

Deaf Artists' Exhibit

***A Perspective of Deaf
Culture Through Art***

*at Northern Essex
Community College
Haverhill, MA*

September 1-30, 1993

Gallery Guide

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Introduction

How this exhibit came into being

In the fall of 1992, Jane Nunes, Director of Special Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, was thinking about what to do for a Deaf Awareness exhibit at Northern Essex Community College. Rather than scheduling "the usual stuff," such as demonstrations of TTYs and other devices used by Deaf people, she decided to do something radically different. She met with Arthur Signorelli, Director of Student Activities, and presented the concept of an art exhibition containing works by Deaf artists. Signorelli loved the idea and reserved gallery space for September, 1993. Ms. Nunes was given two months to find out how to contact Deaf artists.

At about the same time, Brenda Schertz, then studying at the Art Institute of Boston, was working on an independent study project to examine the theory of De'VIA, the DeafView/Image Art set forth in a manifesto created by a group of Deaf artists during Deaf Way, at Gallaudet in 1989. (See page 4 for a copy of this manifesto.) Brenda was to write a five-page paper and make a slide presentation of Deaf artists who create works related to the Deaf experience or culture.

Kathy Vesey, Director of the Gallaudet University Regional Center at NECC, who worked closely with Jane, knew Brenda from working with her on a separate project at DEAF, Inc. She loved the idea and realized that a meeting of these two women could lead to a fruitful partnership. That meeting led to the creation of the exhibit team and the show you are now seeing.

The goals of the exhibit

Jane Nunes wanted an exhibit that would illuminate the Deaf culture through a visual medium, accessible to both Deaf and hearing audiences. She felt that an art exhibit would be an ideal way to do this, and that it would in any case be superior to simply asking people to walk around tables laden with various devices. The fact that this exhibit includes works from eight different artists that will be displayed through the entire month of September

makes possible a much greater impact than could be obtained with the usual types of Deaf Awareness exhibits.

Brenda Schertz finds this exhibit the perfect culmination of her research project, and is delighted to be able to share her findings with as wide an audience as possible. Brenda, whose love of art is also shown in the ASL tours of various exhibits that she conducts for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, thinks that she would like nothing better than conducting such a tour of the works of Deaf artists.

The purpose of this Gallery Guide

Many nuances of the works included in this exhibit may be difficult to discern without knowledge of the issues and perceptions common to members of the Deaf community. This guide is intended to provide certain minimum information concerning the ways in which each work is relevant to the Deaf culture or experience.

People who are already knowledgeable about the Deaf culture may find this guide helpful in obtaining deeper insights into these works. No one, however, should consider the information presented here absolutely definitive: it is, rather, subjective material written by Brenda Schertz on the basis of information she obtained from a variety of sources, including the artists, and including direct quotations from many of these artists. Viewers of these works are encouraged to offer their own thoughts.

The De'VIA Manifesto

Deaf View/Image Art

De'VIA represents Deaf artists and perceptions based on their Deaf experiences. It uses formal art elements with the intention of expressing innate cultural or physical Deaf experience. These experiences may include Deaf metaphors, Deaf perspectives, and Deaf insight in relationship with the environment (both the natural world and Deaf cultural environment), spiritual and everyday life.

De'VIA can be identified by formal elements such as Deaf artists' possible tendency to use contrasting colors and values, intense colors, contrasting textures. It may also most often include a centralized focus, with exaggeration or emphasis on facial features, especially eyes, mouths, ears, and hands. Currently, Deaf artists tend to work in human scale with these exaggerations, and not exaggerate the space around these elements.

There is a difference between Deaf artists and De'VIA. Deaf artists are those who use art in any form, media, or subject matter, and who are held to the same artistic standards as other artists. De'VIA is created when the artist intends to express their Deaf experience through visual art. De'VIA may also be created by deafened or hearing artists, if the intention is to create work that is born of their Deaf experience (a possible example would be a hearing child of Deaf parents). It is clearly possible for Deaf artists not to work in the area of De'VIA.

