ABSTRACT

PAINTINGS

PERFORMANCE/MASKS

JUNE 3 – JULY 10, 1993

TONY BECHARA CARMEN HERRERA TOM MURRIN MAC WELLS

ARTISTS SPACE, NEW YORK
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 1983 Artists Space initiated a series of special exhibitions with the support of The Mark Rothko Foundation. Through what was then an informal arrangement between the two institutions Artists Space was able to present, on an annual basis, the work of serious artists with considerable experience in their chosen field who had not received the public recognition warranted by their work. In 1988, the Mark Rothko Foundation awarded a grant to Artists Space which will enable us to continue this series annually, through the end of this century.

Painters Tony Bechara, Carmen Herrera and Mac Wells, and performance artist Tom Murrin are each featured with comprehensive presentations of their recent work, as well as in the case of Tom Murrin, a series of public performances. While this exhibition is not thematic, these artists do share an obsession with color, a fascination with abstraction and a directness in their presentation. In addition, each artist has evolved a very specific, uniquely personal formal vocabulary. Herrera’s geometric abstractions successfully play off rigidity of form with colorist ebullience; Bechara’s obsessively sober black and white grid-based paintings softly speak of an understanding of the possibility of riotous color, a tone which is beautifully underscored by the small mosaics in the exhibition; Well’s fields of color float gloriously within thinly disguised rigid structures, as if hovering above and within the picture plane; and Murrin’s masks, while sharing the painters concern for color and form, create a wonderful counterpoint to the formalism of the other artists, as they admit elements of figuration which suggest representation.

The depth and commitment, as well as the level of artistic achievement of these four artists is indeed inspirational, and developing the exhibition with them has been a true joy. For this, and the opportunity to present their work, I would like to thank Tony Bechara, Carmen Herrera, Tom Murrin and Mac Wells. Additionally, I would like to thank the Mark Rothko Foundation for their farsighted support of these exhibitions.

I would also like to thank Gary Nickard for his assistance in selecting works and coordinating all aspects of this exhibition and catalogue, as well as the rest of the Artists Space staff for their continuing and invaluable support and assistance. This exhibition has been sponsored by the Mark Rothko Foundation.

Carlos Gutierrez-Solana
Artistic and Executive Director
TONY BECHARA

BIOGRAPHY
Studied at the University of Paris, Sorbonne, Paris, France; New York University, Graduate School of International Relations, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY; and the Georgetown University School of Law, Washington, DC.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
1989 Alternative Museum, New York, NY
1985 El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY
1984 Georgetown Artists Space, Washington, DC
1982 Gallery Yves Arman, New York, NY
1980 Bild & Rahmen Gallery, Munich, Germany
1979 Cayman Gallery, New York, NY
1979 Apollo Gallery Die Insel, Munich, Germany

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
1992 Museo Caetano, Puerto Rico
1990 A Force of Repetition, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ
1990 Gallery Marrozzini, San Juan, Puerto Rico
1988 Geometry and Structure, Robeson Center Gallery, Rutgers University, NJ
1988 Miraf, Los Angeles Municipal Museum, Los Angeles, CA
1987 Arte Abstracto, Museo de la Universidad, San Juan, PR
1986 Art, New York, Sneed Gallery, Rockford, IL
1985 Art of the 1970's & 80's, Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, CT
1983 Surfaces, Creiger Sesen, Boston, MA
1981 Patterns & Systems, Yellowstone Art Center, Billings, MT
1980 Recent Directions, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
1980 Shaped Field; Eccentric Format, PS1, Queens, NY
1980 Dialects, Franklin Furnace, New York, NY
1979 Latin American Painters, Queens Museum, NY
1979 Fifteen New Talents, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT
CARMEN HERRERA

BIOGRAPHY
Carmen Herrera was born in Habana, Cuba, and lived and worked in Paris, France from 1948 through 1953. She has lived and worked in New York City since 1954. Ms. Herrera studied with J.F. Edelman, the director of the Academy of San Alejandro, and she studied painting and art history at Marymount College, Paris, France. In addition she has studied architecture at Habana University.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
1992 Duo Geo, Jardite Galleries, New York, NY
1988 Rastovski Gallery, New York, NY
1987 Rastovski Gallery, New York, NY
1984 Carmen Herrera Retrospective Exhibition, Alternative Museum, New York, NY
1965 Cisneros Gallery, New York, NY
1963 Trabia Gallery, New York, NY
1956 Galeria SudAmericana, New York, NY
1953 Eglington Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
1989 The Latin American Spirit, Bronx Museum of the Arts, NY
1987 Outside Cuba, Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
1986 Two Minimalists Four Decades Apart: Carmen Herrera—Elizabeth Poverono, Rastovski Gallery, New York, NY
1981 The Big Picture, Major Paintings, Buecker and Harpsichords, New York, NY
1974 Purism in New York, Buecker and Harpsichords, New York, NY
1968 Five Latin American Artists at Work in New York, Center for Inter-American Relations, New York, NY
1965 New York Cuban Group, Cisneros Gallery, New York, NY
1962 Geometric Painting, Classic and Romantic, Jerrold Morris International Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1953 Quelques Femmes Peintres, Galerie Olga Bogroff, Paris, France
1951 Art Cubain Contemporain, Musée d’Art Modern, Paris, France
TOM MURRIN/ALIEN COMIC

