

*paper*

FORM & SUBSTANCE

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*Paper*  
**FORM & SUBSTANCE**

September 18-October 23, 1988

Zigi BEN-HAIM  
Anne ELLIOTT  
Kyoko IBE  
Shoichi IDA  
Kathy LEVINE  
Golda LEWIS  
Winifred LUTZ  
Creighton MICHAEL  
Ann PAGE  
Barbara SCHWARTZ  
Michelle STUART

**New Jersey Center for Visual Arts**  
68 Elm Street Summit, New Jersey 07901

Paper is ambiguous stuff. Cheap, yet precious, it is the most disposable substance in our culture, yet among the most indispensable. Manufactured in the West only since about 1276,<sup>1</sup> at the waning of the Middle Ages, paper made the Renaissance possible. In conjunction with the invention of movable type in the fifteenth century, paper became the vehicle for the dissemination of information and learning that was fundamental to the Renaissance. This intellectual role of paper was also an important part of its function as paper became associated with art-making. The Renaissance concept of *disegno* — the newly conceptual aspect of the artwork that for the first time qualified the plastic arts for inclusion among the liberal arts (raising the status of the artist above the level of artisan, from maker to thinker) — depended upon paper as the medium of plastic thought, in the form of preliminary drawings.

But the intellectual role of paper has tended to make its material qualities seem negligible. Through most of its history as art in the West, paper's value has been as substrate, its intrinsic qualities of substance overlooked or taken for granted. This has not been the case in the East, where the aesthetic faculty is seen to be more spiritual, bridging the Western gap between hand and intellect. Nor has it been the case in the work of a significant number of contemporary artists whose works engage the sensuous potential of paper in a dialogue with its more conceptual associations, creating works in which paper functions as form and substance in both the material and intellectual senses of those words. The aim of this exhibition is to document this tendency, in works of art from the last dozen years. The artists represented do not constitute a school or movement, but rather were selected to demonstrate the diversity of approaches to and interpretations of the formal and conceptual significance of paper.

Recently, since about the early 1960s, increasing numbers of artists in the United States have turned their attention to the aesthetic possibilities of the material of paper, bringing about what has been termed the American Paper Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> Led by such innovators as Dard Hunter, Douglass Morse Howell and Golda Lewis, these artists have created both beautiful handmade papers to serve as substrates for prints, and new ways of forming and building paper sculpturally.

Golda Lewis has played an important part in this paper revival. Trained first as a sculptor before becoming a painter, her initial experiments with paper in the late 1950s combined painterly and sculptural interests — as do her most recent works. The scarcity of appropriate handmade papers led her to Douglass Morse Howell, from whom she learned the craft of papermaking. Working on her own since 1961, Lewis's career has been marked by experimentation and technical innovations, including incorporating found objects within the paper to create an interior deckle edge, combining paper pulp with clay, and developing a process for making paper directly on unsized

canvas, thus overcoming restrictions of scale. Winifred Lutz continues this tradition of innovation in her highly original work. Her extensive researches in the use of unusual fibers and casting in hand-made moulds produce sculptures with a mysterious, organic effect, appearing more to have grown than to have been made. Skillfully manipulating the flow of light around and through her paper "skins", Lutz creates a powerful plastic poetry that transcends the limits of verbal language.

Through the 1960s and '70s, the continuing surge in interest in the material of paper and the manual process of its making coincided with a constellation of apparently antithetical artistic trends. In their emphasis on conceptual and impersonal or industrial approaches to art-making and art object, minimalism, "process" art and earthworks seemed irreconcilably at odds with the intimacy and sensuousness of the hand-papermaking aesthetic. In an impressive series of works begun in the mid-seventies, Michelle Stuart succeeded in reuniting the conceptual with the sensuous; her use of paper was integral to this achievement.

Relying both literally and metaphorically on the traditional association of paper with documentation, Stuart incorporated earth taken from the sites where she worked into handmade books and stacked records. The unique colors and textures of the papers thus produced are at once handmade and the result of impersonal geologic forces. Similarly combining the impersonality of nature with intensive personal engagement, she exploited the blank receptiveness of paper in creating her original "drawing" techniques — indenting the paper with rocks or laboriously hand-rubbing earth into the paper's surface. The fascinating surface patinas of the *Strata* series are achieved in this manner. Through the process of their creation, the overlapping layers of paper document literally both the earth's strata and the artist's work in transforming earth into art.

