

The plural of '-isms' is arms. Agent NAHM woke up with a start. I, who always dreamt and who had been trained to remember my dreams, this particular morning, remembered nothing. There had been no dream. I try to put things on paper, but a fire burns and paper is flammable: cellulose. The animal reaches to a plant.

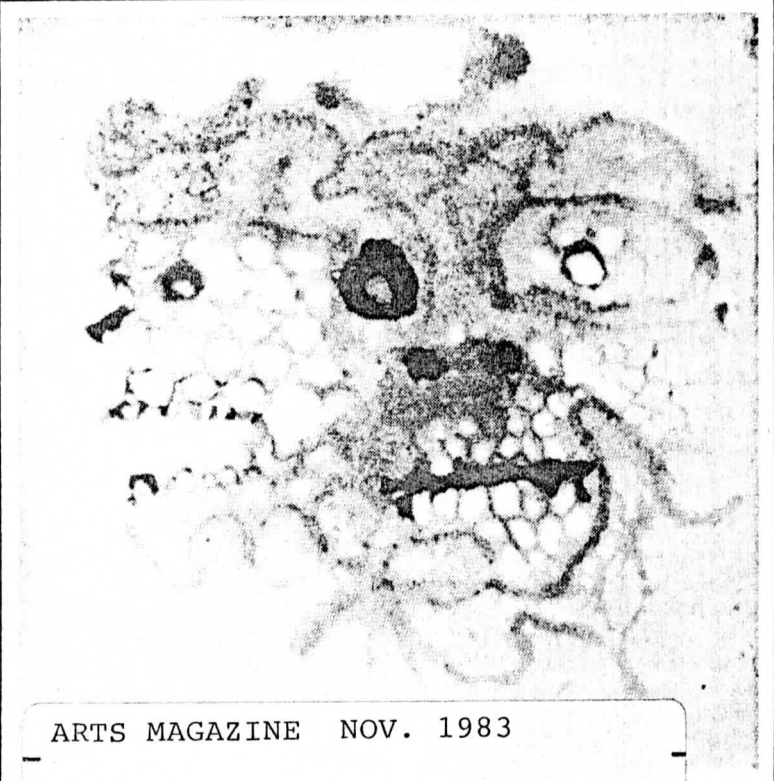
My memory haunts me. And incidents, where my memory could never have been attributed blank, incidents that were never really on my mind, return. Those like me rarely divulge their secret. I question what I forget: what is it that I forgot? What is it that I remember? I am never really sure what I will remember and am even less sure of what I will forget. It is puzzling—the memory wave continuously in flux; the vault that is the mind; the combinations that open it; the sudden perfume that transports one; the notes of a song you once knew; the unexplainable—but ever so clear—vision.

Sometimes I sit down and try to remember; I actually go beyond the basic situation or fact I am trying to remember. More often, memory just happens in me.

My robot form was smashed, but my living mind survives, somehow becoming one with the clay. My mind gives the clay life. The minerals become crystal; the retina welds itself onto

Nicolas A. Moufarrege, Self-Portrait, 1972. Marker and ink on paper, 12 x 8".

Victor Hugo, Dentelles et Spectres (Laces and Specters).



