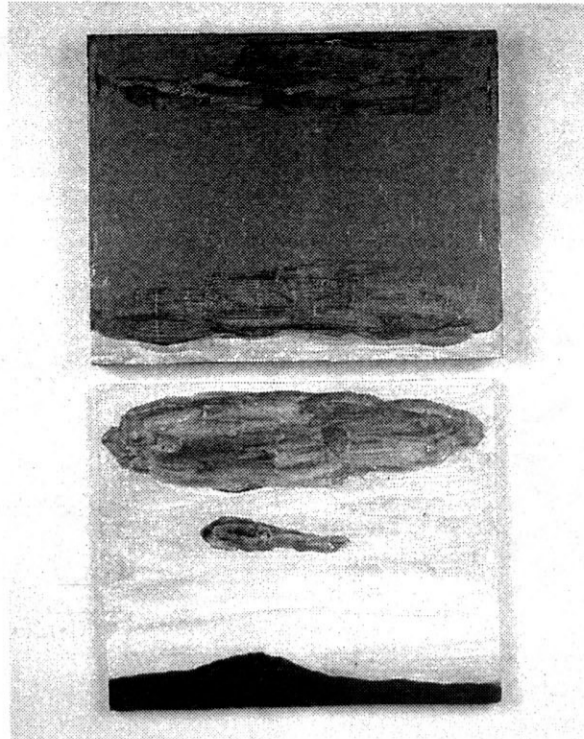
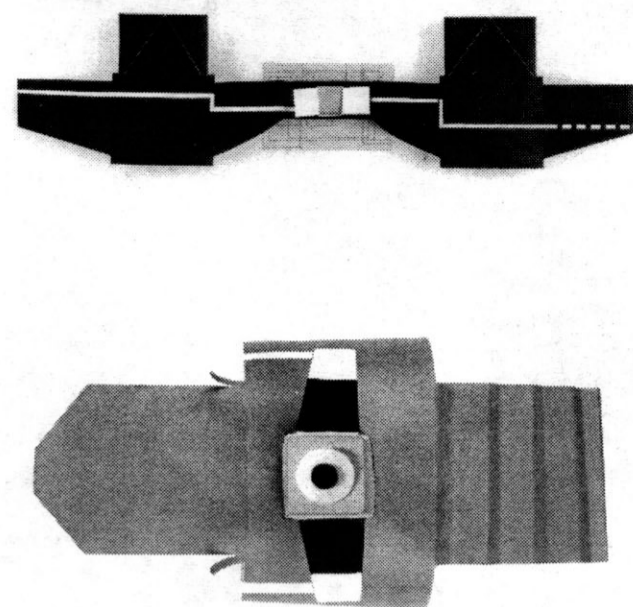




Susan Mastrangelo, *Head Shots*



Jean Feinberg, *Landscape*



Joan Grubin, *Transfer (top)* and *Light Catcher (bottom)*



Surprise Results

DEPARTURES, ARRIVALS & PIT-STOPS-

THREE ARTISTS AT A.D.D. GALLERY

by Jeanette Fintz

Every so often I stand in my studio and wonder, as most artists must every so often, how I came to be doing what I am, where I am. I contemplate the fork in the road taken or passed by, and the series of decisions in day-to-day life in art that have brought me to this point. Life affects art, art affects life.

The work by the three artists presently exhibiting at A.D.D. Gallery in Hudson represents the result of having taken different bends in the road and setting up camp at points along the way. I have known the work of Jean Feinberg and Susan Mastrangelo for many years. I am familiar with Joan Grubin's work only from her last show at A.D. D. But in each case, the work installed by each artist is a departure in some way from her previous body of work. The impetus for change is quite obvious in some respects; the outcome may be still quite startling in others. Whether the work here is fully realized or a stepping stone, for the most part its direction has the refreshing flavor of discovery.

Jean Feinberg and Susan Mastrangelo's respective installations have been informed by two very disparate and passionate avocations. Feinberg, an abstract painter, whose work maintains a considered geometry and awareness of architectural space, has been fully engaged by undertaking the design and remodeling of her home in East Taghanic. Mastrangelo, a sculptor who had her beginning as a painter, has always been keenly sensitive to interpersonal dynamics. She decided a number of years ago to expand her awareness of self and others by enrolling in serious acting classes in New York City.

Feinberg's subtly hued, rusticated, minimalist constructions are very much in line with the accomplished abstract canvases she has exhibited throughout her career. Her loose but thoughtful and spatial geometric style has always been concerned with planar color. The work in this show contains a palette of closely calibrated naturalistic hues worthy of Martha Stewart (not a put-down, please note). The difference is in the source of inspiration, which is the landscape in proximity to, [and] the play of light on surfaces in her cottage and studio. This project has been a labor of love (her words) for the past six years. In it she has brought to bear her respect for the natural texture of information in things found as they are. Slow to act, she's the kind of artist/designer who first "lives with it," contemplating the light and shadow patterns

and the intricate linear textures of peeling, painted wood.

