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The Abstract Expressionists in late thirties and early forties, argued over the exact nature of their work in the Eight Street Club and the Wardour Diner; was there a sympathy between abstraction and expression?. Did the Blavatsky inspired non-objective art of Kandinsky, Mondrian and others, with its theoretical nuances to poetic and arcane metaphors from Theosophy have a distinct correlation to expressionism as internal dialogues from Surrealism. These intellectual discourses led to the agreed terminology of Abstract Expressionism, rather than the obscure and often derogatory acceptance of reviewers spleen, as with Impressionism and Cubism in Paris. It is significant that the artists who debated these concepts of identity in those forums, were articulating their own idealised form, as a distinct contrast to the surrounding older modernist perceptions.

The paintings of what can also be genetically described as the New York School, espoused the last remnants of nineteenth century romanticism. The industrial revolution had achieved its ultimate apotheosis with the atom bomb and the diversity of art making reflected the eclectic nature of a society without the certainties of external order. This is reflected and articulated by internal dialogues, many of which were literary experiments which found novel expressions in the material exegesis of advertising. The sale of an imagined utopia as a household implement, replaced the older declaration of mans defeat of physical nature. The collages of post-modernism kitsch, rejected the sublime nature of individual internal revelation, for the multiple material accessibility of the mod con, its usual term, modern convenience, which also references the confidence trick, the illusion of material gain.

For some years Mary Theresa Keown has been formulating collected images through the process of applied sources from trivia, fashion magazines, and reproductions from art history. These works which correspond to her painterly images on canvas, have also a distinct nature in themselves, they reference the notations of Braque and Picasso, not as constructed Cubist collages, but as metaphors for a conceptual physicality.

The paintings have distilled their own relationship to these totemistic references, where sometimes splashes of paint integrate sources in an organic expression of the dual nature of seeing and collating. The nature of a painting practice which engages with ephemera both as sources and physical notations towards art making, embraces the modernist aspirations of painting, yet also seeks to occlude the very nature of such experiments. This contradiction, somehow reminds me of Hans Hoffman's push and pull, the physical and material nature of making an image which intrinsically disavows the elements of its molecular charge, yet seemingly as a plastic identity, interfaces with the dual nature of its correlation as an art work.

The recent body of work in this exhibition, explores multifaceted elements of the pictorial image with its historical and cultural references in post-modernism, with

aspects of the painted surface, commonly associated with abstraction, but intrinsic to the nature of classical painting. This seeming contradiction, also references her sources in collage and montage. The collective interpretation of eclectic imagery is seduced by the intense nature of apparently monochrome partners. The diptych as a mechanism, can be simply an extension of a painted surface on two panels, or it can reference its original nature as a book, a religious reliquary for meditation in medieval art. The distinct panels speak to each other, are confirmed by terms of reference which articulates the viewers perceived desires, yet embraces the dual nature of the visual space relationship to the eye, and the internal assumptions of the mind in such spatial experiences. The abstract Expressionist use of large format paintings, and the spatial meditations of Rothko, singularly reduce the oblique nature of multi-faceted images, by a rhythmic induction of the body into the emotive plane of the painted surface. The almost monochrome paintings of Frederic Thursz, have extracted the intensity of colour and emotion from such constructions, and singularly positioned the painted surface as an intensity of human experience. This emotive longing, as an often melancholic evocation of the human experience of art, induces as languor, yet fundamentally traces such sources to the origins of romanticism and the density of abstract experience. To combine these elements in a series of diptychs as Keown has done, has an anarchical vein of dyslexic orientation. We have the history of western art, the oblique references to traditional sources, and yet the paintings are in themselves tonal reliquaries of association and desire. Abstract extensions of an integrated image, where the obvious is obscured and the paint as a singular entity is the central focus of the work.

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