While applied and decorative arts may also use the qualities of De'VIA (high contrast, centralized focus, exaggeration of specific features), this manifesto is specifically written to cover the traditional fields of visual fine arts (painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, printmaking) as well as alternative media when used as fine arts such as fiber arts, ceramics, neon, and collage.

Created in May, 1989, at The Deaf Way
The signatories were:

Dr. Betty G. Miller, painter; Dr. Paul Johnston, sculptor; Dr. Deborah M. Sonnenstrahl, art historian; Chuck Baird, painter; Guy Wonder, sculptor; Alex Wilhite, painter; Sandi Inches Vasnick, fiber artist; Nancy Creighton, fiber artist; and Lai-Yok Ho, video artist.

Artists' Biographies

Chuck Baird

(Information courtesy of DawnSignPress)

Biography

Chuck Baird, a native of Kansas with three artistically gifted older deaf sisters, attended the Kansas School for the Deaf. At 13, he created an oil painting that won a National Scholastic Art Award. He subsequently won several first-place honors in the regional Scholastic Magazine Contest.

Mr. Baird attended Gallaudet University, in Washington, DC, for two years before moving on to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), which had just been established as a college of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), in Rochester, NY. Mr. Baird received his BFA in Studio Painting in 1974. He served as Visual Arts Coordinator for Spectrum - Focus on Deaf Artists before joining the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) in 1980. He remained with NTD for eleven years, working both as an actor and a set designer.

Mr. Baird's career with NTD was capped by his work in NTD's interpretation of *The King of Hearts*, Phillippe de Broca's cult film classic. In the role of the Painter, he painted new sets every night in front of a live audience. He moved to California in 1992, and is currently painting full-time for DawnSignPress of San Diego, producing a series of paintings in the vein of Deaf Art.

Philosophy

In his early attempts to develop a style, Baird played with photorealistic techniques that were all the rage in the 1970's. He admired the ultra realistic urban landscapes of Richard Estes, with their trapped-in-windows reflections of scenes ordinarily outside of the canvas frames. Like many Deaf painters, Baird went through a period of commenting on cultural oppression. In this he was influenced by Dr. Betty G. Miller, particularly her *Bell School*, 1944.

James R. Canning

Biography

James M. Canning, who became Deaf at age 8, grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania and was educated in the public school system. He attended Adelphi University, New York, where he was a chemistry major and never thought of art seriously until he took a required art class. In 1962, after a year at Adelphi, he dropped out but continued to educate himself at public libraries.

In 1965, Mr. Canning moved to Rhode Island and took courses in illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design. He exhibited his works in summer shows, and "a couple of" solo exhibits. At this time, he met Tom Willard, the founder of Deaf Artists of America, who told him of the greater range of opportunities available at RIT/NTID. Mr. Canning then moved to Rochester, NY and resumed full-time schooling as a painting major. He received RIT's first-ever BFA in Painting-Illustration in May, 1993.

Still a resident of Rochester, Mr. Canning is attempting to enter the field of juvenile book illustration, and has hopes of doing some creative writing.

Philosophy

"I am not too sure about a separate genre of Deaf art. Deafness obviously sometimes influences my work. Sometimes there is scarcely a trace of any attitudes and beliefs caused by deafness. These works all come from the same person, myself, and I am at no time deliberately thinking of expressing deafness in my art. I see my work as coming from the person under the deafness, that is deafness is an influence but, ... the deafness is not myself. ... The deafness sometimes shows, sometimes not. It depends on how much influence deafness has had on the concepts I am presenting in the painting."

Randy Dunham

Biography

Randy Dunham, a native of Troy, NY, began drawing early and never stopped. When he was 7, his older brother gave him a How-to-Draw book, which introduced him to a more technical approach. He began working in oil and acrylic when he was 13. His favorite painters include the Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali and the American

painter and illustrator Maxfield Parrish, who was "a strong influence on color."

