

UPWARDS

Lane Banks, Rob Caslin, Thomas Glassford, Etty Horowitz,
Seth Kaufman, Margo Sawyer and Emi Winter

Curated by Christine Bisetto
University of Dallas Haggerty Gallery
January 31 - February 26, 2003

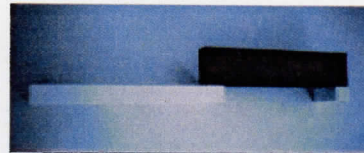
According to the GAP, "stripes are in" in 2003 but these works are not mere regurgitations of mass marketing but products of artists working toward a personal vision; where stripes and color become more than a kitsch fashion statement. Although one cannot deny the decorative nature of the works upon first glance, the works present much more. While not all artists in *UPWARDS* use stripes, these artists have all embraced the common and mass-produced, transforming it into something unexpected with an elegant simplicity. Referencing the past movements of minimalism, op art and neo-geo, they also present sensuous surfaces that challenge the contemporary distinctions between sculpture and painting thus pushing them into the realm of present day art historical dialogue.

The color and texture of the works call the viewer to question physical versus optical space by pairing flat with raised, smooth with rough, and opaque with transparent. Etty Horowitz manipulates ribbon and wire into fragile objects that ripple through space while creating ephemeral shadows of delicate color resulting in challenges to the physicality of the actual object. The works of Lane Banks appear to defy gravity with massive blocks of black and white. It is through color, size and composition that an uneasy paradox is created for the spectator, as the blocks are actually hollow. Banks and Horowitz use the wall as the blank canvas on which to create, similar to the method of Margo Sawyer. Sawyer's colorful rectilinear shapes dance across the wall, creating objects the viewer wishes to play with and movements the viewer desires to mimic. Not all the works in *UPWARDS* so emphatically force the issue of physical space. Thomas Glassford, Rob Caslin, and Emi Winter work in a very shallow space, referencing the physical flatness of the surfaces on which they have chosen to work. These works cannot be confronted as flat images easily reproduced for mass consumption, but must be confronted as objects, examining texture, paint application, scale and both the visual and physical manipulation of space. The works taunt the onlooker by slowly drawing them into the subtle worlds these artists have created. Robert Caslin's works of oil enamel on medium density fiberboard appear as flat patterns from a distance but gradually reveal themselves as objects as one approaches them. Thomas Glassford's reflective pieces create an ambiguous flat space that upon closer examination undulate off the wall with an ever-changing visual that questions perception. However, the works of Emi Winter's play with this same illusion on a flat slick surface. Her pieces mimic the subtle roll of a lithograph plate with a fragile application of paint one desires to touch but dare not.

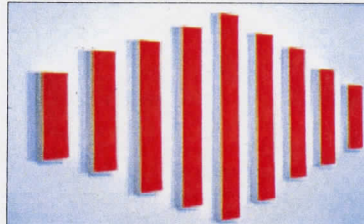
These artists force the viewers to analyze the creation process and not only ask "why?" but "how?" How are these massive blocks supported? How does the flat surface bend space so easily? How does an aluminum sheet become feather-light? How does the work constantly change in relation to the observer? How is the paint applied so seamlessly? Or how is the color virtually vibrating? The meticulous nature of each process is only slowly revealed. The viewer begins to imagine the artist's hand floating delicately over the surface with paint or using their entire upper body strength to sand, smooth or rip. This investigation introduces the significance of process, and serves to reinforce the "object" qualities of each piece. For example, Seth Kaufman's obsessive method of creating organic forms from discarded paint chips redefine contemporary notions of patience in our society based on instant gratification. All the artists, like Kaufman, give no quick or easy answers. They dare one – explore, inquire.

This collection of artists merge the past with questions for our modern society. Their objects' slick sophistication fit perfectly in the industrialized world to which we have become accustomed. With a progressive mastery of ordinary materials and the prevailing gallery space, these artists pit the simple against the complex. The physicality of stripes, colors and textures in these works create a variety of sensations; at times each is racing, growing, expanding, spiraling, receding, zipping, contemplating, or simply waiting.

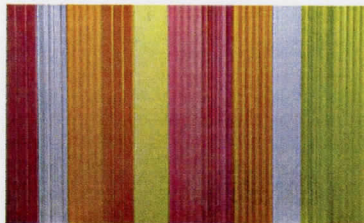
Guest Essayist David Maxwell
Visiting Assistant Professor of Art, Painting, University of Dallas, Irving, TX.



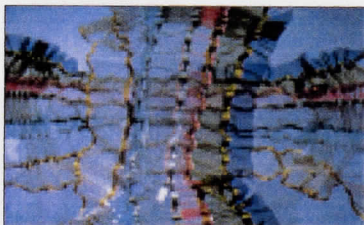
Lane Banks



Rob Caslin



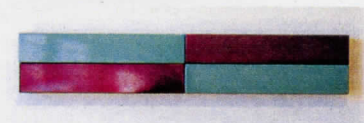
Thomas Glassford



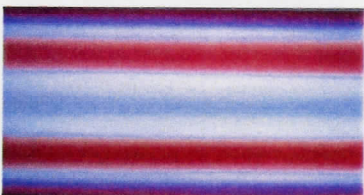
Etty Horowitz



Seth Kaufman



Margo Sawyer



Emi Winter