

WOMEN OF WALKER

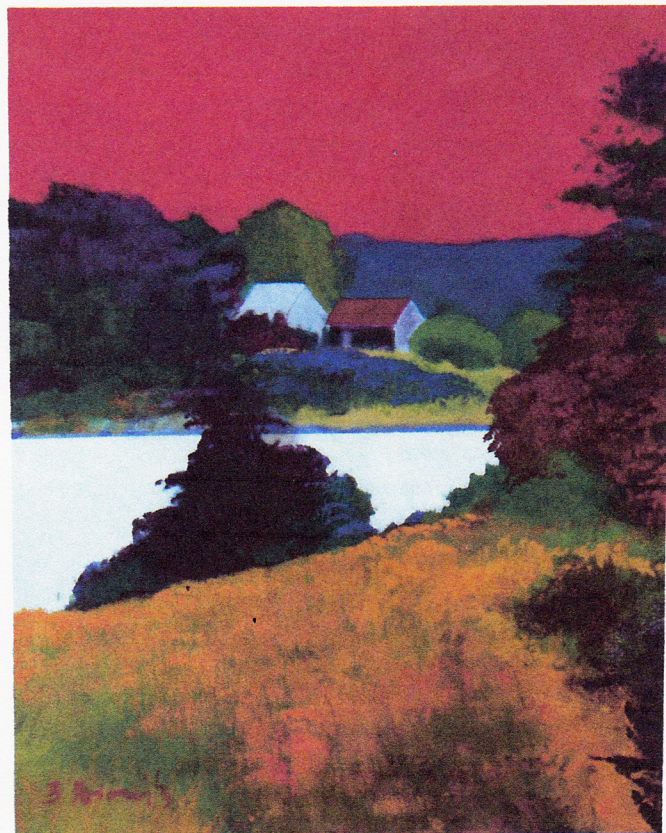
Berta Walker Gallery
208 Bradford Street
Provincetown, Massachusetts

Selina Trieff: *Transcending the Now:
A Prophet Paints*

Through July 15

Brenda Horowitz: *Color in Form:
Nature Power*
Danielle Mailer: *Form in Color:
Animal Power*

July 20 through August 5



Brenda Horowitz, *Mill Pond*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 20" x 20".

THE BERTA WALKER GALLERY CELEBRATES THREE OF ITS FINEST WOMAN ARTISTS WITH BACK-TO-BACK SHOWS FROM SELINA TRIEFF, BRENDA HOROWITZ AND DANIELLE MAILER.

The Selina Trieff show is only up until July 15, but try to catch it. Trieff is best known for her minimally staged, theatrical paintings of sheathed and robed, quasi-religious figures huddled in pairs, small clusters or piercingly alone, sometimes with attendant sheep, pigs or dogs. The bulk of this work was recently pulled from storage in New York and has not been seen for some time, and while that alone makes it worthwhile, what I was not prepared for was the strength

of the work: it's more than good, it's quietly stunning.

Aside from two paintings from the 1980s and one from 2008, most of the work is from the 1990s, composed of pairs of three-quarter-length figures, one behind the other locked in a brace of boney white hands that Trieff paints with expressive conviction. Holding, embracing, clasping and coupling, they're painted with a firebrand

conviction of assured line and strong pure color worked in and around fields of gold leaf that spill forth a radiant fire. The otherworldliness of these figures is manifest in their mask-like features and a detachment that inoculates us from ever truly knowing the nature of their conspiracy, while still allowing us to share in their intimacy.

At five-foot-square, "Guardian" (1984) and "Pilgrim with Pig" (1989) are

knockouts. The former is a depiction of a full-length figure in dark robes and flanked on either side by a pair of sheep, so that in the end, it crosses one's mind to wonder who's tending whom. The latter is a disarming image in near-silhouette of a seated pilgrim with a disarming wide brimmed hat and a small one side outlined in a ghostly green set against the most gorgeously abstract field of soft green and yellow. Both have a refined grandeur that's Trieff as her best: her gaze is direct, flat and unequivocally unnerving; ambiguity to the core succumb to a certain reverent, contemplative heart and an uneasy smile on her lips.

and contemporary of Trieff's, Morowitz has been painting the landscape since the 1980s, and Trieff, she is a former student of Hofmann. You can see his influence in the articulation of her color compositions as they wend their way from bottom-to-top, side-to-side, and again. They are both perfectly balanced and expansive, but what sets her apart from the mainstay

Cod landscape painters — a palette tired with a dull, homogenous color — is her incongruous palette. She finds local color for vivid earthy tones: magenta, ochre and a range of blues from a light cerulean, and icy phthalos.

Like many former Hofmann students, included, these paintings are as devoid of abstraction as they are of their subject matter, so that Morowitz, her landscapes with red skies and bottomless blue wet waters simply become an arena for her on which to hang her combinations of shape and order to sustain a hushed mood that subtly envelops you. You see this more so than in this recent body of

work. In paintings like "Wits Lane" and "Mill Pond," both from 2012, she ignites her palette with a perceptible new brightness, making their vivid stature more than just a skillful handling of color. They're immersive and deeply sensory meditations on the landscape bathed in an experience that feels lived in, but only if you sometimes live in a dream.

Danielle Mailer's steel and aluminum cutouts of cats both massive and manageable, a regal dachshund, birds, an 8-foot-long horse and the lithe propulsion of female dancers flitting across the gallery are all signifiers for female empowerment incorporating themes of sexuality, mythology and domesticity. Codifying her experiences and perceptions as a woman, Mailer imbeds her cutouts with painted images of other animals, musical instruments, teapots, butterflies, birds, trees, flowers and a proliferation of spirals, scrolling lines and zippy, dense patterns that revel in their decorative persuasion.

Inside the confines of the gallery, her broods of animals' are a little hemmed in, but that doesn't mute their allure.



Mailer, *Cat Tales, #2*, 2011, acrylic on aluminum, 17 1/2" x 14 1/2" x 5".



Selina Trieff, *Pilgrim With Pig*, 1989, oil on canvas, 60" x 60".

Rendered with bright, flat color and crisp, clean execution, the mood is optimistic and vibrant, her iconographic tableaux infused with a celebratory exuberance that neatly sidesteps whimsy for an affirmation that treats her animals as spirited equals, although that may be hard to imagine when, in "Cat Tales" for example, your feline friend is 8-feet-tall with a corkscrew tail that could easily double its length.

By incorporating a narrative of sorts across the stark black silhouette of her cutouts, you see one before you see

the other, but it's precisely the kind of double entendre that keeps you coming back as you engage and investigate the form and imagery from all sides. She's not afraid to let it be fun, while collectively forming an impassioned declaration of the female ardor that's still universal enough to pertain to the human spirit-at-large.

André van der Wende