COLLABORATION: OTHER DIMENSIONS

Collage is a very flexible medium in technique, medium and imagery. While only a few artists have attained major status based on the medium, either as the main thrust of their art (Kurt Schwitters) or as a significant aspect of it (Joseph Cornell, Matisse's late cutouts), collage has continued to be a medium with many practitioners. Although the notion of collage is generally associated with the cutting and pasting of paper, this exhibition of four artists is divided between an acknowledgment of the historical centrality of paper to collage, and an endeavor to move beyond it. Through the work of four artists, it demonstrates that collage can incorporate a wide diversity of media and intentions, and that it can sometimes literally rise above the flat surface often assumed to be its natural form.

Chinyee, born in Nanjing, China, mastered traditional forms of water-based Chinese painting, but also was proficient in Western art methods, ultimately tending toward modern ideas and abstraction. Her collages are expressions of the ability of reductive imagery and subtlety to produce works of great elegance and refinement. However, although fashioned from just a few pieces of torn paper with applied watercolor, they also display a firm compositional and chromatic power.

Dennis Lick has taught art on the college level for decades, and his work can be viewed as an ongoing literal lesson in the foundational principles of color and composition -- in the best and most creative sense. With a practiced sensitivity for shape and hue, fragments of magazines, newspapers, and other printed items are cut and placed to create firmly designed surfaces that sparkle with visual interplay. Carefully selected and positioned snippets of words or imagery add a sprinkling
of wit and extra visual interest to the overall vivacity of these complex compositions.

Peter S. Arakawa enhances his technical skill with a fervent, unbounded imagination that scoops up imagery, ideas, materials and objects and reconfigures them into personal worlds of wonder. The surfaces of his collages may be perforated with holes, stitched with thread and wire, adorned with tags, fasteners, or raised conical paper forms of his own devising. As if in response to the frantic activity of his imagery that seems determined to overflow its planar restrictions, occasionally Arakawa has made collages that integrate with three-dimensional supports, forming hybrid constructions.

Bonnie Lucas has built an impressive body of art that, with a few notable exceptions, is based on collage, though her interest quickly advanced her output from flat paper to work incorporating small objects. As her imagery and conceptual framework grew in complexity and ambition (matched by superb craftsmanship), her work became larger and integrated a sweeping set of items and materials – many of which she purchased from low-cost variety stores in Manhattan – even including full articles of clothing such as socks, kerchiefs, gloves, and baby’s clothes. The bulk of some of these items raised the surfaces of her work to several inches above the background.

Jeffrey Wechsler