Mr. Dunham attended seven different public schools before entering the New York State School for the Deaf in Rome. At Rome, "my greatest teacher ... was Miss Kathy Sins, an RIT graduate." He then went on to NTID/RIT, where he "learned a little about pastel," which, together with oil, is his favorite medium.

His stay at NTID was brief, and he then dabbled in real estate before setting up a short-lived custom framing and art shop. He presently works in another framing shop. Mr. Dunham has had successful shows in the Deaf Artists of America and Pyramid galleries.

Philosophy

In 1988, "I started to [experiment]. I created lots of ideas and I got a little frustrated, but I persisted until I found the best image in general, now I'm staying with this sort of image. ... I really love science, so I sort of put science in my art. ... Right now I'm using a basic idea: reflection and refraction, through waterdrops, lens, mercury, and mirror over a landscape or seascape. ... A mixing of science and art. I don't think in terms of 'themes.'"

Susan "Vito" Dupor

Biography

Susan "Vito" Dupor was born deaf and has an older brother who was also born deaf. She grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, where she attended "hearing-impaired" mainstream programs from Kindergarten through Grade 12. In 1987, she enrolled at NTID as a cross-registered RIT student majoring in illustration. She subsequently transferred to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she earned her Bachelors in Fine Art. She worked for a year in an animation studio, and decided to enter the Joint Educational Specialist Program of the University of Rochester and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, from which she received her Masters of Science in Deaf Education. She currently works as a substitute teacher in the Rochester, NY area. When not teaching, she paints and spends time with her three dogs.

Philosophy

Ms. Dupor states that throughout her childhood, creative art served to help her deal with the lack of genuine socialization that accompanied her mainstreamed education. "My emotions and

experiences growing up deaf are seen and felt in most of my pieces. As an adult artist, I try to perceive and relive those childhood senses by working with deaf and hard of hearing children, who have been the primary inspiration of my current paintings." She cites such Deaf poets as Clayton Valli, Peter Cook and Debbie Rennie as major influences on her work.

Dr. Betty G. Miller

Biography

Dr. Miller, currently a resident of Washington, DC, was born to Deaf parents in Chicago, IL. She is a well-known professional Deaf Artist, who taught art at Gallaudet University for 18 years. She left Gallaudet in 1977 to co-found Spectrum, Focus on Deaf Artists. In 1986, she was an Artist-In-Residence at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) in Washington, DC.

Dr. Miller has participated in art shows in Washington, DC, Austin, TX, and Northern California. She is primarily known for her visual representation of her Deaf experience, some of which has been published in *Deaf Heritage*. Her one-woman art show, "The Deaf Experience," was held at Takoma Park, Maryland in January, 1989, and at Gallaudet University in May, 1989.

Among her influences she cites her father, who was also an artist; one of her professors at Pennsylvania State University; and Nancy Creighton, an artist who "also inspired me ... in the past few years."

Dr. Miller's future plans are "to continue with my art work, and hope to provide more support for De'Via and include this as part of Deaf Studies."

Philosophy

"Much of my work depicts the Deaf experience expressed in the most appropriate form of communication: visual art. I present the suppression of Deaf Culture and American Sign Language as I see it ... This oppression of Deaf people by hearing is actually cultural and political - and has little to do with impaired hearing. Another aspect of my work ... shows the beauty of Deaf culture and American Sign Language. I hope this work, and the understanding that may arise from this visual expression, will help bridge the gap between the Deaf world, and the hearing world."

Eddie Swayze

Biography

Eddie Swayze, who believes that he has been "into art since birth," was born and raised in Ithaca, NY. He entered the Rochester School for the Deaf at age three, and remained there until he was twelve, when he transferred to mainstreamed classes in the Rochester public school system. He enrolled in NTID and cross-registered with RIT, from which he received his BFA in 1989.

Among artists who have influenced his work, Mr. Swayze cites first the Dadaists Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, then such others as Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and the performance artists Naum June Pike and Laurie Anderson.

