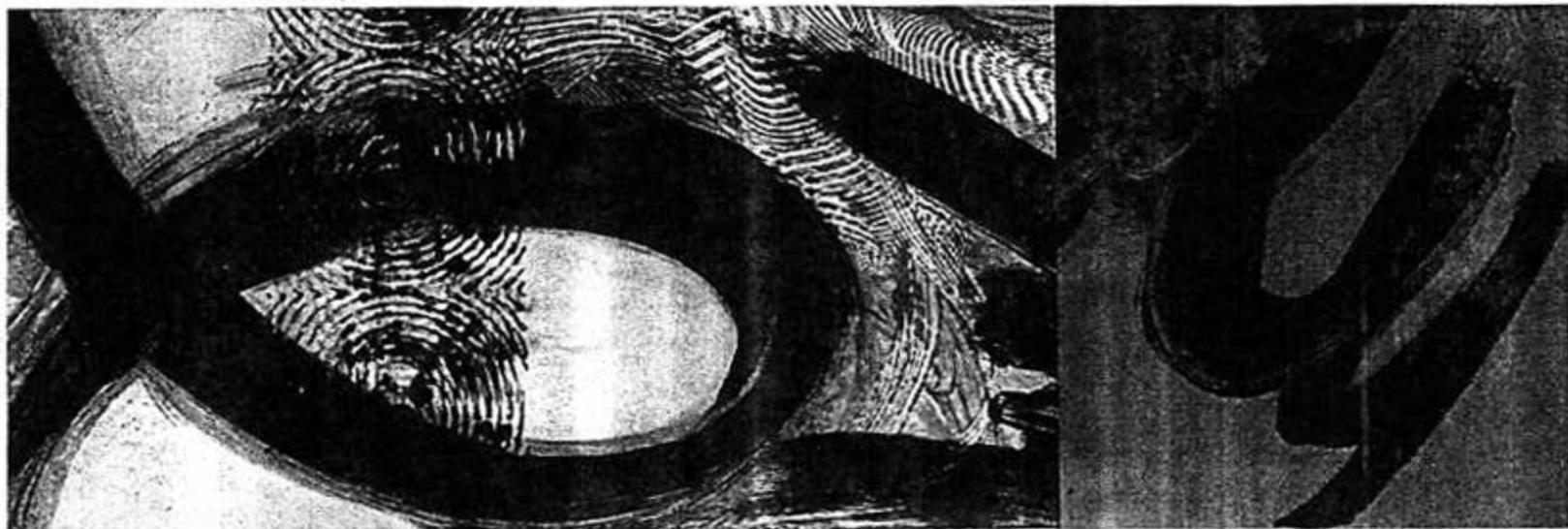


ART REVIEWS/Phyllis Braff

Works on Paper, With a Difference



'Take Out/Eat In'

Molloy College Art Gallery, 1000 Hempstead Avenue, Rockville Centre. Through March 19. 678-5000.

The wealth of choices on a restaurant's multi-columned menu is used as a metaphor for "Take Out/Eat In," a gathering of work by nine artists pursuing diverse directions. There is a unifying thread, however, in the way the show tries to demonstrate abstraction's wide scope. In the range here, abstraction can refer to the alteration and manipulation of recognizable images as well as to the creation of visual experiences that depend only on the actions of the materials involved.

Ron Ehrlich's loose, dripping pigment activating a scratchy, evocative surface and Arthur Arnold's luminous lavender field are two examples that use the action of the paint to generate responses. Jackie Batten-

field allows the tactile quality of handmade Asian papers to encourage some of her markings, but she goes much further by combining styles in adjacent sections of a single piece to add energy and tension. Sensibilities mix powerfully, too, and also suggest abstract cultural interpretations in Rhoda Sherbell's sculptural assemblage "Out of Africa," a forceful head that uses shells, bird feathers and delicate laces in its blend of evocative materials.

Levels of meaning are particularly intriguing in Jenny Scobel's compelling grisaille torso portraits with the character of advertising illustrations from the 1940's. As if developing a pun, each illusionistically modeled figure is clothed in patterns that resemble motifs in children's books, and they seem derived from designs in the painted, two-dimensional background. Eye gazes are intense, adding to the feeling of disorientation.

Jessica Falstein also reuses older sources for new purposes in assemblages that feature a single turn-of-the-century glass slide, once intended as photo-documentation of factory work. The format blends past and present in a challenging way, with the old scene's reality asserting a fascinating but unsettling authority.

The evocative power of small-scale images is one component, too, of Susan Mastrangelo's memorable grouping of 50 miniature heads, each emphasizing a different facial type fashioned in briskly, boldly twisted and painted modeling material.

"Catena Tango No. 3," above, by Jackie Battenfield, part of "Take Out/Eat In" at Molloy College.