Like Michelle Stuart, Anne Elliott treats the theme of landscape in its vastness. Elliott employs the pliant crispness of paint-soaked Okawara rice paper in a metaphorical evocation of the ponderous expanse of mountains and caves. Yet, in spite of the heavy depth and metallic glint of their richly-colored surfaces, there is a dancing lightness to her twisted and crumpled paper forms that conjures the spiritual exaltation experienced by the mountain climber.

The landscape is given a more intimate interpretation in Kathy Levine's three-dimensional reconstructions of a few inches of turf. Built primarily of photographs taken by the artist, Levine's collage reliefs employ paper in a directly documentary manner that is in one respect the antithesis of Michelle Stuart's pounding and rubbing. As a mechanical procedure, photography is depersonalizing, but the close view taken by the camera, the small scale of the work and the delicate handwork of reconstructing the photos in three dimensions, combine to produce an effect of intimacy, even tenderness.

Paper's various roles in contemporary civilization — as conveyor of culture in books, newspapers, and official documents of all kinds, and as the material of much litter and refuse — along with its ability to cling to other objects, have made it a highly allusive material for representing the urban landscape as well. Zigi Ben-Haim and Golda Lewis interpret landscape as the urban environment, incorporating in their works found objects as familiar as Ben-Haim's newspaper or as strange as Lewis's suggestively-textured bits of scrap metal and wood.

Golda Lewis first turned her attention to the patterns and shapes of broken concrete in her *Sidewalks of New York* series of 1981, in which clay formed by pressing into the rough cement served as a base for her paper. Since then she has made all-paper reliefs based on the baroque irregularities of the stone walls at Altos de Chavon, Dominican Republic. On a base of paper, the relief is built up layer by layer and pressed by foot to retain the texture and extravagantly sensuous deckle edge of each shape.

With its origin as wood, humble newsprint is for Zigi Ben-Haim the ideal material to express his constant theme of the dialogue in human experience of two natures, the first natural, the second man-made. Combining the paper with other materials chosen to represent these two "natures", such as tree branches or concrete, he creates highly original figures and forms that seem nevertheless recognizable through the familiarity of their gestures.

The familiar gestures of nature provide the lively, organic element in Barbara Schwartz's colorful abstractions. The physical characteristics of paper pulp — its lightness and malleability — inspire the supple intertwining of her forms, while its deep texture provides an ideal ground for the complex inventiveness of her paint handling.

Not the appearance of nature but its rhythm, structure and ultimate mystery inform the work of Kyoko Ibe, Ann Page, and Shoichi Ida. The repetitiousness of the twisting and knotting of the Washi (Japanese paper) to create her ethereal, veil-like forms evokes for Kyoko Ibe the cyclic repetition of nature itself. The majestic presence and quietly rustling movement of *White Wind* metaphorically re-creates its namesake. Using paper with a warm, variegated color that emphasizes its organic origins, Ann Page mimics the growth processes of nature. Each piece is built up through the repetition — with subtle modifications — of a basic geometric unit, as in the growth of crystals or the proliferation of leaves on a tree.

Shoichi Ida uses paper to explore the web of relationships between nature, art, and representation. In the series, *Descended Level — Between Vertical and Horizon*, he questions the assumed "transparency" of paper in its traditional role as substrate for naturalistic representation. Rather, by printing his images of natural objects on the reverse of the paper, or by actually embedding the object within the paper, he emphasizes that the paper (in its

capacity as medium of representation) is an obscuring veil between nature and perception. By molding the paper into shallow, box-like shapes, suggesting a container or stage, Ida separates plastic space — the arena of aesthetic perception — from the space of nature.

Light, space and even time are essential elements in Creighton Michael's elusive works, as they disclose themselves only gradually to the viewer. The intricate wood skeletons thrust the paper skins out into space and light, to display the paper's subtly colored translucence and reveal as well their own construction. Without any overt illustration or symbolism, Michael's sculptures evoke a multitude of associations, from the ancient and organic to futuristic geometry. The artist seems content to allow the associations to multiply, bringing to their making an assortment of references — remembrances of his viewing of medieval armor, Japanese folk art, of his readings in Celtic legends. But their meanings remain enclosed within the suggestive forms.

