

JEFF SCHLANGER

March 17 – April 23, 2005

“One form dissolves and another takes its place.
The flash of the spirit is witnessed and recorded here.”

- Ree Schonlau Kaneko, Exhibition Curator

Since the inception of the *musicWitness*® project in 1975, artist Jeff Schlanger has pictorially recorded some of the jazz world’s most legendary moments both in New York and abroad. Schlanger directly engages the improvising jazz artist at work, and transforms the listening experience into a lasting form of visual tribute through application of line, color, texture, and form in drawing, painting and ceramic sculpture.

Having a father who was a musician instilled within the artist a devotion to the craft at an early age. Throughout the late 50’s and 60’s Schlanger was introduced to jazz greats at Pep’s and the Showboat in Philadelphia. It was there that he began sketching and drawing. By the early 70’s, the jazz revolution taking place in musician-run New York concert spaces such as Studio Infinity and Sam Rivers’ Studio Rivbea became a source of inspiration for his work in the studio. During this period, few photographers were recording these and other innovative performances prompting him to begin vividly documenting these unforgettable moments as an active participant.

Listening while painting and sculpting allows the artist to directly tap into the improvisational and communal nature of the performance onstage. It is a highly demanding process in which all the senses and both hands must act in concert. Rather than focusing on the individual performance, Schlanger envisions the music as a live conversation shared between audience and musicians, and by translating the sheer kinetic energy produced onto paper or transfixing it in clay, he is able to lengthen the spirit and essence of a moment beyond the notes played.

Schlanger powerfully conveys movement and sound by lyrically outlining the form of musician and instrument. In employing lines, splashes, and drips of vibrant color throughout the composition, he



JAH Burmin' (Julius Hemphill), 1992
Wood fired ceramic stoneware
37 1/2" x 13 1/2" x 10". Photo © Jürg Rehbein

articulates the exchange of energy between the musicians on stage and the audience. Each hand responds to and translates color and rhythms onto paper through a process which Schlanger describes as “a dance of the hands with wet colors, a human-souled bodily seismograph of the energy, rhythms, and movements in the music.”

The improvisational nature of his work also provides him with an enormous fuel which enables him to sculpt in real time. Molding clay with his hands allows him to materialize form and movement and to further explore the expressive force of musician and instrument.

(Over please)



Roosters (James Ulmer & Jamaladeen Tacuma)
Made live at Vision 9 Festival NY, 25 May, 2004
Ink and acrylic on paper, 40" x 55"

“A big part of what’s inspiring,” says Schlanger, “is to follow musicians over time as they develop their articulation on their instruments and are freer to express the totality of who they are as they explore.” It is a developing totality which transcends the fleeting nature of the performance, and whose enormous relevance Schlanger has intensively documented for over thirty years.

Supported by **Joe & Beth Massoud**.

ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC PROGRAMS AT CUE:

Friday, March 18, 7-9pm: Musician Cooper Moore and Poet Michael Palmer

Friday, April 8, 7-9pm: Musicians William Parker and Oluyemi Thomas

Admission is free, but reservations are required. Please call 212 206-3583 for more information.

ARTIST’S BIO:

Born in New York City in 1937, Jeff Schlanger attended New York’s High School of Music & Art, studied under Maija Grotell at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and has created public art projects throughout his career on three interrelated subjects of Peace, Resistance to War, and Music.

Schlanger has been an active participant in the Arts for Art Vision Festivals held in New York over the last nine years, was featured as a painter in performance at Sons d’Hiver 2004 in Paris, and at the Tampere, Finland Jazz Happening 2000 – 2003, as well as a graphic artist in Canada at the Guelph Jazz Festival in 2002. Exhibitions from these projects have been held at San Francisco’s Intersection for the Arts, Webster University in St. Louis, MO, and the Hunterdon Museum of Art in Clinton, NJ. Events held at downtown New York performance spaces include four installations at the Leonard Street Knitting Factory on Houston Street; three permanent pictures on view at the new Knitting Factory; installations in the Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts; The Electric Circus; The Center; the Learning Alliance; the Improviser’s Collective, and CHARAS/El Bohio. Selections from *musicWitness*® have been commissioned as album covers by many leading musicians including Julius Hemphill, Muhal Richard Abrams & Roscoe Mitchell, Charles Gayle, William Parker, Billy Bang and Kidd Jordan. Articles on *musicWitness*® have appeared in Japan’s Morning magazine, Germany’s BeQ! and France’s Papiers Nicklés #2.

CHILE NEW YORK, a war resistance project composed of 400 ceramic Faces on a black wall, together with memorial Figures and monumental Jars was mounted at NY State College of Ceramics at Alfred in 1978 and later, at the City University of NY Graduate Center in 1980. Forty installations of works from the project have been displayed at public visual arts institutions across the USA including the Everson Museum in Syracuse, NY; Laumier Sculpture Park in St. Louis, MO; Bennington College in Bennington, VT; and the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC. For further information on the artist, please visit www.musicwitness.com.

ABOUT CUE:

CUE Art Foundation, a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, provides educational and professional development programs in the visual arts. These include student internships, stipends, exhibitions, public lectures, and an in-gallery studio program, all of which draw from the talents and experience of the diverse community of artists, art critics, and teachers that the Foundation brings together.

CUE's exhibition season gives unknown or under-recognized artists public and professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. The Advisory Council, an honorary group of artists and leading figures from the arts education, applied arts, art history, and literary communities, has the responsibility of selecting exhibition curators. The curators, in turn, nominate artists to exhibit at CUE, and continue to play a role throughout the exhibition process. Both the Advisory Council and the exhibition curators actively participate in the public lectures and educational programs.

For additional information, please contact Beatrice Wolert-Weese, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212 206-3583, or email beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org.