

Artists in Midcareer and Beyond Are Showing That Experience Matters

By HOLLAND COTTER

DON'T trust anyone over 30" was the street wisdom I grew up with. I still find that excellent advice. But my faith in youthful inspiration has been tested recently; by art, of all things, or rather by the art world's fixation on barely-out-of-school talent.

Not that my interest in new art has in any way diminished. It hasn't. Still, these days I find my attention drawn to the not-so-new, to artists who are in midcareer and beyond, sometimes far beyond. Many such artists are in evidence in galleries and museums this month, and I'll mention a handful below, among them a posthumous hero, a poet-turned-artist, an octogenarian debutante. They have one thing in common: their work has developed over time and maintained its presence for a number of years. In a fast-food culture, as capricious in its erasures as in its rewards, that's the vote of confidence that counts...

Among American abstract painters of a still earlier generation, Jack Youngerman, 80, deserves far more attention than he has received. In the 1950's, he lived at Coenties Slip in Lower Manhattan with Ellsworth Kelly and Agnes Martin and produced a body of gorgeous paintings. Suggesting hallucinatory flowers and eruptions of light, they exuded a brushy, European-style sensuousness that was out of favor at the time but looks fresh and attractive now. The 159 small paintings on paper in his current solo at Washburn include just such images, along with other more recent work, demonstrating the consistency and variety of this admirable artist's work over half a century...

So wisdom comes with age after all. And what can it tell young artists ready to dash out of school? Don't just do something; sit there. Art takes time. Let your brilliant career have a middle, and a late period, and an end. Let it be long.

Artists Only Better With Age: The Exhibitions

CARL ANDRE, Paula Cooper Gallery, 521 West 21st Street, Chelsea, (212) 255-1105 (through April 29).

'ANOTHER MODERNITY: WORKS ON PAPER BY UCHE OKEKE, the Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, Newark, (973) 596-6550; www.newarkmuseum.org (through July 20).

THOMAS BAYRLE, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 620 Greenwich Street, West Village, (212) 627-5258 (through April 29).

'FÉLIX GONZÁLEZ-TORRES: EARLY IMPRESSIONS, El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street, (212) 831-7272. www.elmuseo.org. (through May 21).

TAKESHI KAWASHIMA, Mitchell Alguas Gallery, 511 West 25th Street, Suite 206, Chelsea, (212) 242-6242 (through April 29).

SHERRIE LEVINE, Paula Cooper Gallery, 534 West 21st Street, Chelsea, (212) 255-1105 (through April 29).

MANUEL OCAMPO, Gray Kapernekas Gallery, 526 West 26th Street., Suite 814, Chelsea, (212) 462-4150 (through April 29).

JULES OLITSKI: 'THE 70'S, PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, Paul Kasmin Gallery, 293 10th Avenue, at 27th Street, Chelsea, (212) 563-4474 (through April 29).

FLORENCE PIERCE, Howard Scott Gallery, 529 West 20th Street, Chelsea, (646) 486-7004 (through May 20).

GARY SIMMONS, '1964, Bohem Foundation, 415 West 13th Street, Chelsea, (212) 414-4575 (through May 26).

ARLINGTON WEITHERS, AFP Galleries, 41 East 57th Street, Suite 702, Manhattan, (212) 230-1003 (through April 28).

JACK YOUNGERMAN, Washburn Gallery, 20 West 57th Street, Manhattan, (212) 397-6780 (through May 6).



Study/Blue, 1955, gouache and cut paper on paper