



Art at Greenwich Plaza



Apthorp

1975, acrylic on canvas, 64" x 76-3/16"

James Brooks

James Brooks was a first generation New York School Abstract Expressionist. *Apthorp*, a late work, demonstrates the cumulative power and vision of forty years of Brooks's artistic development. With its organic yet carefully composed image in grisaille (black and white), *Apthorp* may be seen as a synthesis of Brooks's Cubist-inspired compositions from the 1930's, with the freedom and improvisational elements of his splattered forms from the 1950's. Inspired by Jackson Pollack's paintings, Brooks developed a splatter technique of paint application often executed over a black background. Later switching over from oil to acrylic he continued to evolve his approach to forging an abstract image through manipulation of liquid materials.

In 1965, Brooks explained to Dorothy Seckler that, "I still begin on the floor and work both with brushes and with some paint poured on, and squeegeed on with a cardboard perhaps. That produces very flat tones but mainly a...crisp edge to the form. And I like to work with brushes and with washes to have other areas have different kinds of penetration or softness to them."

The time Brooks allows for his canvas to develop results in a duality that stain paintings like *Apthorp* embody. The spontaneity of his methods combined with consideration and adjustment creates a balance between stability and chaos. We might see images of rocks, figures, land- or sea-scapes, yet primarily we are seduced by the resounding clash of formal elements – the massive dry blacks and the incisive surety of the grey negative space. Art critic Carter Ratcliff states that Brooks's "forms always develop intense relationships with that inevitable geometry, the edge of the canvas. As a result, energy learns stability. Explosiveness is transformed into calm, though never absorbed by it. Both qualities remain."

Brooks was born in 1906, in St. Louis, Missouri. He studied art at Southern Methodist University for two years, after which he studied with James A. Waddell at the Dallas Art Institute, and took private lessons with Martha Simkins. He moved to New York in 1926 where he worked as a commercial artist and took night classes with Boardman Robinson and Kimon Nicolaides at the Art Students League. In the 1930's he produced murals for the WPA including the monumental *Flight* for the Marine Air Terminal at La Guardia Airport. In addition to his career in painting, Brooks held teaching posts at various institutions, including Columbia University, Yale University and Pratt Institute in New York. Among his awards and honors includes a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1969, and an election to membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1973. James Brooks died on March 9, 1992 on Long Island.

Brooks's work is included in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and many others.



Dream of Jack's Island

2006, oil on canvas, 60" x 52"

Paul Resika

Paul Resika creates paintings that straddle the line between representation and abstraction. The American poet Mark Strand wrote, "In looking at Resika's work, one senses two things simultaneously: that nature despite its complexity has been partially transformed into an idealized place of circles, half-circles, triangles, and straight lines, and that the feel of the out-of-doors—the depth of the sky, the outline of the island or distant mountain, the sun, the moon—is palpable and has not been compromised." It is the paired-down interplay of form and color that makes Resika's work both abstract and evocative of our visual experience. The sail in *Dream of Jack's Island* feels as though it might have been glimpsed in the Long Island Sound on the other side of Rt. 95. In fact, the imagery in *Dream of Jack's Island* was inspired by the artist's trips to a remote lake in northern Maine.

Paul Resika was born in New York City in 1928. He had a precocious interest in art and began to study painting by the age of twelve with Sol Wilson. His most important teacher was Hans Hofmann with whom he studied on Cape Cod and in New York City in the mid-1940's. Resika rejected Hofmann's pedagogy when he went to Europe in the 1950's to study perspective and anatomy from old master paintings – aspects of his discipline that he felt had been omitted at Hofmann's school.

When he returned from Europe in the mid-1950's his work reflected his profound interest in Venetian painting and existed largely in opposition to what was happening in New York School Painting at the time. But Resika was part of an underground of post war New York painters who sought to marry working from observation with vigorous paint handling and a formal sense of abstraction. Resika's lush and elegant *Provincetown Piers* from the 1980's, his progressively more abstract *Vessels* series of the 1990's and his most recent figures and landscapes reveal his ongoing dialog with Hofmann's ideas about color and pictorial structure. This is echoed in the strong relationship that Resika maintains with the art of the past from Titian to de Kooning. Mark Strand notes that "...the force of Resika's paintings depends not only on their existing with amazing sureness between the contrary demands of realism and abstraction, but also between the sensuous claims of the present and the echoes of an art historical past."

Resika's work is in many important public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. He is a member of The National Academy of Design and American Academy of Arts and Letters.



Borealis

1988, painted steel, 28-1/2' x 30-1/2' x 18'

Mark di Suvero

Each day, Mark di Suvero's monumental sculpture *Borealis* is seen by thousands of commuters using the Greenwich train station or driving past Exit 3 on Rt. 95. The clarity and exuberance of its ascendant red form reflects a serendipitous overlap between corporate art collecting and public sculpture. Henry Ashforth, former chairman of The Ashforth Company who was instrumental in the acquisition and installation of *Borealis* at Greenwich Plaza described, in the words of art historian Irving Sandler, di Suvero's "unabashedly celebratory humanist monuments" in reference to the installation of *Borealis* at Greenwich Plaza. Situated at this nexus of commuter travel, *Borealis* epitomizes this aspect of di Suvero's work.

Mark di Suvero was born in Shanghai, China in 1933, and immigrated to the United States in 1941. He studied philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley and art in his final year. After college, he moved to New York. During the 1950's and 60's, di Suvero worked with discarded industrial materials. This has evolved into his use today of monumentally-scaled industrial materials such as steel I-beams, titanium, and industrial found elements. di Suvero often employs motion and balance as elements in his large scale sculptures and even a fixed work such as *Borealis* makes reference to the engineering feat of supporting many ton elements in equilibrium.

In 1960, a nearly fatal accident left him partially paralyzed. However, following a hard won recovery, he has continued to make works that are acknowledged among the significant sculptures of the late twentieth century.

In a catalog for an exhibition at The Orange County Museum of Art that included *Borealis*, Terry Neff suggests the title *Borealis* – which refers to the phenomenon of the Northern lights – along with that of a sister sculpture *Aurora*, presently installed in the National Gallery in Washington, is suggestive of "light and air – both intangible forces harnessed ironically into some of the most aggressively tangible materials available today; steel I-beams." Additionally, she points out that these two related monumental sculptures, "tower and reach upward toward the sky and that these natural elements are diametrically opposed to the...man-made elements...that comprise the building blocks of di Suvero's sculpture." *Borealis* was permanently hoisted into place by a crane at Greenwich Plaza between Buildings One and Two in 1999, after being shown at The Orange County Museum of Art in 1998 and before that in Venice in the exhibition *Mark di Suvero a Venezia* in 1995 where it was presented in unpainted steel.

di Suvero's work is part of many important public collections including the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, also in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, and the Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, New York.



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