BIOGRAPHY
Alien Comic (aka Tom Murrin) began performing in Seattle in 1974 with Para Trupe, toured the USA, Canada & Europe with Johanna Went, and performed solo around the world in 1977-78. He has been performing in New York City venues since 1978.

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

1992  Full Moon Show, PS122, New York, NY
Fashions for Defense, Walker’s Point Art Center for the Arts, Milwaukee, WI
Fashions for Defense, Green Room, Manchester, England
1991  Pope Dream, La Mama, New York, NY
Alien Postcard, XOXO Gallery, New York, NY
Full Moon Show, Highways, Los Angeles, CA
Full Moon Show, Sushi, San Diego, CA
1990  Getting Ready for Halloween, Cameo Theater, Miami Beach, FL
Halloween Show, La Mama, New York, NY
Cardboard City, Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY
April Fools Day Show, La Mama, New York, NY
Man with 1000 Faces, Highways, Los Angeles, CA
1989  By the Bay, Magic Theater, San Francisco, CA
Spring Fever, La Mama, New York, NY
Harvest Moon, Pyramid Arts Center, Rochester, NY
Urban Witchdoctor, PS122, New York, NY
1988  March Hare Brained, Hallwalls, Buffalo, NY
Detective Story Dream, Lightworks, Syracuse, NY
Election Day Show, Winter Garden, World Financial Center, New York, NY
1987  Alien Tabloid, L.A.C.E., Los Angeles, CA
Pope Dream, Franklin Furnace at Equitable Insurance, New York, NY
Spring has Sprung, Artists Space at Federal Hall, New York, NY
1986  Trash Dreams, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA
Hot Enough for Ya?, Creative Time at Central Park, New York, NY
3 Shows for Abe Lincoln, The Great Hall, Cooper Union, New York, NY
MAC WELLS

BIOGRAPHY
1948 BA Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
1949 Cooper Union, New York, NY

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
1992 Dwight Frederick Boyden Gallery, St. Mary's College of Maryland
1981 SS Mercer Gallery, New York, NY
1979 Landmark Gallery, New York, NY
1975 Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, NY
1972 Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
1970 Max Hutchinson Gallery, New York, NY
1967 A.M. Sachs Gallery, New York, NY
1966 Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
1963 Aegea Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
1993 Faculty Artists Exhibition, Hunter College Art Gallery, New York, NY
1992 Persistence of Abstraction, Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, KS
1991 Physicality, Hunter College Art Gallery, New York, NY
1986 Art From CUNY: Approaches to Abstraction, University of Shanghai, China
1985 50th Anniversary of American Abstract Artists, Bronx Museum, NY
1985 Works on Paper, Arbitrage Gallery, New York, NY
1983 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC
1982 American Abstract Artists, New York City Gallery, New York, NY
1979 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, NY
1976 Maine State Museum, Augusta, ME
1972 Paintings on Paper, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson NY
1971 The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, OH
Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA
ILLUSTRATIONS

Dimensions are in inches. Height precedes width. All works are lent by the artists.

TONY BECHARA

PAGE 3:
BLIZZARD (detail)
1993
acrylic on linen
50 x 50

PAGE 5:
LA FENICE
1993
glass mosaics, epoxy, wood
16 x 8

PAGE 6:
CIRCLE
1993
cement, glass, canvas
20 x 20

Photos: Craig Chesek

CARMEN HERRERA

PAGE 7:
GREEN’S WAY
1988
acrylic on canvas
42 x 42

PAGE 9:
P. M.
1990
acrylic on canvas
42 x 42

PAGE 10:
SOME BLUE, SOME WHITE
1992
acrylic on canvas
42 x 42

Photos: John Gregory

TOM MURRIN/ALIEN COMIC

PAGE 11:
SKULL WITH RED KNICKERS
1988
acrylic on cardboard with lingerie
28 x 12

PAGE 13:
JOHANNA WENT
1985
14 3/4 x 20
acrylic on foam core
Photos: Patty Wallace

PAGE 14:
URBAN WARRIOR
1986
mixed media
life sized
Photo: John Eder

MAC WELLS

PAGE 15:
KHAGA (DETAIL)
1985
acrylic on canvas
72 x 120

PAGE 17:
TIRTHA
1980
acrylic on canvas
24 x 20

PAGE 18:
VANASPATI
1990
acrylic on canvas
60 x 100

Photos: Patty Wallace

CREDITS
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