Margaret R. Lunn

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jane M. Farmer, "Paper: The Technological Wonder of the Ancient World," *New American Paperworks* (San Francisco: The World Print Council, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Glaubinger, "The American Paper Renaissance," *Paper Now: Bent, Molded, and Manipulated* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1986), pp. 1-15.

# Zigi Ben-Haim

Born, Bagdad, Iraq, 1945

The Avni Institute of Fine Arts, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 1966-70

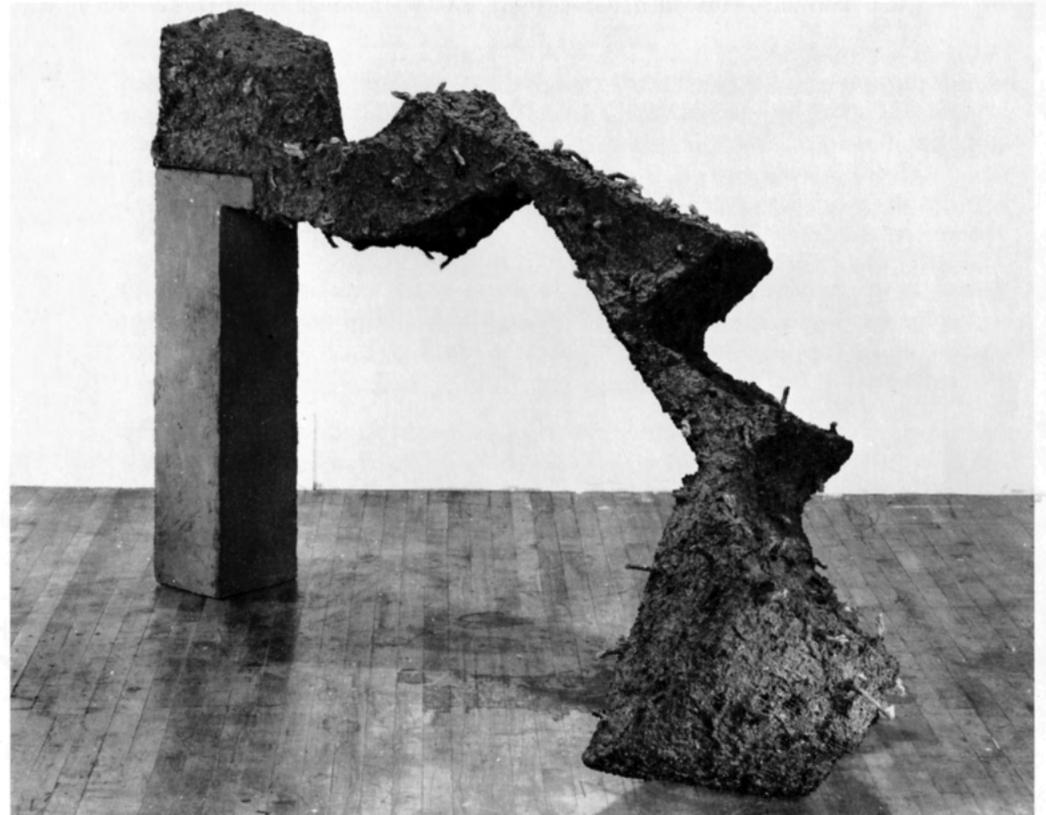
California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, 1971

California State University, San Francisco, M.F.A., 1974

Lives and works in New York

*As a man walking through different fields leaves his marks behind, and at the same time he breathes a new experience, I find the actual reality — Nature of green, and emotional and mental nature within us — collides and coincides with a second nature — The Urban Environment. Working with materials which symbolize both natures, the result is a new concept of Landscape as seen through the Urban experience.*

Zigi Ben-Haim



*Nightline*, 1982

Acid-free newsprint, wire mesh, rope, pigments and concrete

50" x 78" x 21"

Courtesy of the artist

# Anne Elliott

Born, Pittsburgh, PA, 1944

Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Summer, 1964

Sarah Lawrence College, New York, B.A., 1966

The Art Students League of New York, 1967

Parsons School of Design, New York, 1969

Lives and works in Ligonier, PA

*Elliott's work is about transformation, as is nature. In nature what is molten becomes solid; sea beds become high-flown crags; mountains become rocks, become pebbles, become sand; life and death, high and low, perform a stately dance. Is it such a miracle then that watercolor can become sculpture or that ricepaper can become a kind of rock? Is it such a miracle then that what is heavy and so solid can be shown as light, as paper?*

John Perrault, *Anne Elliott*, (Greensburg, PA: Westmoreland County Museum of Art, 1982).

