

Frank, Peter. "Art Pick of the Week." *LA Weekly*, 16 November 1995, p. 134.

ART PICKS OF THE WEEK

LYNN BENNETT, ROY DOWELL, BUZZ SPECTOR

Lynn Bennett does not so much deconstruct contemporary myths of femininity as reconstruct them from a feminist — well, feminized — point of view. Bennett's stuff-crammed collages constrain themselves to a traditional iconic formula that places the archetypal woman, be she madonna or whore, front and center. Around our heroine, typical attributes such as glamour, seduction, nurture and self-sacrifice are magnified and metamorphosed to such an extent that the images themselves explode out past the grasp of the male gaze. These bride-of-Frankenstein syncretisms are as optically busy as game boards or Mexican wrestling posters, and every bit as laden with gravid signifiers.

In their visual opulence Bennett's scrapbook votives abhor Modernist vacuum and post-Modernist vacuousness alike. Likewise, Roy Dowell's collage works, fabricated in a wide array of sizes, boil over with detail. If the parts seem familiar (billboard segments, for instance, clearly comprise



Muse, 1995, by Lynn Bennett

a hefty portion of Dowell's source material), the wholes are wholly abstract, depicting nothing. But they manifest thrilling, seemingly inexhaustable visual tumult, powered by extravagant linear formations and, often, lurid colors. Deft formal rhymes and balances render these lathered maelstroms coherent. The larger of Dowell's collages, nearing six feet in height, are thick with themes and syncopations and are positively symphonic in their breadth. The smaller works on paper may be chamber music, but their orchestration is every bit as intricate.

Buzz Spector's use of collage is as heady as Dowell's is visceral, and as sly as Bennett's is straightforward. What Spector shares with the other paper-rippers is a love of the material itself, and of its social and personal resonance. Paper has been our society's support medium for the recording and retrieval of information. But the writing is on the screen: the paperless phase of cybernetic communication will soon be upon us. In the face of this, Spector's work is laced with bibliophilic poignance. Its bookish references pay delicate homage to writers (Kafka, Bertrand Russell, John Cage), to print (which flickers through certain pieces like ghostly stuttering), and to the codex sheaf itself. Spector is no rear-guard Gutenbergian, however, and in the most beautiful and mysterious work in his show his torn sheafs of printed papers fuse into shimmering monochrome fields in which elusive images waft and murmur like drawings made of steam.

Lynn Bennett at Patricia Correia, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica; thru Nov. 25. Roy Dowell at Margo Leavin, 812 N. Robertson Blvd., W. Hlywd.; thru Dec. 2. Buzz Spector at Angles, 2230 Main St., Santa Monica; thru Dec. 2.

—Peter Frank