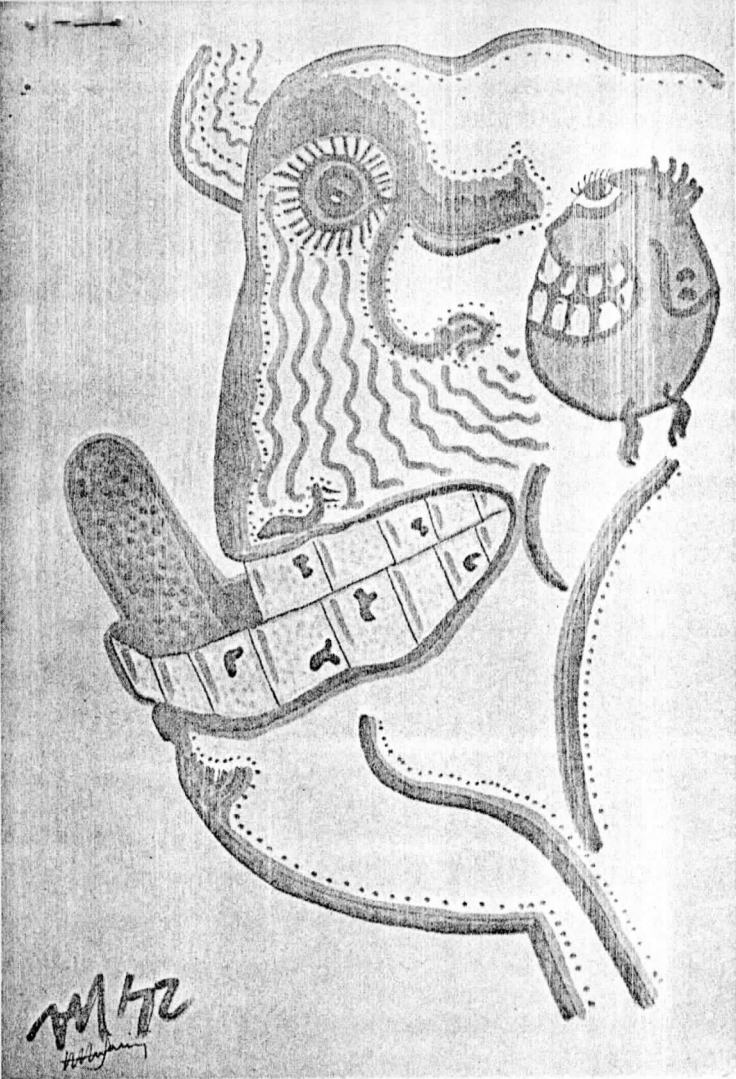
ARTS MAGAZINE NOV. 1983

THE MUTANT INTERNATIONAL; III: THE LAST STAR... AURORA

NICOLAS A. MOUFARREGE

The study of beauty is a duel in which the artist shrieks with terror before being overcome by the fireworks of laughter.

Chuck Nanney, Psionic Hypnotic Communication, 1983. Acrylic on paper, 54½ x 46½".





Chuck Nanney, *Stormy Weather* (detail). *Acrylic on canvas, 56 x 37 1/2"*.

the image. Shapes appear. I look out of my window; the men and women on the streets have shapes similar to mine. Those of my dreams have words etched on their toenails.

I am the Mutant International. Time was when dawn was in the East, then light moved down toward the South, and now it springs mindless of the compass. Time was when particular nations shone; joyfully and successfully they cultivated the arts of the imagination. But never let it be forgotten that nations, those vast collective beings, are subject to the same laws as individuals. Like babies they wail, gurgle, fill out and grow. Like youths and mature people they produce works full of boldness and wisdom. Like the aged they fall asleep on their heaped-up riches. Often enough the very principle of their strength and development brings about their decline, especially when that principle, vitalized by all-conquering zeal, has become a kind of routine. Then the vital spark moves elsewhere. The newcomers do not inherit the whole estate from previous generations, nor do they receive from the latter a ready-made doctrine. It often happens that the loss is total, and a new start has to be made.

Kenny Scharf, *Ultimat Space*, 1983. *Oil and spraypaint on canvas, 8 x 9'*. Private Collection, New York. Courtesy Tony Shalrazi Gallery.

Transmutation: the manifestations are everywhere and from everyplace, and they are strangely urgent, pressing, imperious even, as though the order had been given and no time must be lost. There are signs of occult powers—of magnetism, telepathy, unsuspected properties of radiating matter, and countless other phenomena that are battering down the door of science. Physicists are discussing the Equations of Chaos. Linguists develop the Theory of the Catastrophe. Water absorbs heat linearly; suddenly it reaches the point when it boils. The mountain shepherds explore the countryside. A landmine suddenly explodes.

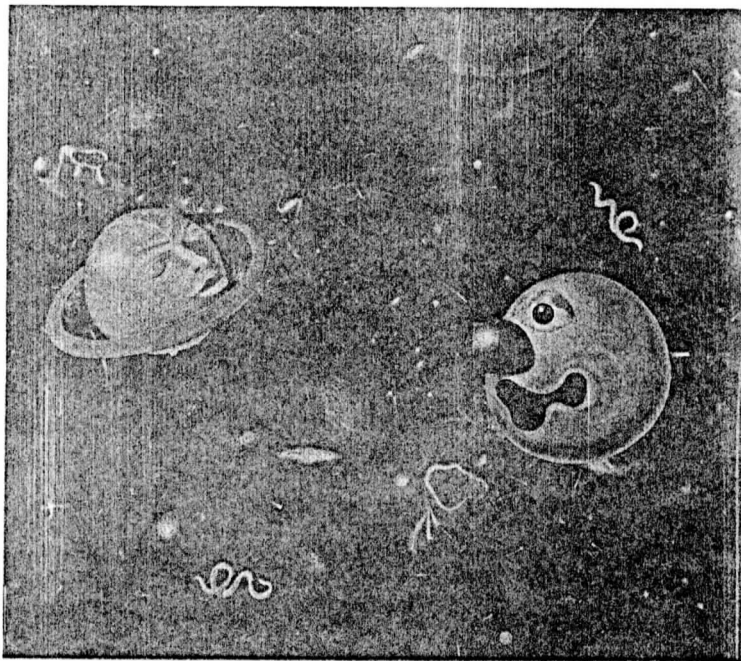
The tracking computer is set on the image of the condition before transition; this is significant and indicates the beginning of a new phase in the program. Success. Good fortune. How could this be a mistake? In the middle of the earth is water. Writing is really a line of ink; base metals turn into gold and silver. From beyond the unknown the black tulip and the blue dahlia become reality.