*Volcano III*, 1984

Reinforced rice paper, acrylic paint, rhoplex

5' x 4' x 3'

Courtesy of the artist



Photo by David Aschkenas

# Kyoko Ibe

Born, Nagoya, Japan, 1941

Kyoto Institute of Technology, Kyoto, B.A., 1963, M.A., 1967

Lives and works in Kyoto

*When the wind softly touches my cheek, I feel the breath of the universe. It occurs to me sometime that the sunrise and the sunset are the peaceful rhythm of the earth. What I wish to express in my work of Washi (Japanese paper) is a sign or feeling of Nature — one's empathy with the unseen depth of the universe.*

Kyoko Ibe

*White Wind*, 1988  
Washi, fiberglass, illuminator  
8' x 4' x 10' (diameter)  
Courtesy of the artist



# Shoichi Ida

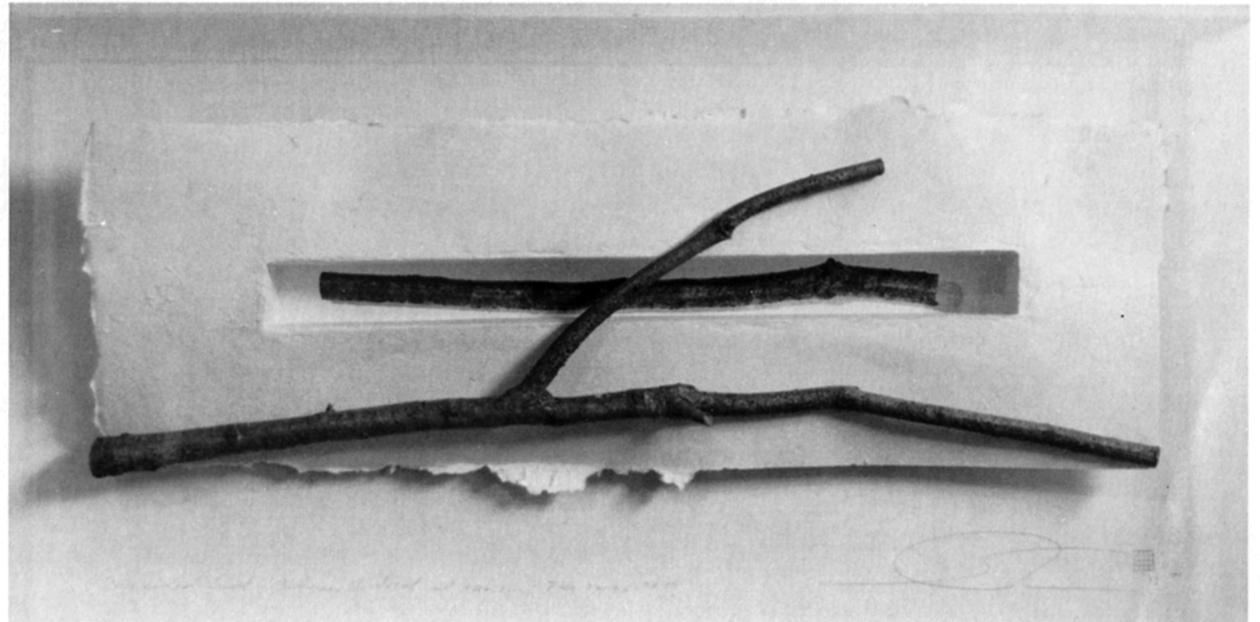
Born, Kyoto, Japan, 1941

Post Graduate Course, Kyoto Municipal University of Art, Kyoto, 1965

Lives and works in Kyoto

*I'm interested in a variety of mediums because I can observe and learn about the natural and physical processes in both the physical and psychological spheres as I create. But I must be directly, physically involved in the process; then I can observe the phenomenon of time and its effect on both the physical changes in the painting and on my own physical and emotional changes.*

Shoichi Ida, quoted in *ARTnews*, September 1981, p. 100.



