

zionistic testaments to self-expression and universal expressions. They take no final stand because they want to be everything at once.

Christopher Knowles: with Knowles, someone obviously confused the adjective "autistic" with "artistic." Knowles is a genuine naif, and perhaps stands in relation to Naïf Nouveau the way Henri Rousseau stood in relation to Cubism. I understand and sometimes respond to his whimsy and his uncorseted stream-of-unconsciousness, but frankly, prefer the untutored work of my 10-year old niece.

Lois Lane: Like Hurson, a borderline case. It is also possible to see her work as an extension of post-Minimalism — a return to personal content while maintaining a restriction of means. Often a ravishing collagist, her content is tiny and childlike. Fans. Hands. Human figures. Her work truly is on the boundary between the simple and the simple-minded.

Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt: his atavism isn't in the realm of simple or simple-minded pleasure, but in the iconology of the Eastern Orthodox Church, whose ritual relics he fashions out of foil and florist paper. Dazzling and childlike in their awe of sacerdotal pomp and circumstance (not to speak of his youthful exuberance in subverting religious convention — some of his artifacts are gilded rats), Lanigan-Schmidt is the most sophisticated of Naïf Nouveau because of his scale — he transforms entire rooms. He uses materials readily available to anyone and transforms them into something that borders on the realms of religion, art, childhood, and awe.

Thomas Lawson: from the limited examples of his work I saw on a visit to his studio (that wasn't a studio visit but a business meeting), in some respects Lawson is like Africano. His fig-

ures are isolated, floating on the canvas ground. I read somewhere that Lawson's aim was not to be a representational artist, but a misrepresentational artist. If that's his intention, he succeeds — because his work embodies all the troubling contradictions of Naïf Nouveau. Is he serious? Humorous? Ironic? It's not resolved, and it's due to his painting's lack of resolve. A poem about boredom need not be a boring poem. Likewise, a painting about unresolved tensions need not to be unresolved.

Sherrie Levine: her icons are deadpan, like much of Pop art. Many rely on audience recognition of their other, non-aesthetic, life to work. I like the idea of an art directly relating to its culture, but the scattered examples of Levine's work I've seen don't amount to social criticism, just a presentation of the lexicon of popular iconography. She may be the doyenne of a Pop revival.

Robert Longo: Like Levine and Brauntuch, Longo is interested in appropriating other people's images. He loves the movies, and many of his works isolate images from, say, Rohmer's *Perceval*, Fassbinder's *An American Soldier*, and Arthur Penn's *The Missouri Breaks*. Like Duchamp, Longo has an eye for a readymade. Like Cornell, a touch of the connoisseur. But he is interested in transformation, making these images in a way they couldn't be seen before, by making these images sculptural (casting them in aluminium), or making them mammoth-scale, movie-screen-size themselves. He chooses an image not for its iconic qualities (the way Wesselmann, Dali, Warhol and Rosenquist went for Marilyn Monroe), but for its compositional dynamic. His relief sculptures literally are busting out of their molds. He wants to fill the frame

with as much action as possible — and succeeds.

David Salle: Like Lawson, Salle's paintings are figures on a canvas. Woman chain-smoking, lounging, dreaming. The content of a Salle painting is leisure (and that's an important aspect of Lawson's, too), the form is layering images — painted and drawn. The attitude of the subjects is ennui. Salle's paintings are the visual equivalent of the *nouveau roman* — but suggestively elliptical, fraught with meaning, as though silence bespeaks infinite wisdom. This is a literary idea, not a visual one (although *nouveau romanistes* Marguerite Duras and Alain Robbe-Grillet have translated their novels into powerful visuals). Like Lawson, he makes the fatal mistake of imitative fallacy: he thinks a painting about ennui should induce it.

Jeff Way: Some people are neophilists — lovers of the new — others are nostalgics, lovers of the old. Way is both. He loves George Catlin with the same passion he reserves for proto-Punk icons (leopard-skin costume and maracas). He loves Fred Astaire and Hank Williams. His is the most garish palette of Naïf Nouveau, screaming primary colors — all in the same place at the same time — and he vacillates about whether there's time for normal considerations like figure/ground problems and the like. On some days, in some paintings, he'll argue that there's no solution because there's no problem. On other days, he'll complicate the issue by making an almost Fauve landscape (Fauve with primary colors, that is) with complicated spatial relations. His is style without the style. He wants to reject tradition and embrace it. Which, after all, might be the most conclusive thing one can say about Naïf Nouveau.

Carrie Rickey

CAROLE JEAN FEUERMAN

fragments — part I




The Wedding 1978. Resin, polychromed in oil; 8¼ x 15¼ x 10"

realist
sculptures
polychromed

cast
bronzes

multiples
in
bronze
&
pewter
finishes

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