There are a couple of people that I see almost daily. For a long time it is merely by their gestures that I distinguish them, by their habits, be these of mind or body, by the manner in which they feel, act, and think. But, in the course of every friendship of some duration, there comes a mysterious moment when we seem to perceive the exact relationship of someone to the unknown that surrounds him or her, when we discover the attitude destiny has assumed toward them. I see, once and for all, the treatment held in store for them by events.

There are others, another in particular, who by the nature of my business I am forced to encounter. Like a film craving exposure, his appearance hustles about me. A dealer, under patent, in political idioms, he will soon experience the power of oblivion; and along with his first cousins in ignorance and fat-

headedness, he shall lie undisturbed and unprocessed in the waste-paper basket of indifference, like so much waste paper, uselessly scrawled on, and useless for anything but making new paper.

Enough said; I'll return to one of the group I first mentioned. Through the link of friendship, and through his art, Chuck Nanney shows me a culture, the acts of life of a generation raised differently from me. I never had Quisp and Cola for breakfast. Nanney describes a pink Martian in a green outfit with a propeller on his head—that's Quisp, the cereal, whose sugary bits are shaped like flying saucers. My parents never had a TV; I still don't have one. It was with Chuck Nanney that I first watched the reruns of *The Twilight Zone* and *Outer Limits*. He and Hervé



Di Rosa rekindled my interest in comic books. I now juxtapose the Thing and Rom with Arabic writing, Cyclops of The X-Men with ice-cream vaudeville; I echo The New Mutants. Nanney is a Mutant International. He sometimes believes his parents found him in a bread box, floating in the Mississippi, at the Tennessee/Arkansas border; he grew up in Memphis on Elvis Presley and David Bowie. The first time he had fresh vegetables was when he moved to New York, five or six years ago. An ex-New Waver and an ex-punk, ex-Fashion Institute of Technology student and ex-nightclub doorman, he started painting on paper with mini-rollers. He took up canvas and the brush more recently, and the extent of maturity these young paintings display is astonishing.

The artist's is an unquenchable thirst for all that lies beyond and that life reveals. It is simply the human longing for a superior form. The manifestation of this principle lies in an enthusiasm, an excitement of the soul—an enthusiasm that is quite independent of passion, which is an intoxication of the heart, and of truth, which is a nourishment of reason. Nanney has faith in psionic energies: they express the power of mind over matter. The will is hypnotized by the desire for a broader understanding. A while back I asked the question of how he dealt with being an Absorbing Man. Nanney portrays the comic strip character in several of his paintings; as The Absorbing Man, Nanney possesses the ability to absorb at will the physical properties of anything he touches or that touches him. The power extends to both animate and inanimate objects and to certain forms of energy. Through practice, he has learned to absorb only the properties of objects that he wishes to absorb. He can also assimilate mystic properties of objects and beings. The prerogative of choice makes Nanney invulnerable. He follows a simple and modest technique: he looks; he listens; and then he tells his

story. His intuition is solid and most of his pictures, however odd they look, are direct from life. His truths are commonplace, but truths they are.