*Descended Level — Between Vertical and Horizon*

*Two Twigs No. 10 — F-No. 26, 1979*

Lithograph on molded paper with a twig - kozo paper

31.5 x 64.5 x 7.5 cm

Courtesy Suzuki Gallery, New York

# Kathy Levine

Born, Queens, NY, 1958

State University at Potsdam, NY, B.A., 1980

Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, M.A., 1983

Lives and works in New York and Brooklyn

*My work is about seeing beauty in things that aren't really looked at or considered beautiful. I've always been interested in living things, nature and the landscape. The three-dimensional quality of the photographs came about because I wanted the pictures to be more tactile and concrete.*

Kathy Levine



*Shelter*, 1983  
Photograph, papier mâché, acrylic  
17" x 19" x 3"  
Courtesy of the artist

Photo by the artist

# Golda Lewis

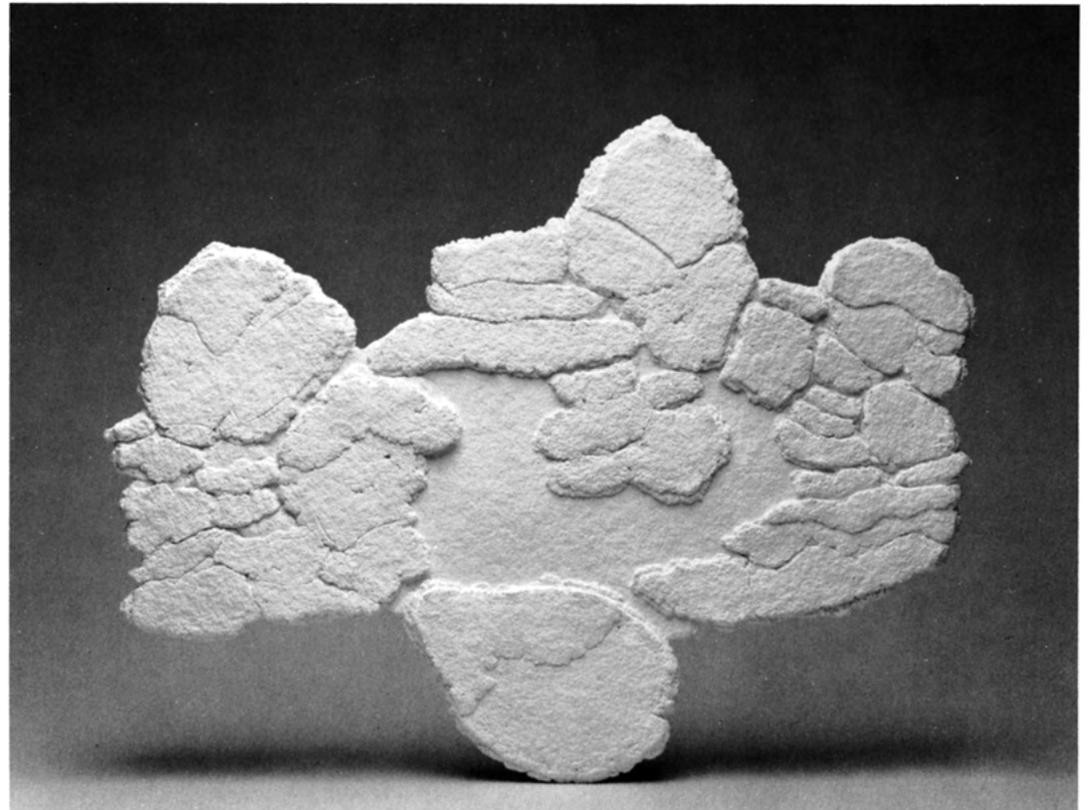
Born, New York, NY

Studied painting with Hans Hofmann, Jack Tworkov and Vaclav Vytlacil; sculpture with Robert Laurent; papermaking with Douglass Morse Howell

Lives and works in New York

*Having trained as a sculptor before becoming a painter, retrospectively it doesn't surprise me that my initial approach to the collected paper was that after 3 years of contemplation, one day I took a knife to the paper and raised the top layer into different shapes much as a shoemaker skives his leather. I glanced at the palette, saw those wonderful areas of paint made by brush when mixing colors, and instinctively placed the coagulated paint into my skived shapes and I was on my way. The tactile manipulation of the paper satisfied me as a sculptor and the paint satisfied me as a painter.*

Golda Lewis, quoted in *Internationale Biennale der Papierkunst "Handgeschöpftes"* (Duren, West Germany: Leopold-Hoesch Museum, 1986).



