

Jennifer Bartlett's "False Spring: Spring," in a baked enamel silkscreen series, is included in the "New Work/New York" exhibition at Cal State L.A., which runs through Thursday.

Art

East Coast Meets West in 'New Work/New York'

BY HENRY J. SELDIS

● A revealing assemblage of work by emerging New York artists has been mounted by guest curator Michael Auping at the Fine Arts Gallery of Cal State Los Angeles. Surveying art being shown largely in New York's SoHo district, Auping's "New Work/New York" exhibits experimental artists of a wide range who are largely unfamiliar to us out here. The show continues through Thursday.

Claiming that our previous acquaintance of emerging New York artists has been limited to what has been offered us by a few commercial galleries "committed to exhibiting only work that has been thoroughly digested into the elite orthodoxy of the international art market," Auping asserts, exaggerating somewhat, that New York activity is represented in Los Angeles by basically the same small group of artists each year. But he is correct in emphasizing that when it comes to our acquaintance with New York's emerging artists, we have developed "an uncanny dependency on the professional art press for communication." His exhibition offers us a chance to directly experience a multiplicity of expressions produced by up-and-coming New York artists of his choice.

A by-product of his efforts has been a parallel show by little-known Los Angeles artists being displayed at the Museum of Modern-Art Penthouse Gallery. Meanwhile, six New Yorkers are being shown at the UC Santa Barbara Art Galleries through Nov. 7. They are Jake Berthot, Margo Magois, Lynton Welis, Jennifer Bartlett, Howard Buchwald and Rodney Rippis.

While some art world aficionados deplore the present state of contemporary art where no single approach is dominant, I am among those who welcome the long-overdue recognition of the pluralism that has always informed contemporary American art even when the fashion or fad system was in full swing through the promotional efforts of key dealers and curators.

A good many of these generally modestly scaled works do not seem to me to give a great deal of promise for the full emergence of their creators regardless what system of marketing and information dominates the art world. But there is sufficient stimulation and titillation here to demand serious attention to the expressions and explorations of most of the exhibition's participants.

Carefully calculated tensions are set up by Richard Francisco's wall piece created from balsa wood, string, nails and rice paper. Quite opposite in intent is Josef Fischer's "Hair Square #18" (spun from his own hair, which he apparently allows to grow long between less

egocentric and provocative endeavors). In contrast, there is a sense of vitality and topicality in Robert Mapelthorpe's photographic triptych of gallery owner Holly Solomon—he fulfills his intent of preserving three seconds of life.

In a rather fascinating perceptual exercise, Jud Nelson re-created the word "the" from the pages of the New York Times, drawing with graphite on cotton rag paper, challenging the viewer to detect the minute differences in each of the six drawings which make up his "Holos-New York Times Series 3," thus commenting on hardly noticed typographical inconsistencies found

nightmarish to the point of evoking aspects of primal scream therapy.

By joining hand-drawn and industrial patterns and allowing her textile "screens" to interact with the viewer through their transparencies, Tina Girouard introduces one of the lightest yet most convincing notes in this eclectic assemblage. In contrast, the very massiveness of Lucio Pozzi's "Level Group Paintings" brings an unaccustomed weightiness to his very personal minimalist concepts, although the surfaces of these paintings are exceedingly fragile.

Heraldic and mask-like, Ron Gorchov's canvas is a rather repelling image. Yet his phantasmagoric fantasy drawing (complete with script) is one of the most intriguing and multileveled contributions to the show.

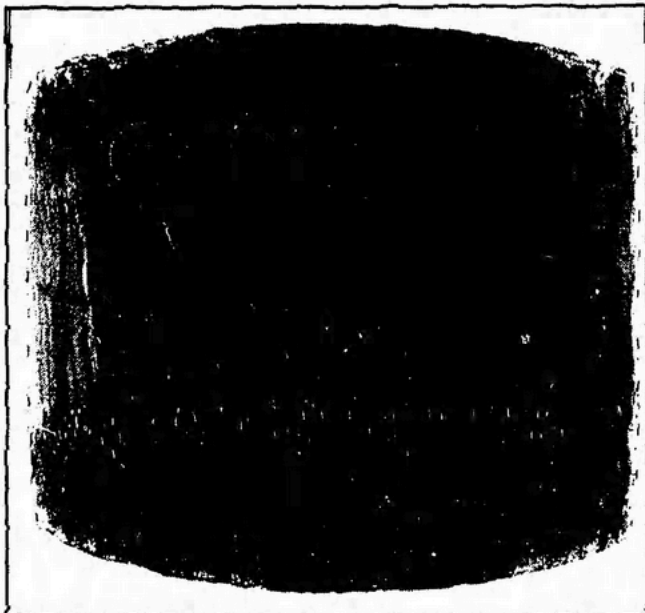
Among the artists here who are justifiably garnering a wide reputation is Jennifer Bartlett, whose baked enamel silkscreen series are evolved from an intricate series of grids and color variations that are truly astonishing. In a sharply contrasting manner, neo-constructivist influences can be found in the meticulous drawing of William Fares and the far looser handling of geometric forms in Elizabeth Murray's painting.

One of the exhibition's highlights comes with Susan Rothenberg's untitled acrylic and pencil painting in which the subject of a horse is carefully divided to hold the image in time and flat space. There is a double, silhouetted profile to the horse image which denies illusionism and relates to strictly abstract canons.

At least to this viewer, Roberta Allen's 18 negative boxes are negative, indeed, to the point of nihilism. Outside the gallery we are entertained by the imagination and imagery of Judy Pfaff's mixed-media installation in which the use of tinfoil plays a major part. Also shown are contributions by Ross Bleckner, Pinchas Cohen Gan, Marilyn Lenkowsky and Doug Sanderson.

It is well to quote from the exhibited protest by the radical, anticapitalist "Art and Language" group. In a manifesto titled "The Capitalist Art-eagle once more refeathers itself and flies off to California (a business trip)," the group concluded that "it's no surprise that M. Auping should end up sanctifying the bloody morass of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."

Auping's show does no such thing. On the contrary, the emerging artists he acquaints us with at CSLA often successfully challenge long-accepted aesthetic standards in order to advance fairly radical notions of their own, happily devoid of politics.



Ron Gorchov's "Untitled" is among the New York works in the Cal State L.A. show.

daily in mass-produced publications. Intricate problems of light and space are impressively solved by Gordon Hart's minimalist oils with their hairlines penetrating into the overall massiveness of his painting surfaces.

There is a Duchampian air to Chris Darton's "Part Profile," which skillfully and distinctively uses the wall itself as part of his basically gestural composition. In contrast to his sophistication we find Jon Borofsky's deliberately naive draftsmanship in rendering his dreams,