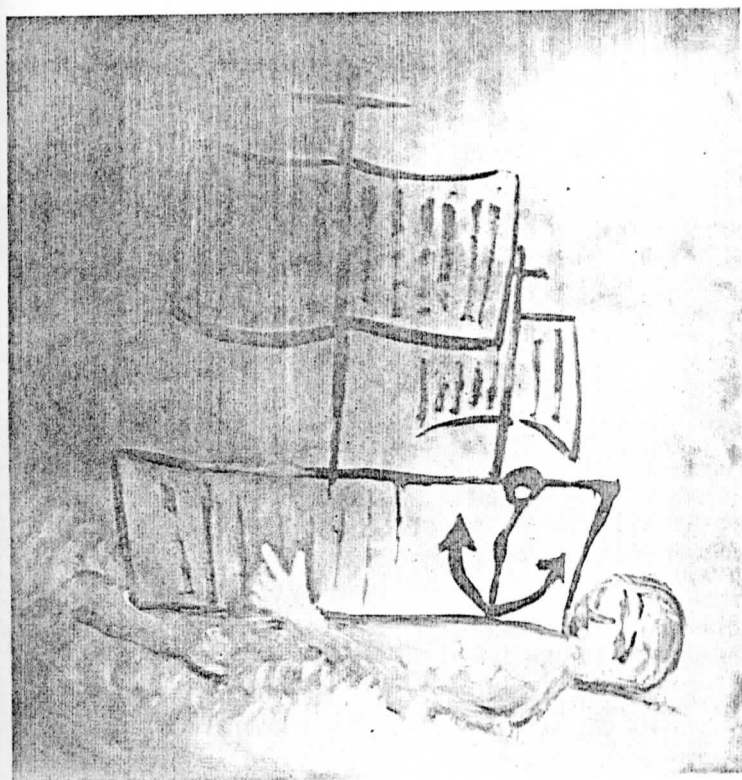
What are Sue and Reed of The Fantastic Four doing in Nanney's painting? Their portraits, done in a deep, warm pink, form the central panel of the work. It's modern love; the artist lays a timeless American boyhood bare. He used to wish the super-heroes for parents; his parents, he depicts mummified in the arms of a cosmic egg contained in a lower panel. The up-most panel holds a mutated hybrid of a fish, a strange coil joining the head to the tail; Nanney refers to it as "the last fish on Earth." *Sue and Reed* (1983) renders the truth of an American generation waking up to itself; it shucks the corn to reveal the grains of a native truth. *Psionic Hypnotic Communication* (1983) shows the junk-food addict projected through a home plate, the latter shape all wired up with flailing limbs. The picture is a self-portrait with *doppelgänger* counterpart: one's bugged out and all eyeballs; the other, more contained, blanks out behind black-rimmed glasses, his lips held back in a wide grimace that bares the teeth and squares the jaw. It's the experience of teleplasm, when one enters the trance state that transports into spirit worlds and other dimensions, but from a distance, telepathically. The painting's background is a splattering of green flecks applied by featherdusters dipped in paint, a technique Nanney borrowed from his mother who used it to decorate her walls. Don't mistake this for flimsiness—it's savage, like truth, and will eat you up alive.

The cosmic egg in *Sue and Reed* has the world in its mouth; the arms holding the mummies are like shadowpaths joining the real mother and father to the source. The panel is a rich violet made deeper by the dark green ground of the painting; the egg is yellow, the mummies white and black. In China violet is worn as a sign of mourning; here, Nanney mourns his parents' routine middle-American way. He rebels against dogma with unbridled wackiness. He's got sugar-colored blood: sour grape and atomic fireball bubblegums were the 'biggies' among childhood foods, but also jawbreakers, M&Ms, and later skittles. It's Disneyworld food, with Mary Poppins adding a little sugar to 'make the medicine go down'. Artificial flavors and artificial colorings: pop culture radioactivity. Maybe that's why Nanney's marvelously intuitive sense of color is so right, and definitely the cause of the tingling convulsiveness of the compositions.

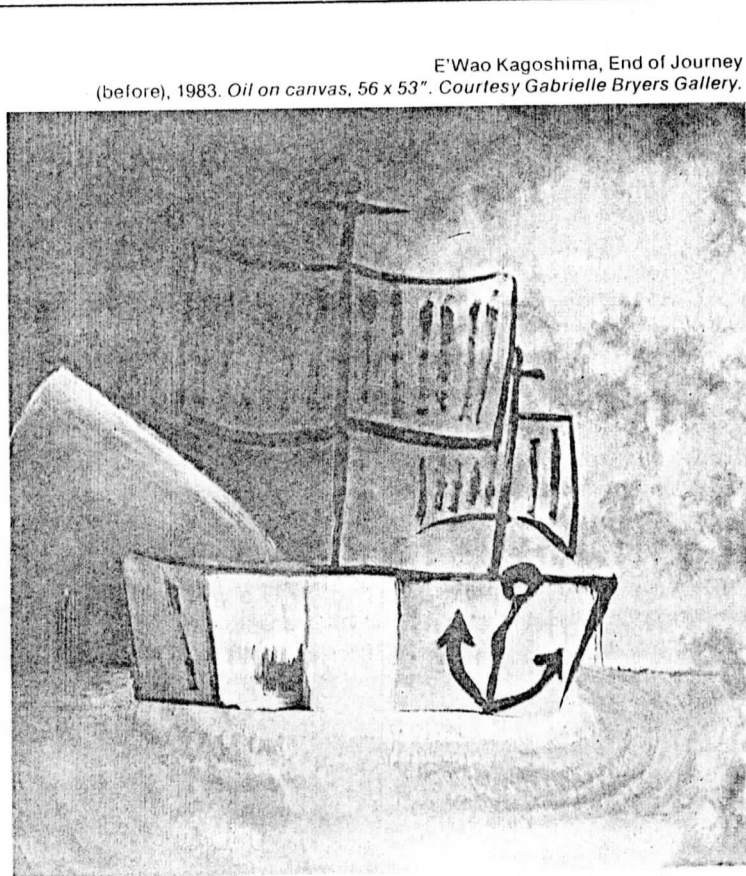
The giddiness is hilarious; the paintings make you laugh, their mood is up: they have sufficient sense for the truth that allows one to laugh at oneself as one would have to in order to laugh *out of the whole truth*.