*Altos de Chavon*, 1984  
Paper handmade by the artist  
26" x 33 1/2"  
Courtesy of the artist

# Winifred Lutz

Born, Brooklyn, NY, 1942

Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH, B.F.A., 1965

Atelier 17, with Stanley William Hayter, 1965

Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, 1968

Lives and works in Huntingdon Valley, PA

*About this making . . .*

*Someone said,*

*"It's like a stone skipping-on water . . ."*

*Spreads rings of force*

*Which launch each leap,*

*And dissipate*

*Themselves eventually*

*Absorbed in the fluid body,*

*The skipping always stops;*

*The stone sinks,*

*Is Bottom-rubbed*

*To particles eventually*

*Dissolving into the fluid body.*

*The fluid evaporates to find the sky.*

*What's left congeals*

*And is the earth,*

*Might skip again,*

*Sink again,*

*Dissolve again . . .*

*Eventually completely changed to sky,*

*Which expands*

*Until no skipping remains*

*To propel it outward and*

*The empty is filled.*

*The imbalance balances.*

*Thus action is self-absolving.*

Winifred Lutz

*In the belly,*

*Of the bone,*

*From the water,*

*Bred of stone.*

*If Tatlin had a boat without a hull,*

*He would ride it*

*Upside down in the sky,*

*Unthwarted.*

1986

Cast flax paper, wood

28" x 27" x 74"

