

NEW YORK TIMES

JANUARY 23, 1971

ART: THEMES OF VIOLENCE

By Hilton Kramer

Robyn Denny (Elkon, 1063 Madison Avenue at 81st Street): This is quite the best group of paintings that Mr. Denny, an English painter of rigorously designed color abstractions, has shown in New York. In these new paintings, a single field of color occupies almost, but not quite, the entire surface of the picture. Along its bottom edge, a small, neat structure of related colors rises like an austere architectural model or a schematized landscape. The effect is, generally, both luminous and cerebral, suggesting "real" light and a conception of light at the same time. Most successful, I think, are the pictures in which color is held to the closest values: "View from the Blue 2" and "Give."

Jane Wasey (Kraushaar, 1055 Madison Avenue at 80th Street): Connoisseurs of the carver's art will derive a great deal of pleasure from this, exhibition of sculpture executed in the last few years. Although Miss Wasey includes several fine torsos, carved in wood, the main focus of the exhibition is a poetic abstraction, and she is strongest in the stone carvings. The trouble, alas, is that these stone sculptures are not very original in their formal conception. The craftsman's work is superb, indeed eloquent in itself, but the forms are too often the clichés of modern sculptural history. Her strongest work is based, I think, on her "Sea Form" motif, and the white marble "Sea Form II" is, assuredly, a work of both strength and elegance.

Bob Duran (Bykert, 24 East 81st Street): We've been hearing a good deal about the revival of so-called "lyric abstraction" lately, and Mr. Duran's paintings must, I suppose, be considered part of this phenomenon. Liquid color is stained onto the canvas in carefully arranged shapes that touch, overlap and generally arrange themselves in attractive decorative patterns. The result is painting that is both pleasant to look at and very lightweight in its general effect.

A version of this archives appears in print on January 23, 1971, on Page 24 of the New York edition with the headline: Art: Themes of Violence.

What Mr. Shannon's paintings offer us are elaborate tableaux of social violence. Social, sexual, racial and political motifs are not so much joined as simply thrown together in a kind of helter-skelter stew of images and ideas. The drawing—and this is the kind of painting that is fundamentally tinted drawing—is sketchy; the painting itself is rapid and charged with emotion. This is anecdotal art, though the exact scenario of each given anecdote is left a little mysterious. All one can be certain of is that the outcome will be a violation of polite expectations.

Mr. Shannon is, as I have suggested, a better draftsman than he is a painter, and he is a better illustrator than he is a draftsman. As for his social ideas, they consist of little more than clichés gleaned from the headlines and the evening news report on the tube. His real interest, I suspect, is quick-action life-drawing, and he is rather

carved in wood, the main focus of the exhibition is a poetic abstraction, and she is strongest in the stone carvings. The trouble, alas, is that these stone sculptures are not very original in their formal conception. The craftsmanship is superb, indeed eloquent in itself, but the forms are too often the clichés of modern sculptural history. Her strongest work is based, I think, on her "Sea Form" motif, and the white marble "Sea Form II" is, assuredly, a work of both strength and elegance.

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Aide to Mayor Denies Conflict Between Law Practice and Job

By EDWARD C. BURKS

Edward A. Morrison, the Mayor's representative on the Board of Estimate and his liaison with the City Council, said yesterday that his private law practice did not constitute a conflict of interest.

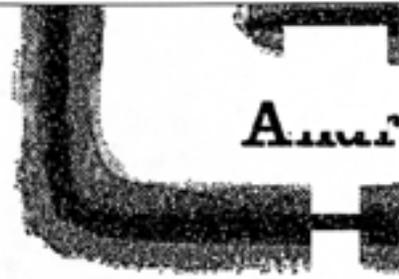
"It's not an ethical problem," the \$28,000-a-year special assistant to the Mayor said, "because I accept no clients having any business to do with the City of New York nor do I recommend any other attorney for them."

He made his comment after reports published about his private law practice as a partner

name in the title of his former law firm, although he was leaving it and would receive no fees.

S. Stanley Kreutzer, the board's counsel, sent him a letter three months later advising that he could leave his name in the title, but suggesting that he ought to make known his retirement from the firm.