There are those who will see parallels in the works of Nanney alongside Hervé Di Rosa's and Kenny Scharf's. They are the similarities of people the same age growing up exposed to the same evo-cultural rays and media waves. They all breathe, or whatever. The associations are facile, the variations and differences more interesting. Unlike Scharf who, like Keith Haring, is videotape streamers and television bias (the lights change a hundred times a minute), Nanney's comic strip book sagas fill his life with the peoploid characters of the stories. Di Rosa, who is heavily into the same strips as Nanney, creates a series of his own with heroes and villains to wit. Nanney deals facts out, an occasional short narrative. There's a fiction/documentary, non-fiction difference. Di Rosa's *bistrot* Freud tidbits find counterparts in Nanney's pulp Jung symbols. The fantastic is nevertheless a world where Di Rosa, Nanney, and Scharf meet; it's a science-fiction playground, a universe all spasms and twitches. All, Keith Haring included, share a common, naked desire to make us laugh, without any of the embarrassed desperation that such a role, the artists' inborn comic nature, may encounter. Their work does not feed off the energy of the viewer—it instills energy in him.

Nanney deals directly with childhood, that American boyhood seen in the speckled blots of a shaken featherduster. In the child's reverie, the image takes precedent over everything else. Experiences come only later. The reverie toward childhood returns one to the beauty of the first images. Look at walls splashed with a number of stains or stones of various mixed colors. An infinite number of things can be reduced into separate and well-drawn forms, and these appear on such walls confusedly. There's truth in the corny confusion of first images. There you can see resemblances to a number of landscapes; also, you can see various battles, lively postures of strange figures, expressions on faces, costumes, animals and men, and monstrous things, such as devils. It's the haunting Victor Hugo projects into a piece of tattered lace in *Dentelles et Spectres*. A veronica: what you see is what you get; what you get is what you see. What's the image in the shroud? Hugo's lace transmutes into the landscape and Notre Dame; the image flows into his



E'Wao Kagoshima, *End of Journey* (after), 1983. Oil on canvas, 56 x 53". Courtesy Gabrielle Bryers Gallery.



E'Wao Kagoshima, *End of Journey* (before), 1983. Oil on canvas, 56 x 53". Courtesy Gabrielle Bryers Gallery.

name, a bizarre tag, the *carte de visite* he sent as a New Year's greeting at the onset of 1856.

The least crack in a windowpane or a bowl can bring back the felicity of a great memory. In the featherduster patterns, the life given animation is a fragmented life, and it is easy; it is sincere. Truth does not follow complicated preambles. A cornucopia of images spills over, the spiraling thought bubble of the artist, in Nanney's *Stormy Weather* (1983). The Impossible Man, a pair of bloodshot eyes, an E.T. bunny, a home plate, the last fish on Earth, an orange alligator, a bird with rock skin, the star of Bethlehem, a cyclops insectoid, a nuclear bomb with angel wings, a 'pink tonsil' man, a hatchet head, a nerd head, a North American Indian, a simple dot, and a Saturnian patrolman swirl in delicious confusion and pure color in the paint splatters. Those are the shapes that take form and name out of the indistinctness. It's no longer the question of the learned 'right' and successful image that comes through; rather it's a liberated nonsense.

With the cheerful nonsense of his corn, Nanney rescues his pleasure in freedom of thinking. The images are put together without regard to the condition that they should make sense. Particular additions transform the usual forms; a kind of private language may be constructed which here brings about, in part, the emergence of the comic. It's like the jokes children (and adults) find funny when words are somewhat transformed and changed: games with sounds and games with pictures. Which takes us back to Alain Jacquet and his games: the particular vision into the continents' shapes, the vision in cloud formations, and the final dumb truth everything reduces to—the truth of birth and the truth of death; the polar biology that sex and gender participate in; the species we have designated as human; the volume of skin each of us occupies. There is no right and left. X equals Zero, $x = 0$. The equation moves in all directions. The shaft and the tunnel, the stem and the petals, an umbilical cord and the spiral foetus, the necessary truth and reality of every reader of these lines.