Mr. Swayze is also an ASL poet. His most recent performance, entitled "Rock This Mess Around," was given at the Hendricks Dance Project in Rochester in August, 1993. In July, 1993 he took part in a group show at NTID's Bevier Gallery as part of the NTID 25th Anniversary Alumni Reunion.

"My plans are to complete my 'Industrial Art' thesis and receive a Masters of Fine Arts degree from RIT, then become an art or art history teacher and continue to exhibit my work."

Philosophy

"I continue to use geometric and cubist shapes for the works in this exhibition, because I think geometric shapes represent the modern society that we must live in, and how we are being oppressed."

Mary J. Thornley

Biography

Ms. Thornley, who now lives in Vancouver, BC, was born and raised in Elkhart, Indiana, where she attended public schools. She received her BA from Indiana University in 1987, and her MFA from the University of Washington in 1990. In 1991, she participated in a travelling exhibit organized by Very Special Arts, Washington and also had a solo exhibition at the Switzer Gallery in Rochester, NY.

In 1992, Ms. Thornley received an Independent New Works Program grant to produce "The Enigma Unravelled: She was a Native Signer," an exploration of the influence of Deaf culture on art, past and present. In the same year, she was curator and participant in "The Power of Silence: Artwork

by Students at the Northwest School for Hearing-Impaired Children," an exhibit at the Pacific Arts Center.

"I became involved in art as a child. I was always drawing, and I used either hand. Sometime in childhood I saw Picasso's 'Guernica' and was much disturbed by it. I guess that's an 'influence'!

Philosophy

"For the past two years I have concentrated on images that relate specifically to my experiences as a deaf person. I've tried to explore the universal aspects of human experience combined with the unique events of my own life. The happenings that set people apart interest me, as well as the psycho-social interactions that occur and the meanings behind them. I work primarily in charcoal and oils.

"In 1992 with the support of a grant, I developed metaphors for deafness. I wanted to make deafness 'visible' and relate it to art history. I then used the metaphors to comment on current modes of treating deafness in popular media.

"My goal is to lay bare new areas of artistic portrayal. Approaches to understanding 'disability' have rarely encompassed art, art history or art criticism."

Sandi Inches Vasnick

Biography

Born hearing into a family that included three older deaf siblings, Ms. Vasnick became deaf herself at age six. She considers her father, a master carpenter, among her artistic influences. She attended the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, and received her BFA from Gallaudet University in 1977. Along with Chuck Baird and Dr. Betty Miller, she was involved in Spectrum - Focus on Deaf Artists, in various capacities. She has appeared in a number of television programs, and spent over a decade with the National Theatre of the Deaf before leaving to study for her MS in Teaching, which she received from RIT in May of 1993.

"I became interested in art at the age of three. My art work is about communication. ... My having attended a school for the deaf where sign language was forbidden had made me want to express more of my feelings through art work. ... I discovered batik during my teens.

"My plans for the future are to get involved in my batik work and to teach students how to be creative in their works of art."

Philosophy

"My art work is related to the world of visual communication through themes both personal and evocative.

"Most of my works stress and enlarge the hands and the eyes, and de-emphasize the mouth and the ears ... except when hands emerge from these organs. In the case of animals and myth figures, I depict silent creatures that relate to us through their eyes as powerful indicators of needs and feelings. Color, a sine qua non of art, is the most difficult component of the work to capture. Color holds the power to enhance the mood and meaning of each composition. In art, all is possible without being able to hear."

A note on Batik:

The word "batik" is of Indonesian origin, and means "wax writing." Batik is a form of resist printing that consists of the application of hot wax, an effective barrier to dye, to fabric that is subsequently exposed to cool dyes that do not melt the wax. Only the unwaxed areas of the fabric take the color. Very fine patterns can be made with a *tjanting*, a specialized tool for applying hot wax.

Descriptions of Artworks

1. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Butterfly, 1983
Neon, 42" x 32"

The hands are shaped into a sign for butterfly, demonstrating the wings in motion, complete with the antennas and the tail, celebrating the beauty of sign language.