Mr. Ruskin agreed that removal of a name from a former firm was not the main issue. The important factor, he said yesterday, was that the agency head should receive no income from his former firm for any



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Art: Themes of Violence

Shannon's Paintings Offer Tableaux of Social, Racial and Political Motifs

By MILTON KRAMER

As their current art turning its face to the direction of social crisis, but there is actually very little art these days that can be taken seriously—very little that takes itself seriously—as an aesthetic reflection of the agonizing issues that have stricken society. Observing the few books and promotional materials at an art of social consciousness that have lately come forward, I am reminded of one of the art jokers of the sixties. When artists were accused of oversteering a "return to nature," the question often asked was "Is nature willing to return to art?" One wonders if the social-political questions in art is any more amenable to a quick solution.

Whatever the answer to this question may be, a little of the art scene as a whole, one painter at least—Joseph Shannon of Washington—has decided this issue for himself. He has done so, moreover, with an indifference to prevailing aesthetic fashions that is nothing less than breathtaking. He took a certain price for his indifference—the price that illumination must always pay to avoid the signs of a pure political aesthetic, he appears to do so with a conviction that borders on contempt for aesthetic niceties.

I first saw Mr. Shannon's work when it was shown at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington in 1968. Now he is having his first one-man show in New York at the Bradstreet Gallery, 24 East 84th Street. His art is vulgar, energetic, exuberant, realistic and, alas, not terribly original. Yet it has an unmistakable impact and power.

What Mr. Shannon's paintings offer us are elaborate tableaux of social violence. Social, sexual, racial and political motifs are all so much joined as they cluster together in a kind of heterodox view of images and ideas. The drawings and the kind of painting that is fundamentally linked drawings alike, the realistic with emotion. This is sentimental art, though the most sensitive of each given anecdote is left a little mysterious. All one can be certain of is that the outcome will be a violation of polite expectations.

Mr. Shannon is, as I have suggested, a better draftsman than he is a painter, and he is a better draftsman than he is a draftsman. As for his social ideas, they consist of little more than cliché slogans from the headlines and the evening news report, or the tube. His real interest, I suspect, is quick-action illustration, and he is no other

Aide to Mayor Denies Conflict Between Law Practice and Job

By EDWARD C. BURKE

Edward A. Morrison, spokesman in the title of his former Mayor's representative on the Board of Estimates and his liaison with the City Council, said today that his private law practice did not constitute a conflict of interest.

"It's not an ethical problem," the 32,000-year specialist said to the Mayor, "because I accept no clients having any business to do with the City of New York and do not recommend any other attorney for them."

He made his statement after

good to it. I find my own interest in this work, the second time around, is mostly to be negatively quiet work, when the violence of the performance takes precedence over the propagandistic self-portrait, called "myself" seems to me better than any of the big "headlines" or "policy" items.

But he is what he is, an artist of some independence and much energy and a furious talent who has declined his independence of everything current, entire opinion has declared possible.

Other exhibitions this week include the following:

Julius Daney (Diner), 1963
Madison Avenue at 11st Street. This is quite the new group of paintings that Mr. Daney, an English painter of originally modest background, has shown in New York. In these new paintings, a single field of color, one area shaded, but not quite, the entire surface of the picture. Along its bottom edge, a row of small, rectangular, white cubes rises like an ancient architectural model or a suburban landscape. The effect is, generally, both luminous and cerebral, suggesting "real" light and a suspension of light at the same time. Most successful, I think, are the pictures in which color is held to the closest value: "View from the Blue 2" and "View."

Jim Wazy (Diner), 1963
Madison Avenue at 8th Street. Components of the corner's art will derive a great deal of pleasure from the contrast of sculpture executed in the last few years. Although Miss Wazy includes several fine forms, served in wood, the main focus of the exhibition is a group of abstracts, and she is strongest in the show. The result is a kind of collage of modern sculptural history. Her strongest work is found, I think, in her "New Form" series, and the white marble "See Form 2" is, assuredly, a work of both strength and elegance.

Bob Dunes (Diner), 24 East 84th Street. We've been hearing a good deal about the revival of so-called "form abstraction" lately, and Mr. Dunes's paintings must, I suppose, be considered part of this phenomenon. Lapid color is stacked into the canvas in carefully arranged shapes that touch, overlap and generally arrange themselves in a kind of pattern. The result is painting that is both pleasant to look at and very thoughtful in its general effect.

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