Mantiq Attair, Farid Ud-din al Attar's "Conference," "Speech," "Language" or "Discourse" of the Birds (as it is variously called), relates that the Holy Creator "gilded the stars, so that at night the heavens might play tric-trac." It adds that he used the mountains as nails to fix the Earth, which he placed on the back of a bull, the bull on a fish, and the fish on the air. How true.

The beautiful illusion of the dream worlds, in the creation of which every man is truly an artist, is the prerequisite of all plastic art. There is an incredibly beautiful water stain on E'wao Kagoshima's garden wall. An equal intensity exudes out of the wafting forms haunting the smoke stains left in a wall after a fire. Kagoshima and Nanney, in whose apartment/studio a fire had left its mark, have before them an image source made other than by the hand of one of the species. The phenomenological tattoo translates into the agricultural theme in Kagoshima's paintings. I haven't, at this writing, seen any of Nanney's newer (after the fire) works. If Absorbing Man is still around he might be trying to make contact with The Human Torch.

Let's explore some more the duality in fear and laughter. Kenny Scharf's work is pioneer and relevant. A funny thing happened *en route* to the Catastrophe. The sequence of images in *Sunday Drive* (1978) is printed in reverse, right to left. Dad's behind the steering wheel with Ma next to him; the children, a boy and a girl, are in the back seat, leaning forward. The family's expressions are happy and smiling; the panel series transforms them into antennae, cyclopean, extra-terrestrial weirdos. Cracked-up panic, like the laughter at the accidental siren. There's a feisty dragon in *Barbara Simpson's New Kitchen* (1977); bizarre plants grow out of the washbasin and tub in the bathroom where George Simpson barbecues. The typical American upper-middle-class family settings, symbolic of set values and average normal lives, become the stage for strangeness. It is the juxtaposition of the ordinary with the extraordinary that provokes the laughter here. There's nothing funny in each separated; the nonsense combination creates a dream that isn't quite nightmare while possessing distinct attributes of the fearful. The displacement creates a warp, the warp tickles the larynx, and one regains the lost laughter of childhood.

Among Scharf's attributes is the total lack of inhibition. Inhi-

bition doesn't allow for nonsense. The ridiculous absurd is valid only if it's liberated and free; repression stifles laughter. The alien quantity, the unknown ingredient Scharf introduces, present without fuss. In one guise or another, it is always integral to the work. The physical and intellectual laws that condition humanity no longer exist. Scharf launches into a dream world that hesitates between the marvelous and the uncanny, an unknown future and the inexplicable past. The hesitation cannot be situated except in the present. It is in the order of things that since every age and every people have had their own form of beauty, we inevitably have ours. Within Scharf's aesthetic there resides an absolute and a particular element—something eternal and something transitory. It is not only the agreeable and friendly images that he experiences as something universally intelligible; the serious, the troubled, the sad, the tragic of accident, in short a whole divine comedy of life, including death and hell, also pass before him.

The artist offers us worlds of marvel, worlds which are born from an exalted cosmic image and, thanks to the exaltation, the cosmic image is not purely and simply drawn from the world. Scharf upsets relations in time, and yet affirms time, the paintings' own time which mutates them—and the time of metamorphoses where the different temporal ecstasies coincide in a imaginary and fantastic simultaneity and in the form of the space which the painter creates. Sometimes we find ourselves in the presence of a form that guides and encloses our earliest dreams. When a thing becomes isolated, it becomes round, assumes a figure of being that is concentrated upon itself. This 'phenomenology of roundness' appears throughout Scharf's oeuvre.

