his native country and the United States. Vignelli, who has lived and worked here and abroad, succinctly summarized his thoughts by stating, “Italians suffer from design indigestion, Americans suffer from design starvation.” His words have stayed with me. His statement characterizes a fundamental difference in the levels of aesthetic consciousness in the two cultures that I believe can be extended beyond the consideration of design issues into the broader realm of art. We don’t need Vignelli’s analogy to remind us of Italy’s age-old appetite for the arts. While the aesthetic insatiability he alludes to tells one part of the story, it is the implications of the second half of his statement that should be of particular concern for those of us in this country. The fast-food ethos of the American public when applied to issues of art and design has produced a society bloated but largely malnourished with respect to visual culture. In this regard (as fundamental issues have negatively impacted the way the general public responds to matters of art and design in this country.

The first of these points is the issue of accessibility. Not just in Italy, but in numerous cultures, there is the long-held tradition of weaving art and design into the fabric of everyday life. Following this paradigm, art is frequently intended to be encountered and experienced in streets and public places on a daily basis. In this country, however, we seem to have adopted the notion that art belongs almost exclusively in institutions, that for the most part it is a fragile thing that is properly considered only in hushed settings. This supposition has contributed to public red Hispan about what art can contribute to public life, largely because they have so seldom encountered it in a direct manner.

The second point separating our culture from some other societies with respect to art and design is our apparent reluctance, or perhaps inability, to engage in thoughtful framed public dialogue on the subject. What exists in some other cultures as an on-going discussion between artist and audience is here largely conducted as a monologue. There is a very limited precedent here for critical discourse occurring at the popular level. In Vignelli’s homeland on the other hand, forming and expressing an informed opinion is certainly not limited to the cognoscenti. As funding for all kinds of art related matters continues to be cut from education budgets in the U.S., the prospects for developing a broad-based audience that can engage in an informed, dialectical would seem to be diminishing.

How does a community then begin to address these situations, to make art more accessible to a wider audience and to help provide a basis for thoughtful and informed criticism? It was questions such as these that prompted the local government to form the UrbanArt Commission in 1997. For the past seven years, it has been the UAC’s mission to promote the development of public art in Memphis and Shelby County.
The opening of the exhibition US Design 1975-2000 at Memphis Brooks Museum of Art on December 7th was celebrated with a lecture by Terence Riley, the Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Design at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Architecture since 1992. Unlike Johnson, who served as the museum’s first curator of design before becoming an architect, Riley brought to the position experience in drafting rooms, museums and academic groves. At MoMA, he has organized definitive shows with prize-winning catalogs on Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright and the International Style and is currently busy preparing an exhibition on the design of tall buildings.

Riley’s breadth of vision has helped the museum to steer itself in generating concepts to guide MoMA’s current renovation and expansion. In his research, as in his lecture, he surveyed the history of museum design by asking questions like: “What is a museum?” and “How can architecture and museums intersect?” In the beginning, museums did not require such fundamental questions. After the French Revolution, the royal palaces known as the Louvre became the first public museum without spending money on a building or on the acquisition of art. When museums began to be designed in the 19th Century, they were usually neutral classical shells inside which the art, often antique, was allowed to assume the dominant role. Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s Altes Museum in Berlin (completed 1830) is an example.

In the twentieth century, art museum buildings acquired a new importance as monuments, and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (completed 1959) in New York marks the change. Since 1970 over 600 museums have been designed, each responding to a different set of requirements. Museums function today like cathedrals did in an earlier age. Every town has one and hopes it expresses the best the community has to offer. After the Guggenheim, Robert A.M. Stern asserted, “That was the art in the museum, if the building itself isn’t thrilling.”

Museums are in a moment of redefinition, Riley believes. While museums designed since the mid-20th Century have allowed major architects artistic license, resulting in remarkable individuality and experimentation, he asks, “Do we want museums that are themselves works of art or museums that are neutral containers allowing the art inside to be the focus?”

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Riley concludes that the museum should not be architecture-less, but that the test of a good museum design must be, “How does it make us feel about the art?” As an example, Riley suggests that Santiago Calatrava’s extension to the Milwaukee Art Museum is a disappointment if we must view it as sculpture, whereas, he believes, a proper balance is achieved in Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, a beautiful form inside which monumental sculpture is quite comfortable. At MoMA, new construction has been necessary several times. During its first ten years, it was in temporary quarters. In 1939, Edward Durrell Stone and Philip Goodwin designed a new home for the museum at 11 West 53rd Street — a structure regarded today as the first public International Style building in the U.S. In 1953, Philip Johnson, a major advocate of the International Style, added two new spaces, a wing to the west and the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Court. In 1984, Cesar Pelli designed a 53-story tower east of the 1939 building. Six new floors for the museum were included, the balance of the space is residential, providing revenue for museum operations.