2. Susan "Vito" Dupor

I Interesting Hamster, 1993
Mixed media, 48" x 48"

The juxtaposition of the hamsters and the deaf students is a metaphor of the experience of the "caged" environment of mainstreamed deaf students' self contained classrooms. The use of the label "Hearing Impaired" introduces one of the critical issues in education of the deaf, because of the artist's belief that the term "Hearing Impaired" is a pathological disorder label in mainstreamed schools. Deaf students' audiological and speech development are stressed in their education. The flowers in the background, although not the varieties normally seen at a wake, are symbolic of death.

3. Susan "Vito" Dupor

Deaf American, 1989
Oil on canvas, 30" x 42"

From the collection of Susan Schatz

This painting deals with the issue of choices. In the United States, a Deaf person is free to employ devices like hearing aids or to undergo operations like cochlear implants that may improve hearing, providing one can afford such means. The question posed in this picture concerns the tradeoffs between cultural identity, pride, and assimilation. The person portrayed is representative of the most common age at which a decision is made as to which means will be used to communicate for the rest of one's life.

4. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Read My Lips, 1986
Brush & Ink/Watercolor, 28" x 20"

This represents a parody of a hearing person, who could be a speech therapist, trying to coax a deaf person into trying to lipread. The exaggerated lip movements give the hearing person a clownish appearance.

5. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Learning Speech, 1986
Brush & Ink/Watercolor, 28" x 20"

6. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Hot Dog, Ice Cream, Baz Bawl, 1986
Brush & Ink/Watercolor, 28" x 20"

These two pictures represent a dialogue between the much hated speech therapist and the mind of the deaf child during one of those endless speech lessons. *Hot Dog, Ice Cream, Baz Bawl* represents words typical of those practiced in a speech lesson, probably during a sound discrimination test, similar to the words below the drawing in *Learning Speech*.

7. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Mirror, Mirror, 1986
Brush & Ink/Watercolor, 28" x 20"

This work, again, has cultural oppression as its theme. The artist takes from the Snow White story the magical mirror that answered the wicked Queen's question: "Who is the fairest of them all?" and twists the question into "Who is the most oppressed of them all?" The multiple answers, mispronounced, are "Gallaudet," "Deaf people," "ASL," and "visual abilities."

8. Randy Dunham

Shedding onto the Stones, 1989
Pastel, 23" x 20"
From the collection of David Curry, New York

"Outside of the water drop there is no availability of convenience as there is inside. Same idea as people's lives: some who stand outside of the water drop have a less convenient time than inside people. Deaf people have a more difficult time getting what they want than Hearing people."

9. Sandi Inches Vasnich

The Rain Forest, 1988
Batik, 31.5" x 30"

The tree-hands shown here indicate that the means of signing and communication are as valuable to

deaf people as the rain forest is to the world at large, and like the rain forest, this language and culture must be saved from abuse or destruction. "Deaf Education' must not continue to abuse deaf children... sign language is the best way to teach English. In fact, the only way for most of us."

10. Sandi Inches Vasnick

Spirit of Enchantment, 1988

Batik, 18.5" x 29.5"

This work plays with light, again with this artist's characteristic use of hands. The white hands here seem to suggest lightning striking in a desert. The artist says that this piece reminds her of a period of time she spent in Santa Fe, NM.

11. Sandi Inches Vasnick

Dreamland View, 1988

Batik, 35.5" x 38.5"

This work is a fantasy, "... the desire of a colorful place where every detail in the landscape can be exhilarating. Color is the most essential ingredient of batik work - and perhaps of all other works." Note, once again, the hands.

12. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Hearing Qualifications Test, 1990

Neon, mixed media, 34.5" x 44.5"

This is a parody of the audiogram administered to every Deaf child in schools for the Deaf. Different entries record the emphasis on the pathological and medical perspectives on deafness, which stress the use of residual hearing, no matter how little.

While this is not necessarily every hearing person's view, it clearly states the artist's opinion of how hard it is for Deaf people to fit in the hearing world. She is saying that it is better to keep your cultural identity as a Deaf person rather than try to "pass" as a hearing person.