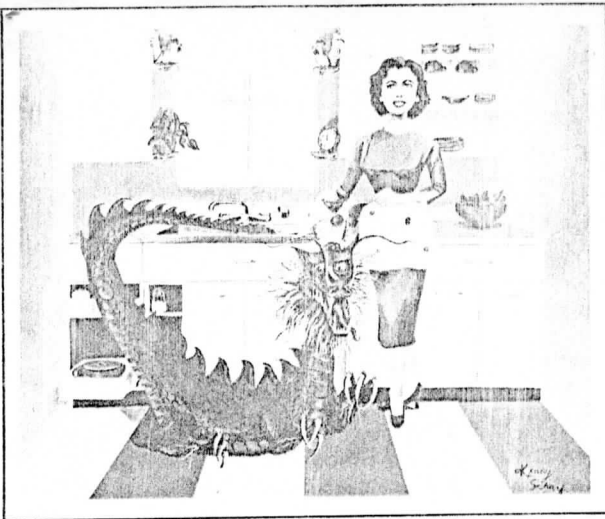
The paintings of 1983 reiterate the circular motif. It's a topsy-turvy world where the dreamer of cosmic reverie has passed from a human vocabulary to a vocabulary of things. The symmetrical composition of *Fertility* (1983) centers about a red sphere floating over a purple landscape. The odd, sexy life-form is all curlicues and ticklers; one can read a pair of thighs penetrated by a crazy blue penis. The creature is double-headed and the heads are again round. *Ultimat Space* (1983) is exactly what the title says. Three major planetoid spheres occupy the night sky; a constellatory sprinkling of stars (a Milky Way?) and ectoplasmic forms move about the black darkness. Only half of one of the three larger spheres is visible; cut off by the upper rim of the painting, it appears vegetal, green in color and veined like leaves. An orange Saturn ring surrounds a blue sphere on the left; a human and feminine face with closed eyes and full lips inhabits it. To the right, sporting a bright pink plum of nose, cyclopean, and blue, the other sphere pulls a face. The presence of unsuspected worlds and powers is experienced in the atmosphere, rather than plot or specifics, is what provokes the emotional intensity this viewer feels. A light delirium fuses fear and laughter; Scharf's astronomic flight recalls how, amid the dangers and terrors of a dream, I have occasionally said to myself, encouragingly, and successfully: "It is a dream! I will dream on!"

It has been said, and truly: nothing is neutral, nothing is impotent in the universe; an atom may ruin all, an atom may ransom all. It's the Madness of the Day. I am not learned; I am not ignorant. I have known joys. That is saying too little: I am alive, and this life gives me the greatest pleasure. And what about death? When I die (perhaps any minute now), I will feel immense pleasure. I am not talking about the foretaste of death which is stale and often disagreeable. Suffering dulls the senses. But this is the remarkable truth, and I am sure of it: I experience boundless pleasure in living, and I will take boundless satisfaction in dying.

The end of history is inscribed in its beginning—history, man at grips with time, bearing stigmata that define both time and man. What madness, too, this concern with history! But what else can you do when you have been *transfixed* by Time? The notion of order is finally finding the counterbalance of an unsailable notion of disorder. Man clings to a divine explanation, yet there is no difference between one idea and another. I reserve the right not to remain bound by whatever idea the necessary consequence and logical progression of my thought may have impelled me to formulate.

Man bit into the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. What hap-

Kenny Scharf,
Barbara
Impson's New
Kitchen, 1977.
Acrylic on
canvas, 24 x
24". Courtesy
Tony Shalrazi
Gallery.



opened then, what did he do? He covered his body with the leaf of the fig. Adam and Eve sewed together aprons of fig leaves to hide their nakedness. Because, before eating the fruit, none had told them about nakedness. Not knowing is that they did not have a name for it. The fig leaf and the figure are thus intimately related. Word and language were born but man was confused, and probably not very happy about the turn of events. The turn of Eve to bear the blame came, and they were both confused. Cast out of the garden of paradise, they realized they no longer possessed eternal life. The threat of death, the knowledge of it, was now part of their lives—as the children born when you read this are part of ours. After that men multiplied and daughters and sons were born to them. Shapes appear; they take form and I see another figure: that of my brother Abel, whom I had killed. It offers me more pity than I had had on it. My child and I follow the shape and the three of us pass over the white sands, between the rocks and by the bushes, silent as the shadows.

Nobody discovered the moon; we all knew it was there all along. More alone than stones, more alone than mussels in the dark. More alone than the writer when to write is to surrender oneself to the fascination of the absence of time. There, where fossils never learnt to pray, dormant craters yawn boredom into the void. I surrender to the hungry vacuum; nothing happens. The reality of the man in the moon is the reality of words on a paper. Let me demonstrate: Write the word MOON in capital letters on a blank space; underneath it write LUNE, also capitalized, but write it vertically, the 'L' at the median line separating the two 'O's in moon. Look at the four letters OOLU; he's the man in the moon: the 'O's are his eyes, the 'L' his nose, and the 'U' the tongue sticking out his mouth.

But what is the image? When there is nothing, that is where the image finds its condition, but disappears into it. The image requires the neutrality and the effacement of the world/word; it wants everything to return to the indifferent depth where nothing is affirmed; it inclines toward the intimacy of what still continues to exist in the void; its truth lies there. Day breaks, the Last Star dies. Nothing but light, and the immensity of brightness. The body is the place marking the disappearance of the body.

