



NANCY MITCHNICK
October 16 – November 22, 2003

“She understands very well the emotional tug of her subjects: dresses, dogs, landscapes, and quirky narratives; but the experience of these paintings is also about color, pattern, flatness, weird points of view - things that have to do with painting and its problems.”

— Polly Apfelbaum
Exhibition Curator

When artist Polly Apfelbaum was asked to select an artist for exhibition at CUE, one artist, whose work she had seen during the 80's, lingered in her mind. Recalling Nancy Mitchnick's wonderful sense of casualness and insistent visuality, Apfelbaum felt Mitchnick's latest work embodied true openness to experimentation and definitely qualified her as a new discovery. An oil painter throughout her career, Mitchnick was instrumental in the founding and development of the Cal Arts studio program under John Baldessari. Now at Harvard, she decided it was time to further explore the immediacy and directness of her oeuvre. As an artist who avoided “the feminine” for most of her life, finally, after fifty, she was willing to acknowledge and ready to convey her own vulnerability through new work. *100 Dresses*, a book from her childhood about a girl who wore the same dress to school everyday would serve as her catalyst. This story of alienation, and later, of vindication resonated for Nancy, and with a sense of irony she began to emulate the little girl in the story, and to render 100 dresses on paper. Hence, *100 Dresses* gradually evolved from a group of studies into a sequential project of, as she describes it, “excessive proportions.”

Although usually non hierarchical in her approach, Mitchnick began methodically choosing a different dress for each subject. Using dresses primarily bought at the Beverly Hills Hadassah thrift shop, Mitchnick would dress her subjects, whether man or woman, young or old, familiar or unfamiliar, in locations that would help her to convey the immediacy of both identity and context. She did make a few exceptions, a chef posed in his apron with work boots, while a fellow dog owner opted for a bathrobe accented with Dalmatian spots; a kilt for a carpenter would suffice; while judiciary robes and academic gowns were also options.

Save for two, each work in the series has remained consistent in proportion with the next, and some abstract changes were made. Her boldest choice though, was painting in acrylic for the first time because of its ready-to-go ease. For Mitchnick, “art is the process and the pleasure of the making.”

Born in Detroit, MI in 1947, Nancy Mitchnick has exhibited her work in Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York since 1973. She was represented by Hirschl & Adler Modern, NY before moving to California in 1987. She has taught at the School of Visual Arts, NY, The California Institute for the Arts and is currently the Rudolph Arnheim Lecturer on Studio Arts at Harvard University, MA. Ms. Mitchnick has received the Guggenheim Fellowship, Pollock/Krasner Foundation Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts grant, and most recently the Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Award, Harvard University.

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CUE Art Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides deserving artists from around the country an opportunity for solo exhibition. Located in New York's Chelsea gallery district, the Foundation's 2,000 sq.ft. ground floor exhibition space affords these artists professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. CUE does not promote a particular school of artistic thought or practice; rather, the criteria for selection have been devised with the sole purpose in mind of exhibiting work by artists who have not had a solo exhibition in a commercial venue or have received minimal exposure in New York in the last ten years.

For additional information, please contact Jeremy Adams, Gallery Director / Sandhini Poddar, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, (212) 206-3583.

Upcoming exhibitions:

December 3 – January 24

Aristedes Logothetis: Selected by William Fagaly

James Cobb: Selected by Jimmy Santiago Baca

January 29 – March 6

David Storey: Selected by Trevor Winkfield

Adrian Esparza: Selected by Kate Bonansinga