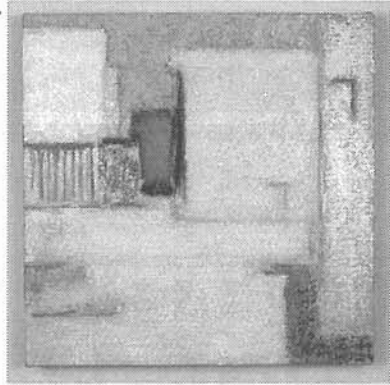


A Flourishing Artist at Spruce Ridge

By Beatrice Quitt

Over a cup of mid-morning tea Shelley Himmelstein and I talked about her painting, her early life and the varied interests that have brought her work to its successful fruition. Growing up in Merion, a suburb of Philadelphia, she had the good fortune to attend art classes at the Barnes Collection, the unusual museum founded by the eccentric physician, Albert Barnes, who made a fortune developing and selling Argyrol (in an earlier generation, a compound used as a local antiseptic). The collection, assembled by Barnes with the help of experts, and curated by him, is one of the finest in the world – housing works by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Renoir, Picasso, Matisse, and many others. Matisse and Mondrian have been major influences on Shelley's approach to art. Inspired by her mother,



who painted as a hobby, she began dabbling in painting as a child.

Upon graduation from high school, Shelley went to Sarah Lawrence College where she received her bachelor's degree. Later she earned a master of fine arts degree from Hunter College. She also spent more than a year at the Tyler School of Art in Rome, and returns frequently to Italy.

Shelley is currently working on a book project: an album titled *Red Poppies in the Wind* featuring haiku poetry by an important contemporary Italian poet, Andrea Zazotto. Haikus are poems which originated in Japan and are now written in many languages; they have a strict discipline in that they must be a certain number of words and syllables. The album is made up of six books, each containing six haiku and six images of a single artist: Shelley Himmelstein and five Italian painters. The poems and water colors depict the interaction of wind and poppies. Shelley has overall responsibility for realization of the project. The first showing will be in Italy, followed by New York.

In the next few months Shelley will be represented in group shows in Croatia and Italy. Her last solo show was at the Ben Shahn Galleries at William Paterson University. She has had one-person shows at 76 Varick and Synchronicity Space in New York City and at Casina Pompeiana in Naples, Italy, and participated in a good many group shows. Her paintings are in private collections in Italy and New York. She has also designed interiors for trade and educational books as well as doing the graphics and production for corporate publications.

Shelley spends 3 or 4 hours several days a week in her studio in the flower district. If anyone is interested in seeing her work, E-mail Info@shelleyhimmelstein.com. She is creating sports-capes, images inspired by New York environs and foreign travel. In her own words, "My images are derived from my environment without necessarily being descriptive of it." She also observes that "color is everything...color is painting...painting allows me to focus on underlying essences of places and moments, exploring and preserving that for contemplation." She has been described by others as a painter of landscape and urban space shaped by personal vision and the abstract painting tradition.

Talking to Shelley Himmelstein about her work has helped me to understand my own passion for looking at art and my fascination with its history. For me the contemplation of works of art and architecture makes it possible to commune with what is best in the human spirit.

Goodbye Caliban

By Pat Mason

I have frequented Caliban restaurant for over 35 years, since the time it was a biker's hangout. Caliban was located on the west side of Third Avenue between 26th and 27th Sts next to the Afghanistan restaurant, Bamiyani. Many an hour I spent at the small wood tables near the bar playing backgammon with friends in the early days, enjoying a good burger and a beer. It was very comfortable.

Alas, the owner told me not long ago that because of the quadrupling of his rent he cannot afford to stay open. He reported that the restaurant would be replaced by a bar/restaurant with big-screen TV viewing. My husband Fred and I were there on their last open day to thank them for their service through the years and to wish all good luck in their future endeavors.



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