Simmering to a slow boil, Feinberg eventually made decisions that couple refinement with earthiness. Her sensitivity to light, shape, and line transform a long slightly concave gray wood beam into the poetic equivalent of deep space in the piece "Evening Landscape" (oil/wood). Typical of most of the pieces in this show, there is a lot of thought and very actual paint on the surface of the found wooden fragment. Two precisely placed rectangular tones of light and dark green settling up next to each other on a panorama of neutral wood suggest a foreground of trees in light and shadow.

Like most transplanted New York artists, Feinberg has done her share of landscape studies. These reveal a romantic streak which is only evinced by her tender regard for found objects. The two actual landscape paintings in the exhibit are scraped down, connecting them texturally to the weathered wood constructions. The two-panel "Landscape" (10" x 12" each oil/wood) hung vertically also reveals her thinking out loud about space, possibly a prototype for the stacked planes she is using to create depth in many of the pieces. In the landscapes we see the same selective eye at work. In everything there is a bit of the city slicker's discernment along with a sensualist's pleasure in color, tactility, and directness. The most successful piece "42 whites" has a playfulness and a satisfying compression of sensibility. It stands against the wall on the gallery floor, making use of the real space of the room. This is typical of how this body of work was conceived: Most of the color changes and textures were discovered by observing light in the confines of her studio. As Feinberg says in her statement, she has carried bits of the city to the country and bits of country to the city, slowly making a life and art.

Joan Grubin's new work in the front gallery is a complete U-turn away from Feinberg's, as well as a turnabout from her own last show here at A.D. D. These fluorescent-hued cardboard wall constructions are a bold leap from the offwhite palette of the traditional still lives previously shown. The closely mixed neutrals had previously softened the only constant, her apparent interest in sharp planar geometry.

The new pieces suggest a variety of things at first viewing; semiflattened package designs, architectural models, and animated toys. On closer observation they start to resemble cameras, film projectors, or old-fashioned 3-D viewers. The fluorescent green and orange light appears to leak out both sides of the bifurcated constructions named "Know Thyself" and "Deuce." It also emanates from the front plane, which is sometimes an opening, often, a cylinder. Bright color animates the constructions and reflects complementary shadow up the wall behind them.

The electrified quality of color makes them seem alive, and the titles put forth the possibility that these are self-referential creations, mechanistic self-portraits, possibly in the act of perception or creation. The bifurcated structure suggests both the split brain as well as binocular vision, resembling a head and brain. The work brings to mind the mechanistic geometry of Duchamp in spirit if not in appearance.

A long narrow piece resembling an airport terminal called "Transfer" suggests both the transfer of information between right and left brain as well as Grubin's own journey of self-discovery. The work as a whole is long on ambition and a bit short on the craftsmanship that would give it the polish that it deserves. Assistance from a technical fabricator would be a good investment. One of the most successful pieces, "Giza,"

uses fluorescent color and planar geometry to suggest deep and shallow spaces. The horizontal structure shows a series of triangular shapes as if caught in a viewfinder, with a gray field behind, implying infinite space. The piece retains mystery, providing just enough information. Is this work a pit stop for Grubin or an arrival? It is most definitely a big adventure.

The delightfully surprising grid installation of 100, 1 x 1 1/2-inch, sculpy clay heads by sculptor Susan Mastrangelo is an arrival. In this congregation of men, women young and old, each is unique and often unnervingly moving. They really animate the wall as you scan the group, but each may surprise you by the emotions it conveys by just a few quick jabs of the thumb. Each head has a facial expression and hairdo all its own: dreadlocks, glasses, braids and bows. Mastrangelo says she worked on them very quickly at first to get the facial character and then dried, sanded, and painted each one later.

Mastrangelo disclosed that this piece was undertaken while she was going through a period of deep loss and emotional stress. One gets the feeling that while the heads are charming and funny at first, the obsession that they convey has the power of a ritual exorcism. Having known Susan and her work for many years, I can say that she is a student of human nature, with large sensitive antennae. Part of her own journey to self-realization was a couple of years attending those acting classes in New York, and I can't help but think that there is a more than indirect relationship between this work and that experience. In her statement, Susan says that part of her goal was to portray the resilience of the human spirit as well as to include the viewer in a community of shared individual experiences. The reactions to this piece prove that she has achieved that.

These macabre and humorous creations are a long way from the faceless cookie cutter figures that marched single file around in her early paintings. Mastrangelo's sculpture, as well painting, has had a figurative basis for many years. The early sculptures of wood and plaster had a muted muffled emotional quality, the gestures were stiff and restrained, especially in the long, narrow, totem pieces from the early 90s. This constraint was embraced as an acknowledged part of the work in child-sized figures that were mummified, literally wrapped and bound. The contrast makes the openness and expressiveness in the new work a revelation.

This piece retains very little of the darkness of her older work, initially, and there is evident joy in the directness of creating and communicating. But see Mastrangelo's online exhibition, done in collaboration with the poet Geoffrey O'Brien. His succinct poems written as captions for a group of the heads lends them voices that are self-mocking, poignant, and wise, punctuating the mordant humor latent in her work with pangs of recognition and sadness. Beards, hats and bows off to Susan.

For information about the artists please contact Jefferson Snider at A.D.D. Gallery, 22 Park Place Hudson, NY, open Friday - Sunday 12-5 pm 518-822-9763. Susan Mastrangelo's online exhibition is at "Heads In Limbo" at www.artretran.com

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