



# The New York Times

Art: 'From Within,' Prisoners' Show  
James R. Mellow  
May 26, 1973

"From Within," is the very apt title for an exhibition of paintings and mixed-media works by the inmates of the Auburn Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison. They are now on view at the New York Cultural Center, 2 Columbus Circle. Despite the old adage that stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage, it seems to be the case that being penned up — whether physically or emotionally — does create a certain subjective intensity in one's emotional life. It is very much "from within" that the successes in this exhibition of 53 works by 21 prisoners derive.

The paintings, drawings and collages shown here are the result of a workshop program organized by James Haritas, director of the Everson Museum in Syracuse, where the exhibition was previously shown, following its opening at the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington. The styles range through most of the contemporary trends, from representational and pop, to primitive art and pure abstraction. For this observer, it is the figurative works that have the most force and meaning.

Prison life and prisoner's dreams, understandably, provide the most persistent themes, and the bits of blue sky that crop up in several of the pictures, although visual clichés, do take on a certain poignancy, given the circumstances. In Joel Gaines's "60268," the theme is perhaps overly literal — the painted figure of a prisoner behind a network of real string. In Ronald Warlord's series of drawings, "The Naked Hands of Love"—figure glimpsed behind bars—the literalism is considerably helped out by a remarkably finished technique. Among the most effective works here are Armando Hernandez's large, fluent pastel, a kind of fantasia figurative themes, and Ralph Lombardi's semiabstraction of beautifully painted hard-edge forms, "Main Street." There are noteworthy paintings, as well, by Alfred Rodriguez and Michael Joseph Nero. And the remainder, I think, are commendable efforts.

Other exhibitions of note include:

Rafael Mandavl (Tibor de Nagy, 29 West 57th Street): In a first one-man showing, this 27-year-old painter is distinctly impressive. His large-scale canvases are symbolic landscapes with fragmentary elements — blurred snapshots, a pair of scissors, Kodachrome slides, typographical elements, situated on grayed, pointillist backgrounds. The paintings work very effectively, spatially and structurally, to create an unusual and highly personal imagery. The smaller collages and gouaches are no less engaging.

**Josef Grau-Garriga (Arras, Gallery, 29 West 57th Street): The major works in this exhibition of tapestries, paintings and collages by Spanish artists, are, I think, the large, decidedly brusque and mescaline tapestries and threedimensional hangings.**

**They are worked in a variety of materials—beautifully dyed wools, odd bits of plastic, even fragments of army uniforms and knitted baby's clothing—with a marked emphasis on textural effects. On occasion, they suggest certain landscape allusions; at other times, the forms are distinctly erotic. Despite the intentional coarseness of the weaving, there is, as well, a certain opposing delicacy in the use of color. The range of earthy browns, tans and soft beiges is quite stunning.**

**The paintings and collages, on the other hand, though carried off with great verve, seem less unusual and much more reminiscent of familiar pop art and mixed-media trends.**



Stan Brodsky and Massimo Pierucci (Roko Gallery, 90 East 10th Street): Mr. Brodsky's landscapes, most of them inspired by a recent stay in New Mexico, have a quiet authority and a handsome sense of painterly touch.

Generally, he uses broad flat swaths of color and elemental forms to convey the scene—farm buildings cresting a hilltop, the irregular blue form of a mountain rising in the distance, stretches of desert landscape topped with a flaming sunset sky. It is the kind of painting that succeeds as much from its sense of atmosphere and the subtlety of its handling, as from the blunt simplicity of its forms..

Mr. Pierucci's sculptures are antic "machines," made of cast-bronze forms which, when vigorously cranked, give off a variety of clunking and 'clopping sounds. The individual elements in these Rube Goldberg contractions are quite handsomely shaped and cast. Without dismissing humor in art, one does wonder if the artist has not relied too heavily on the funand-games aspect of his work.

Dianne Nelson (Graham Gallery, 1014 Madison Avenue): In these collage paintings of garden landscapes and interior views, Miss Nelson displays a really marked talent for excess.

Formally, at times, the paintings have the appearance of quite representational works that have been perversely cut up and pasted down to create examples of abstract expressionism. A face or a flower, for instance, suddenly blooms in a flurry of apparently abstract brushwork.

The results, however, are quite successful; the paintings have a lush, overblown quality, and the colors are rich and heady, as if the viewer had not only been promised a rose garden, but had also been given one in the height of its season.

# Art: 'From Within,' Prisoners' Show

## Auburn Inmates' Work Is at Cultural Center

By JAMES R. MELLOW

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figurative themes, and Ralph Lombardi's semiabstraction of beautifully painted hard-edge forms, "Main Street." There are noteworthy paintings, as well, by Alfred Rodriguez and Michael Joseph Nero. And the remainder, I think, are commendable efforts.

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They are worked in a variety of materials—beautifully dyed wools, odd bits of plastic, even fragments of army uniforms and knitted baby's clothing—with a marked emphasis on textural effects. On occasion, they suggest certain landscape allusions; at other times, the forms are distinctly erotic. Despite the intentional coarseness of the weaving, there is, as well, a certain opposing delicacy in the use of color. The range of earthy browns, tans and soft beiges is quite stunning.

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Stan Brodsky and Massimo Pierucci (Roko Gallery, 90

## Theme of Confinement Stressed Often

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