In *End of Journey* (1983) E'wao Kagoshima ripples his water fetish where once there was a body. The original image shows a two-masted sailboat with the prone figure of a man lying beneath it; the ship's anchor dangles overboard and points to the heart. The body has become *pentimento* in the finished piece; a blue expanse replaces it and a triangular yellow mountain shape peers through a gray sky behind the boat. The sky is aerial water. Another work by Kagoshima depicts a seahorse in an aquarium; an octopus floats strangely above the water level. The spirit of the bird is the spirit of ultramarine depths; the double space immobilizes all the values of cosmic reverie. An intense life in one space provokes the desire for life in the other. Melting into the basic element is a necessary death; there is nothing before water; above water there is nothing. One exists between the bag of water and the motionless abyss. Only a flower that falls is a complete flower, say the Japanese. Kagoshima seeks the ruins of the cities; he wills to erase all traces of

them; the landscapes he paints project a rural surreal. The back of *Positive on the Quest* (1983) shows a giant branch unfolding about what seems to be a self-portrait with vacant red eyes; a strange double forms a round mouth in the center of the forehead. It's the image in the mirror, the looking-glass other. It is written that many philosophers forbid looking into the mirror of the waters, for in seeing the world and oneself upside down, one may be stricken with vertigo. Transfigured on the brink of the horrible, our contortions, visible or secret, are communicated to the planet; already it trembles.

Desire and vertigo grow larger as they approach each other. When they finally touch and blend, then, through a leap, a start of my whole gaze, I attain myself; I attain the concrete feeling of existence, which is wholly enveloped by death. I am a New York peasant caught in the splendor of destiny. There is a fierce edge to the air that makes the eyes smart. I am here now and tomorrow when I may go, as I was here yesterday when I had not yet arrived. Primal mutters at the skull's base send waves along my spine. Darkness or whirlwind, it makes no difference: the night does not yield its vessels.

Caught in the trap of the stars, I imagined myself to be a given animal. With all my senses, intelligence and fantasies, I never paused to reflect except to coordinate and pursue ideas I had had, ideas I thought I had accumulated in my head from beginning to end, from memory to now. I expected conclusions and coherence, organized my being around the linked episodes of my fate. I confronted myself, followed myself; I was my own shadow, the waning of my own hypothesis. I perceived with intoxicating lucidity the graph of the forces that dominated me. I complimented myself on my peaceful prospects. But one night, the night looked back at me and screamed. And in a place of confusion, horrified, I came across, once more, the monstrous imprint of my body and my gaunt face. It was my turn to scream; instead I burst out laughing. It was the hour of the *frisson* which bears an astonishing resemblance to a stroke of black ink. The answers come before what we call after.

There are no answers. We forget the body, but the body does not forget us. Cursed memory of the organs! The traces of jism: love is a state of confusion between the real and the marvelous. In this state, the contradictions of being seem *really* essential to being. The void and the concrete merge; the fantastic, the beyond, the dream, survival, paradise, hell, art, nothing. Not being blind, I do not know what I am missing by not seeing. And if I were to go blind, what would bother me most would be to no longer be able to stare idiotically at the passing clouds. I love the clouds . . . the clouds that pass . . . *les merveilleux nuages*.

Existing is plagiarism. I am the Mutant International. Each of us is entitled to claim the forebears who suit him, who *explain him* in his own eyes. How often have I not changed ancestors! Adam, the baby and the man from Mars, E.T., they all have this in common, being thrust into a new world. From comic strip to comic strip a narrative where nothing happens continues in François Boisrond's paintings. At the climax of the Void we prefer the Catastrophe to the indignity of a complete erosion. The suddenness is honorable, even glamorous. What's the Oxygen Bomb? Isn't that next? After the atom A-bomb and the hydrogen H-bomb must come the O-bomb. It's a scream. So is Ann Magnuson in yet another persona: healer and holy spiritualist Alice Tully Hall, a performance that blends the current confusion with hysterical insight. Oh, and pretty soon we'll be into 1984; I'll tell you more about it next time. And no, I've not finished with Hervé Di Rosa. There's a celebrity guest appearance coming, also the Truth about John the Baptist. What's Robotism? Stay tuned.

The writer finds himself in this more and more comical condition of having nothing to write, and of being forced by an extreme necessity to keep writing it. Having nothing to express should be taken in the simplest sense. Whatever he wants to say, it is nothing. The world, things, knowledge are only reference points across the void. The unknown masterpiece always allows one to see in the corner the tip of a charming foot (*le pied*); this foot prevents the work from being finished, but also prevents the painter from facing the emptiness of his canvas and saying, with the greatest feeling of repose: "Nothing, nothing! At last there is nothing." The study of beauty is a duel in which the artist shrieks with terror before being overcome by the fireworks of laughter.