

Kasle Gallery Revisits 10 Years of Success

BY MARSHA MIRO

Free Press Art Writer

One reward for a successful gallery owner is to reminisce about past efforts and to invite hindsight evaluation, all of which Gertrude Kasle is doing in her current 10-year retrospective exhibition.

The show, which unravels gallery history through the varied work of artists exhibited, reveals the gallery owner's ability to select, over the years, those artists who have a strong sense of personal vision and the ability to make their ideas visible.

The Kasle Gallery modus operandi has been to limit the number of artists shown so that a cache of gallery regulars is established and, in the process, a gallery identity. The retrospective is a sampling of both, through one representative work from each of about 20 artists.

Among them are such nationally known artists as Goodnough, Natkin, Frankenthaler, Gottlieb, Motherwell, DeKooning and Gattigan — principally from the New York art scene — and superb local talent such as Al Loving Jr. and Brenda Goodman. (The Kasle Gallery is one of the few non-New York galleries in the prestigious Art Dealers Association of America.)

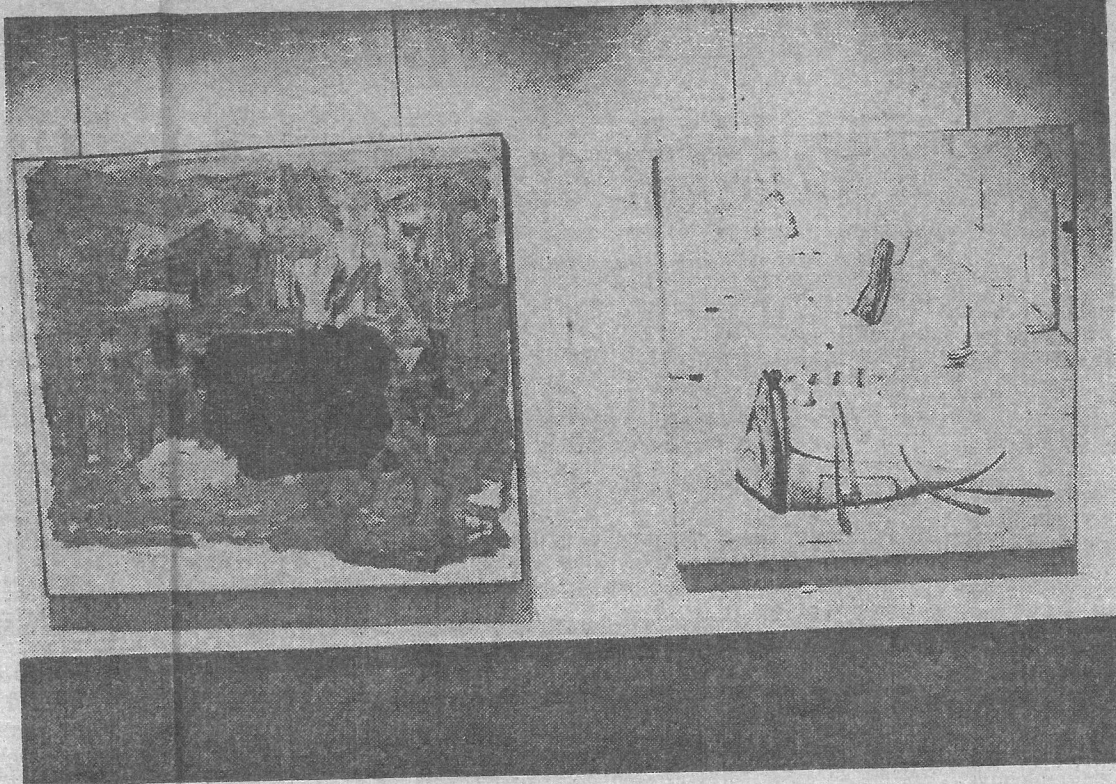
In recent years, Kasle Gallery exhibits have begun with lectures, films and discussions with or about the artist so that formal barriers which usually hinder comfortable questioning by the public are eased. At the opening of the retrospective on April 6, Marcia Tucker, contemporary art curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and her Detroit Institute of Arts counterpart, John Neff, discussed "The Art World."

One of the many interesting notes from the discussion: The annual Whitney "What's Going On in Art" exhibit contained a flood of work this year from all over the country, rather than the usual New York concentration, and was panned by the New York art establishment because, as organizer Tucker said, it was a "major museum saying important work exists outside of New York." Interesting? For sure. The Kasle Retrospective is saying the same thing.

IN THE SHOW, the blood and guts emotional abstract painting by Philip Guston (something of a legend to local artists) is hung next to Detroit's Brenda Goodman's work. They offer a revealing comparison both have a lot of the same feeling, both paint their very personal worlds: Guston, in this case, abstractly; Goodman almost surrealistically. Her painting is filled with bits of a fragmented mind — wandering eye and sexual symbols — as well as the remnants of life in the inner city (Cass Corridor) which is her home. Here is a local artist whose paintings can stand up next to a major international figure. Both have provided very powerful statements.

Jack Tworokov, like Guston a gallery veteran, was nationally acclaimed in the 1950s for his abstract expressionist work, a direction which is still new to him. His "Crossfield," exhibited in the retrospective has an overall surface pattern of regular short drawn strokes which have a peaceful lyricism and beauty far different from the brash, almost violent gestures of his earlier paintings. It is the young free vision of a man of 75.

During the 1960s Tworokov avoided the New York scene, consistently showing only at the Kasle Gallery. The aloof currents of New York — now able to neat



categorize Tworkov as a "lyrical abstractionist" — have only recently caught up with him. All the while, Mrs. Kasle, recognizing Tworkov simply as an innovative abstract expressionist (translation: "lyrical abstractionist"), stood by him.

LOWELL NESBITT, a gallery favorite, is best known for his strangely perceived but photographically realistic macro-flowers. The retrospective, however, draws from his most recent but less popular Robe series: a cadence of hung, discarded and animated robes which, through the chemistry of Nesbitt's weird perspective and technical skills, become almost abstract.

Al Loving Jr. is another Detroit-born favorite linked to the Kasle Gallery. Loving, as a student, met Gertrude Kasle and when his work matured beyond the student's usual penchant for imitative art to the uniqueness she looks for, he got his first gallery show. The Loving work in the retrospective is, typically, two of those brightly colored tumbling cubes. Mrs. Kasle has followed Loving through his rise to national stature exhibiting his work whenever possible — which is what she does for her stable of artists. And when done well, everyone benefits: The artists, the gallery and the public.

The Kasle Gallery, 310 Fisher Building, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Works by
Philip Guston (left)
and Detroiters
Brenda Goodman:
Personal worlds
from two different
viewpoints

Other Art Shows

G. ALDEN SMITH — Sculpture in wood, steel and brass. Through April at Community Arts Gallery, Wayne State University campus. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily; 1 to 5 p.m. weekends.

DEAN MEEKER, PROPAN SRISOUTA, ALAN VIGLAND — Drawings, graphs and ceramics. Through May 3 at Habatat Galleries, 1820 N. Telegraph, Dearborn. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mon. and Fri., noon to 6 p.m. Wed., Thurs., Sat.

RICHARD JERZY — Watercolors and drawings. Through April at Arwin Galleries, 222 Grand River West. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mon.

JANE KNIGHT — Fiber Sculpture. Through May 3 at Birmingham Gallery, 1025 Haynes. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues.-Sat.

POTPOURRI — Paintings, drawings, graphics and watercolors by McCormick, Philipp, Soyler, Shahn and others. Through April 26 at Garelick's Gallery, 280 N. Woodward, Birmingham. 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon.-Sat.