13. Chuck Baird

On the Border, 1989

Acrylic, 84" x 28"

From the collection of Tina Jo Breindel, California

From left to right, the eyes grow warmer in shading and color, alluding to the gradual change from the coldness of the hearing culture to the warmth of deaf culture.

14. Eddie Swayze

A.S.L., 1991

Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 35" each piece

This triptych, consisting of the fingerspelled letters "A" "S" and "L," reflects the pride many Deaf people take in American Sign Language in spite of its oppression.

15. Mary J. Thornley

Signing Mona Lisa II, 1992

Oil, 31" x 35"

16. Mary J. Thornley

Ink Mona, 1992

Ink, 17" x 21"

From the collection of Karen Ozmun, Washington

17. Mary J. Thornley

Signing Mona Lisa I, 1992

Oil, 31" x 35"

These three works are interrelated, part of Thornley's project, "The Enigma Unravelled." "I see the Mona Lisas being strong, positive figures— which are immediately perceived as being deaf. Leonardo's Mona is considered enigmatic because we know so little about her. Her enigmatic smile is intriguing. I gave her an enigmatic hand gesture. Before, we asked, 'What is she smiling about?' Now we can ask, 'What is she signing about?'"

18. Susan "Vito" Dupor

Untitled, 1990

Acrylic on masonite, 60" x 48"

This piece, with its skeletons and marigolds, is open to a variety of interpretations. It implies something very basic about the similarities and differences between the Deaf and the hearing. The skeletons may represent the effect of deprivation of Deaf Culture, if one has not been exposed to it at an early age.

19. James R. Canning

The Temptation of St. Jim, ca. 1986

Oil, 41.5" x 55.5"

"This painting was intended to permit an outburst of feelings of frustration and confinement. At the time I painted it I was having serious troubles with a chronic health problem. Look over the painting awhile and find the little image that represents reality, myself brushing an annoying branch away from my face. Reality has been almost overwhelmed by danger and anxiety. The symbolism implies a threat to the mind (birdlike thing), body

(white beast emerging from belly) and soul (self-worshipful monkish figure on the right).

"Some people feel the gesture of the right hand near the ear shows an effort to hear something ... This was never once in my mind during the entire time I worked on this picture. As I saw it, my hand is attempting to brush the bird's wing away, to prevent the wing from blindfolding me.

"I never thought of deafness while working on this picture."

20. Eddie Swayze

Peter Cook's Hand, 1990

Acrylic on canvas, 29" x 29"

Peter Cook is a renowned Deaf poet/performer. "He always signs 'cool' or 'neat' or something like that with that hand shape on his chest."

21. Eddie Swayze

I. King Jordan, 1992

Acrylic on canvas, 34" x 46"

This portrait is of the first deaf president of Gallaudet University, here shown wearing a hearing aid. (And, for those who wonder, his name actually is I. King Jordan.) The intent is to portray the truth of his deafness.

22. James R. Canning

Cantata, 1985-1986

Oil, 32" x 42"

"This painting probably represents my feelings about deafness more than any other work I have done. There is obvious symbolism in the closed window through which the little boy can see but not hear, see fascinating things he can never reach because the window can never be opened. ... The boy is about the same age as I was when I became deaf, which is eight.

"The title of the painting refers to a form of religious music which I have no memory of ever hearing. A close friend who saw the work when it was nearly done, remarked it 'made him feel like a Bach Cantata.'"

23. Chuck Baird

My Supt., 1993

Acrylic, 21" x 29"

On loan, courtesy of DawnSignPress, California

An affectionate tribute through architecture rather than portraiture, this painting of the Kansas

School for the Deaf's Stanley D. Roth Administration building, with its plays on light and shadow and its simple plaque, is a reminder of the lasting influence of one superintendent (known as "Supt." in ASL) of a school for the deaf.

