

## NEW YORK REVIEWS

**JOHN TORREANO** (Hamilton): Torreano was back with more glitter and sparkle than the galleries have seen in a long while. His medium is distinctly kitschy: glass jewels employed in wood sculpture or in paintings that ape the galaxies. But Torreano's is a delightful, and somehow legitimate, use of the junky. *Diamanti* is a vertical solid wood form with rounded top and bottom, studded along its length with blue glass jewels that catch and reflect light, practically setting the piece ablaze. *Helix Nebula* has orange, red and yellow dots of pigment "inlaid" with the glass jewels, these arranged in swirling helix form against a black ground. In some of the works on canvas, the canvas is left unprimed. *Exploding Galaxy* features black dots of paint inlaid with clear jewels against a tannish background. Perhaps the most luscious works in the show were Torreano's renditions of the Christian cross. Each of these is a sublimely precious object in seemingly endless variations on the theme: an *Irish Cross* of orange and green and clear jewels on white silicon glue, a *Black Cross with Blue Jewels* or, simply, *Diamantes en la Cruz*. With his crosses, Torreano wittily revived the artisan-like aspects of creating religious artifacts, parodying veneration of the cross even as he celebrated it. Torreano's simultaneous camping and reveling in glitter, however, never goes beyond the boundaries of taste. Behind all the shimmer is a sensibility that truly values the sensational, seeing paradigms of the beautiful in the vulgar. It is a sensibility that bears further watching.

**VERNON FISHER** (Barbara Gladstone): Fisher is a currently "hot" artist, having appeared, over the past year, in the Whitney Biennial, the New Museum's "Investigations" show and in "19 Artists—Emergent Americans" at the Guggenheim. His latest show gave further proof of his fashionableness; works included were all of the art-and-language-investigation variety, and all were suitably difficult to decipher. *Albino*, for instance, features a printed story about a man seeing an albino on the street and accidentally kicking a stone against her foot, this set against a photograph of a blue and white sky as "seen" through the eyes of an albino, with a small, empty white canvas next to this and, to the left, the gallery wall emblazoned with black and blue stars forming the constellations of Leo, Orion and, against all scientific reason, a rabbit. *Show and Tell* consists of a small blackboard dappled with white paint with the word "snow" scrawled on it, a photo blowup of two men holding up a catch of fish with the story of a little girl who tore up Kleenex to produce snow during show-and-tell, and a cutout of comic-strip character Nancy's Aunt Fritzie to the right. Cryptic these works certainly are; the fun—and the



John Torreano, *Cruciform with Red Marks*, 1981, mixed media on wood. Hamilton.

esthetic experience—of it all was in trying to read meanings into the assorted components of the work, such as the all-white galaxy and empty white canvas of *Albino*, or the leitmotiv of snow in *Show and Tell*. Sometimes meanings were plain, but nonetheless elusive, as in *Snow Dream*, in which a late snow in Texas is described as being like a "transparent jellyfish," this printed against a picture of a jellyfish-like parachute opening around a man. Perhaps the most amusing, and easiest, work in the show was *Pollock*, a picture of the sea alongside a Pollock splash painting with a story written out in splashes about Pollock peeing into a fireplace and a woman not being able to do so, with a Duchampian urinal placed on the wall alongside. Here the element of dumb humor that is implicit in all of Fisher's work was made explicit. Whatever their meanings—and they are myriad—Fisher's excursions into the wonderful world of semiotics are engagingly insular and aggressively inscrutable. A series of drawings—of jungles, parachuting soldiers, planes and Nancy—nicely echoed the obsessions.

**LUISE KAISH** (Stacmpfli): Kaish is a collagist of considerable sensibility, if not always depth. Her technique remains the same throughout her work: various cut and torn squares and rectangles of canvas are laid down, complete with stray threads; over the amorphously geometric structure the artist applies paint, impastoed white and delicately brushed shades of orange, black and purple. An air of quiet mystery pervades a work like *Mistaya*; others are more expressive, if not expressionist, such as *Storm II* and *Storm III*, with their bold uses of blues and blacks seeming to fly off the canvas. The title of one of the series in the show, "Layers and Levels," would seem

to be a good indication of the spirit of all the work, which is very involved with nuance and painterly suggestion, sometimes giving the work a near-invisible quality. This, if anything, was the drawback of the show: all the subtlety became, somehow, trying, with the continual triumph of sensitivity over expression finally grating. Perhaps the most successful work was *Burntworks V*, a relatively large, orderly succession of rectangular canvas forms with a lightly burnt circular form at the center and areas burnt out along the edges. The burning device lent the work a dynamism lacking in some of the smaller, more cultured collages.

**CHERYL GOLDSLEGER, DONALD SHAMBROOM** (Bertha Urdang): "Exteriors/Interiors" was the title of this joint exhibition. Goldsleger's works are all of a piece: she draws overhead views of interlocking rooms or spaces occupied by folding chairs, tables and, here and there, staircases. These elements are seen beneath a gridwork of faintly traced vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines, out of which gridwork the other elements seem to take shape. Here Goldsleger combines the geometric and the surreal to produce interesting architectural fantasies—like something done by a Piranesi with a fondness for folding chairs. Shambroom's works are also architectural fantasies: *Three Vestibules* features three mosquelike entrances with arched doorways revealing staircases and interiors within; *Four Exploratory Excavations* is composed of four oblong forms cut into the paper, revealing elaborately penciled interiors complete with false entranceways, false windows and walls decorated with every sort of design device, from dots and inlaid triangles to more rectangular textures. Shambroom would seem to have learned something from the architectural caprices of Escher, but his taste is better. At no point do we get a feeling of surrealism for surrealism's sake; rather his fantasies are self-contained, even hermetic, explorations of medieval-looking spaces that never were but might be, given the right imagination and talent—that is, Shambroom's.

**THE FIRST ENERGIST DRAWING SHOW** (Stefanotti): Gallery owner Robert Stefanotti and guest curator-critic Ronny Cohen are to be congratulated for even having attempted this show, which sought to bring together work by a disparate group of artists who fulfill Cohen's definition of a new style she sees emerging called energism. "Energist drawings display an active, aggressive, and outer-directed attitude towards viewer and surroundings," she informs us. "Energist drawings are boldly specific expressions and high profile images that . . . aim to communicate information as form and content immediately." There were 22 artists in all; space permits detailing only some of the highlights.