To design the current renovation and expansion, MoMA chose a conservative Japanese architect who is relatively unknown in the U.S. Yoshio Taniguchi graduated from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design in 1964. In the 1990s he designed stunningly serene museums for modern and contemporary art in Nagano City, Mongolia, and Toyota City, Japan. Taniguchi brings to this job a track record that matches the criteria established for the enlarged and renovated MoMA, it will be minimal but not architecture-less. Exhibition spaces will retain the intimacy that MoMA is known for. Its original galleries were reserved in scale to accommodate Post-expressionist sound paintings — the modern art of the time. MoMA will remain a space in which to be experienced at a slow pace (no moving sidewalks). The architecture will be marked by finely tuned proportions and exquisite craftsmanship. The transparent curtain wall overlooking the sculpture court, for example, requires enormous glass panes that can be fabricated only in Germany.

We will have to wait until the end of this year to see the new MoMA and evaluate whether Riley’s questions and answers have contributed a successful balance between the museum’s famous collections and exhibitions and a signature work of architecture.

Jim Ramsey
Jim Ramsey teaches courses on the history of art and design at Memphis College of Art and the University of Memphis.

Jim Ramsey teaches courses on the history of art and design at Memphis College of Art and the University of Memphis.
Miller Explains Four Design Trends

Dee H. Miller explains four design trends as part of a lively lecture on new directions in design by R. Craig Miller.

The first trend Miller identifies was initiated at the end of the 1990s by Robert Venturi, who became a catalyst for a new way of thinking about design. He had grown up in Philadelphia, the city of Frank Furness and Louis Kahn, and at the American Academy in Rome. His seminal textbook, Learning from Las Vegas, delineated the lessons of the vernacular, “We look back to go forward,” and the lessons of the modern, “Innovators like Charles Eames, George Nelson and the Herman Miller firm, new materials and technologies, many of which had been generated by the war effort, were harnessed to provide “good design for the masses” with a focus on domestic needs.

Between 1968 and 1975, dramatic changes in the world of design paralleled a series of upheavals in society, including the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and the war in Viet Nam. During that period, Eero Saarinen died, Florence Knoll retired and Eames formed other media. Many and pop design companies failed. But design became big business, and the residential market was replaced by a growing business market seeking office systems and ergonomic chairs. Thus became the focus of innovation, and Sears was producing new products.

This period of transition has been described as a spiritual crisis akin to which Design sold out to the Corporation. The first trend Miller identifies was that the 1990s by Robert Venturi, who became a catalyst for a new way of thinking about design. He had grown up in Philadelphia, the city of Frank Furness and Louis Kahn, and at the American Academy in Rome. His seminal textbook, Learning from Las Vegas, delineated the lessons of the vernacular, “We look back to go forward,” and the lessons of the modern, “Innovators like Charles Eames, George Nelson and the Herman Miller firm, new materials and technologies, many of which had been generated by the war effort, were harnessed to provide “good design for the masses” with a focus on domestic needs.

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Exhibitions like Playthings are too common. Work in the same vein can be seen each month in art publications and galleries from coast to coast. It consists of artists exploring their (and presumably our) childhood, strip mining the collective inner child and serving him up in the most accessible way possible by vague gallery literature infused with cultural buzz words like “icon.”

Beth Edwards’ work falls easily into this category. Her version of the still life presents toys, dolls and children’s games as we have seen them too often. All are closely cropped, a device that seeks to lend importance to objects that often go overlooked in the hustle and bustle of today’s adult world. But that’s just it! In today’s “adult” world, these toys are anything but overlooked. With people bidding hundreds of dollars for old toys off E-bay and a fan club devoted to every possible doll or board game, society has promoted these discarded baubles to icon status making Edwards’ statement redundant. In fact, if pop culture had not idolized these objects, most artists depicting them would never have thought to do it.

On a technical level, it’s hard to find fault with Edwards. The images are well painted. Each shadow cast across a doll’s chubby cheek or log in a Lincoln Log house is exactly rendered. In “Doll House I,” the head and shoulders of a chipmunk–looking fellow are magnified; the brilliant blue of his bow tie contrasts luminously with the goldish background. To one side, shadows crisscross against the shallow backboard alluding to an artificial light source à la Pearls and. Only in “Doll House II” does Edwards break with this rigid technique. Here the contents of the playhouse window box are a blob of green leafiness and flower buds.

A captivating palette and impressive technical ability aside, it would be nice at this stage in her career to see Edwards tackle a subject with more gravity. If playthings do represent a weighty subject for Edwards, the work would be more satisfying if it gave some hint why this is so. As it is, Edwards went to a great deal of time and effort to present well crafted, beautifully colored, closely cropped toys.

Paul Behnke

Paul Behnke is a Memphis painter and writer.


