

en hangs from an easel that all but disappears, creating the slightly absurd effect of a crucified fowl. The bird's colors range from lavender and light and dark blue through green, russet, yellow and orange. The overall effect is quite henlike, although the brushstrokes make no attempt to mimic the shapes of feathers. They don't depict the chicken as much as create a convincing parallel for it.

Only three paintings break from a shallow figure/ground relation. In one, a doll in a commedia dell'arte costume hangs from a crossbar (apparently a window mullion). To the left are two jars, one of which holds a red chrysanthemum. Behind

the strangeness of objects to examine the strangeness of interactions of objects. It's a possibility to be relished.

—Vincent Katz

Bruce Dorfman at Reece

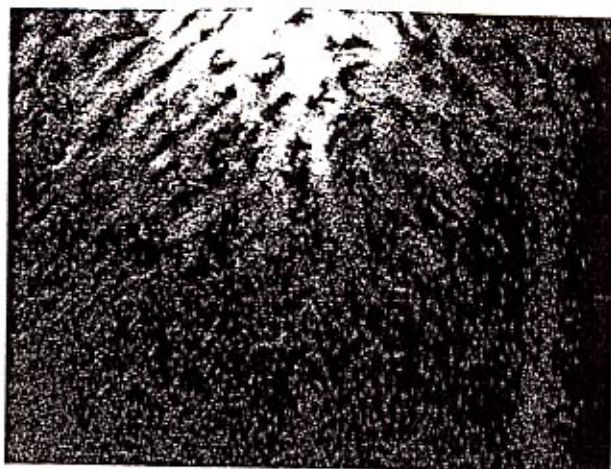
Bruce Dorfman takes bits of printed paper in English or other languages, scraps of wood and various cut or bent metal forms to make assemblage paintings. One thinks, of course, of Schwitters and Motherwell; Dorfman is just as devoted to the form, and his long concentration paid off handsomely in his latest, and most ambitious, show.

He has assemblage style down flat: for all its fixity, every element looks spontaneous, as if it had just come to hand and mind. All the improvisation feels right and creates a visual poetry. *Lorca's Green*—the hue is a burnished, spotty lime—is a 6-foot-tall work that includes horizontal bands of a lighter green toward the top, these seemingly holding in place otherwise wayward flat chunks of white. If Garcia Lorca (who began one of his best-known poems "Green, how I want you green") had a green, this could have been it, earthy and celestial, of nature and of the mind's eye.

Dorfman's colors run to pastels that are both delicate and dense. *Plum* achieves its fruitlike hue with near-invisible scumbling in light and dark shades of purple; at bot-

tom and midsection are two horizontal stripes of meaneat pink. At top are wood scraps lightly yet thoroughly touched by brown and black. More transcendent in tone is *Harpoon*, composed of blues that are somehow near cousins to rose. Scraps of beige wood and white papers slash down its center, with verticals of a very light maroon and a gray/blue to either side. Dorfman's powers of coloristic invention are pronounced, this time as the analogue of a pure expression.

There is a new versatility of size and format in this group of works, and a new sense of



Tod Wizon: *Flaming Rain*, 1998, acrylic on canvas, 18 by 24 inches; at Ramis Barquet.

artistry. If earlier work sometimes seemed creatively perfunctory—perhaps too easily read—there are now esthetic and expressive depths. A piece like the near-4-foot-tall *Pompeii* says much about this ground shift. In its simplicity—blue, ocher and white horizontal bands on a hot red ground, topped by a handsome streak of midnight blue—lies its versatility, as the eye travels from left to right and up and down with nowhere to rest amid the supreme jumble. All this is indicative of new outgoing dramatic strengths, as well as new internal vistas. —Gerrit Henry

Tod Wizon at Ramis Barquet

Throughout the 1970s and '80s, New York artist Tod Wizon painted imaginative landscapes made up of colorful, interpenetrating topographical formations. The land and water masses depicted were abstracted and stylized, yet still readable as landscape. As several critics noted at the time, the vibrant colors and striking compositions of these quasi-mystical works often recalled the tradition of American Romantic landscape painting à la Frederic Church. Since the early '90s, however, Wizon's canvases have become dramatically smaller and increasingly abstract. In the process, his work has lost some of its psychological resonance, though it has gained in mystery. His recent exhibition featured some 20 works from 1995-98.

Each of the paintings consists of tiny, wavy brushstrokes of complementary colors placed in

close proximity or atop one another. The result of this seemingly improvisational paint application is an allover, agitated, viscous surface. These densely packed canvases seem alive with wriggly forms resembling worms, birds, insects and various amoebas. Indeed, many of the paintings look like organisms viewed through a microscope's lens.

Wizon's titles are evocative and allusive, and it is only via their suggestions that one can begin to read the touches of color in terms of imagery. For instance, *Bluebirds* (1998) could be the depiction of a flock in spasmodic flight, flitting in countless directions simultaneously. It is a painting that captures the "feeling" of bluebirds without specifically representing them. Likewise, the orange brushstrokes in *Pyromancy* (1998) suggest flames. *Sailor* (1997) is not a portrait, but the insinuation of one: a white welter of paint overtakes smaller, brightly colored strokes. *Flaming Rain* (1998), one of the more beautiful works in the show, features orange-yellow strokes pummeling down from above, like a pack of dive-bombing fireflies.

—Maura Reilly

Charles Olson at Denise Bibro

Charles Olson's new, mid-to-large-scale acrylics on canvas and paper offer pleasures and mysteries for eye and imagination. A good six of them were titled *Ex Voto* and involved standing "altars," more than a little phallic, that mixed cruciform shapes with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* lights and colors.

Without explaining much of

Charles Olson: *Northern Sky*, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 7 by 5 feet; at Denise Bibro.



the doll, one can make out branchlike shapes and incremental linear curves in a sea of greens, indicating an exterior path into some woods. The doll is squarely in front of this scene, even though it shares several colors with the background. In the woods, bright oranges and pinks evince the dying light of an autumn afternoon.

The larger works, combining interior and exterior views, are complex compositions. They leave one wanting to know what would happen if Dunn jumped up a size again, shifting from her bemused wonder at