24. Chuck Baird

The Detour, 1992

Acrylic, 29" x 21"

From the collection of Ray Parks, Jr., Arizona

Those of us who are Deaf in a hearing world know that we are constantly diverted to side roads on our journeys, forced to ask for accommodations and services that are often denied us. Unlike our hearing counterparts, we cannot take for granted a direct route to our destination. The sign's bright orange contrasts with the bleak grays of the archway into which we must venture. That the actual model for this was a federal building in Louisville, Kentucky, is also significant. The government can be more of an enemy than a friend.

25. Susan "Vito" Dupor

PL 94 - 142, 1991

Oil, 33" x 36"

Here, two deaf adolescents are shown changing their clothes in the locker rooms of a public school, to which they were admitted after the passage of the "mainstreaming law." Public Law 94-142 in the early 1970s mandated but did not define a "least restrictive environment". The deaf subjects are shown wearing body hearing aids. In the background, other students are giving these deaf subjects unwanted attention, and they are shameful, trying to hide their faces.

26. Susan "Vito" Dupor

Family Dog, 1991

Acrylic, 61" x 58"

This is expressive of feelings typical to isolated Deaf children living with non-Signing hearing families. The faces of the other members of the family are blurred, which likens the experience of lipreading to the experience of listening to a TV program disrupted by static. The deaf child, who wears hearing aids, is likened to a family pet that is patted on the head while being told "Good girl, good girl."

27. Chuck Baird

Why Me?, 1973

Acrylic, 26" x 26"

From the collection of Nancy Frishberg, California

This painting attacks the bondage imposed on Deaf schoolchildren who were forced to learn to speak - badly - and not allowed to sign. These children often wound up "oral failures," their education crippled because learning was neglected in favor of speech training.

Thin wires run down each mouth to the chin, suggesting marionettes controlled by an unseen hand. This painting owes much to Dr. Miller's justifiably angry works.

28. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Untitled, 1993

Acrylic/Mixed Media, 32.5" x 34.5"

This is a portrait of a person, almost certainly deaf, with an enlarged ear and surrounded by cochleas, hearing aids, and other devices. It clearly stresses a pathological view of deafness. The wires running through the hands may be the artist's way of saying that one must choose between the pathological approach and one's Deaf Identity.

29. Dr. Betty G. Miller

Bah, Bah Black Sheep, 1984

Acrylic, 11.5" x 13.5"

This picture represents a speech therapist pressuring a deaf child to speak. The child tries, for the sake of the parents and the teachers, and to be accepted into the hearing world. The speech therapist makes an encouraging comment, "Hurrah! Hurrah! Your speech is good!" which is likely to give the deaf child false hopes of being able to communicate in the hearing world.

30. Chuck Baird

All American Breakfast, 1992

Acrylic, 28" x 34"

From the collection of Elizabeth Weyerhauser, Arizona

Fingerspelling is not a Baird hallmark. Fingerspelled words have been absorbed into other paintings, notably those of Morris Broderon. Here the body and spout of a syrup bottle have turned into a hand and a thumb out of which syrup pours onto a plate of pancakes. It is as if human parts have been transplanted onto an inanimate object. It is a startling union of two incompatible forms.

31. Susan "Vito" Dupor

Interpretations, 1991

Acrylic, ink on cereal box and masonite, 20" x 30"
(Originally with red latchhook rug frame)

This work, an experimental piece, arose from an accident when Ms. Dupor's cat knocked over a cereal bowl at breakfast one day. The emotions she felt at the time are conveyed visually, with the depicted person signing and the Rice Krispies character interpreting in word balloons. The signs represented express feelings to which probably everyone can relate.

32. Susan "Vito" Dupor

Rape and her little Bambis, 1990

Acrylic on canvas, 42" x 46"

From the collection of Bobbi Zehner

This painting, like *Deaf American*, deals with the choices necessary to Deaf Americans, but here the decisions are being made for the subject by others. The subject is trapped in a childlike state, victim of a situation not of her choosing. The forced installation of hearing aids is seen as analogous to forcible rape.

Note that this work is on view only at scheduled times.

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