Courtesy of the artist

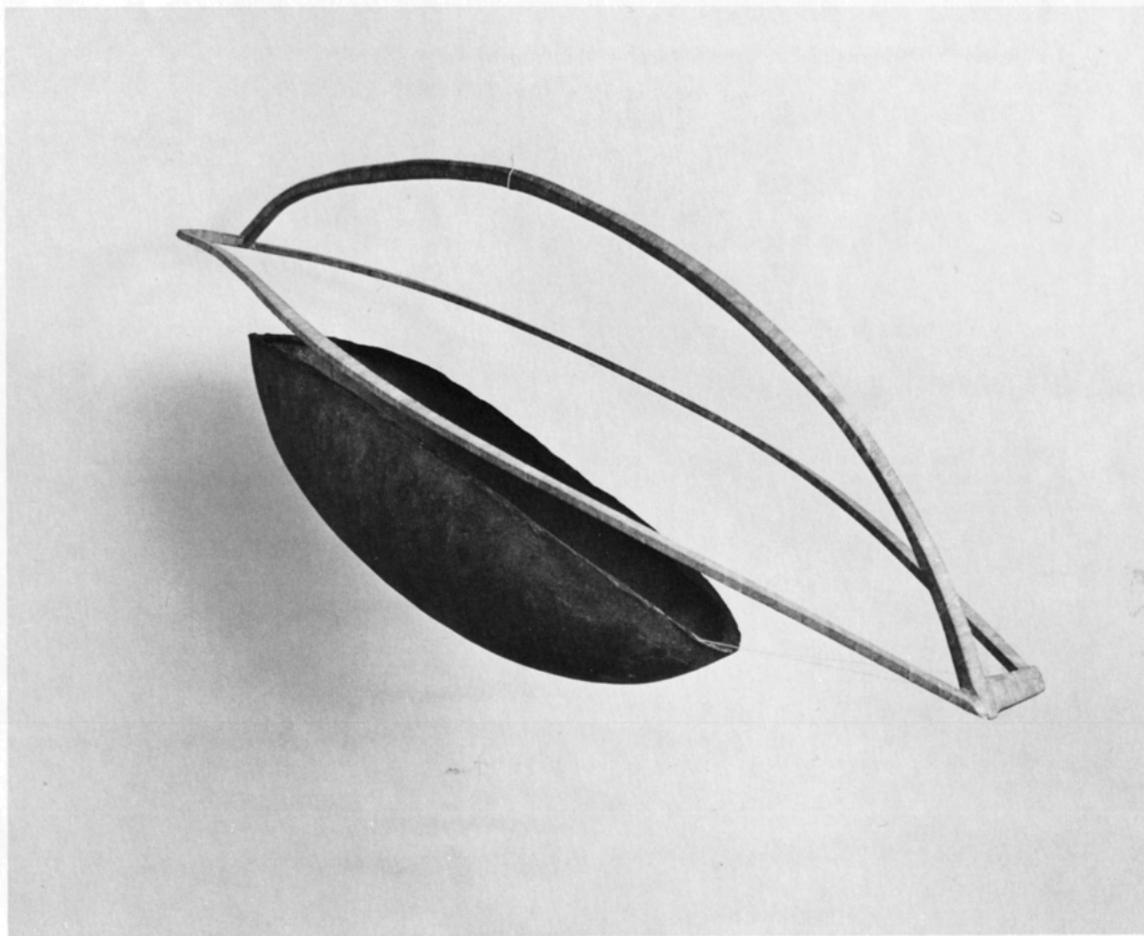


Photo by Bryan Whitney

# Creighton Michael

Born, Knoxville, TN, 1949

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, B.F.A., 1971

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, M.A., Art History, 1976

Washington University, St. Louis, MO, M.F.A. 1978

Lives and works in New York and Brooklyn

*Creighton Michael . . . considers himself not a sculptor per se as much as a maker of highly synthetic and poetic objects. . . . Everything is revealed in Michael's work — interior, armature, structure, and skin — yet meaning is seductively held at bay. His work is about mystery and vulnerability. . . . As these objects provoke vague, unresolved recognition through shape, scale, and especially placement, they incite for the artist a sense of the "dual reality" of the world; they are a vehicle for questioning how we identify things and for probing the "relationship between human and object."*

Susan Krane, *Art at the Edge: Creighton Michael*  
(Atlanta, GA: High Museum of Art, 1987), p. 3.

*Samurai*, 1986

Paper, wood, wax, fiberglass, pigments  
53" x 49" x 28"

Courtesy David Beitzel Gallery, New York

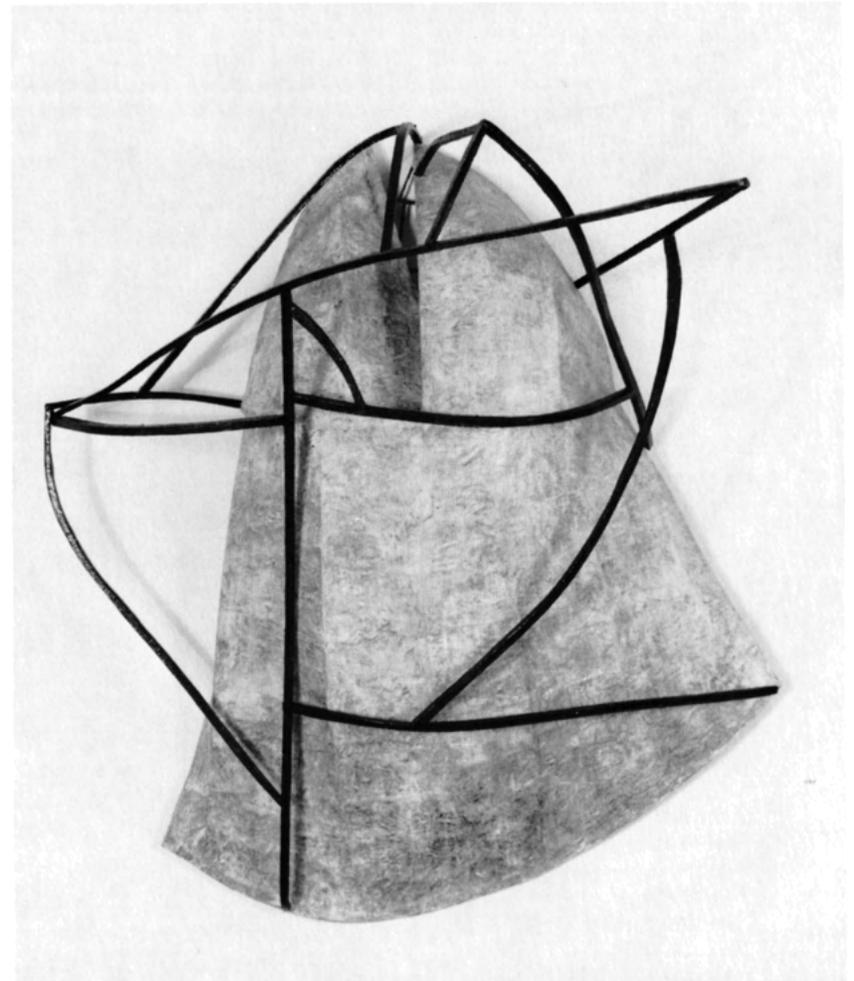


Photo by Rick Weeks

# Ann Page

Born, Seattle, WA, 1940

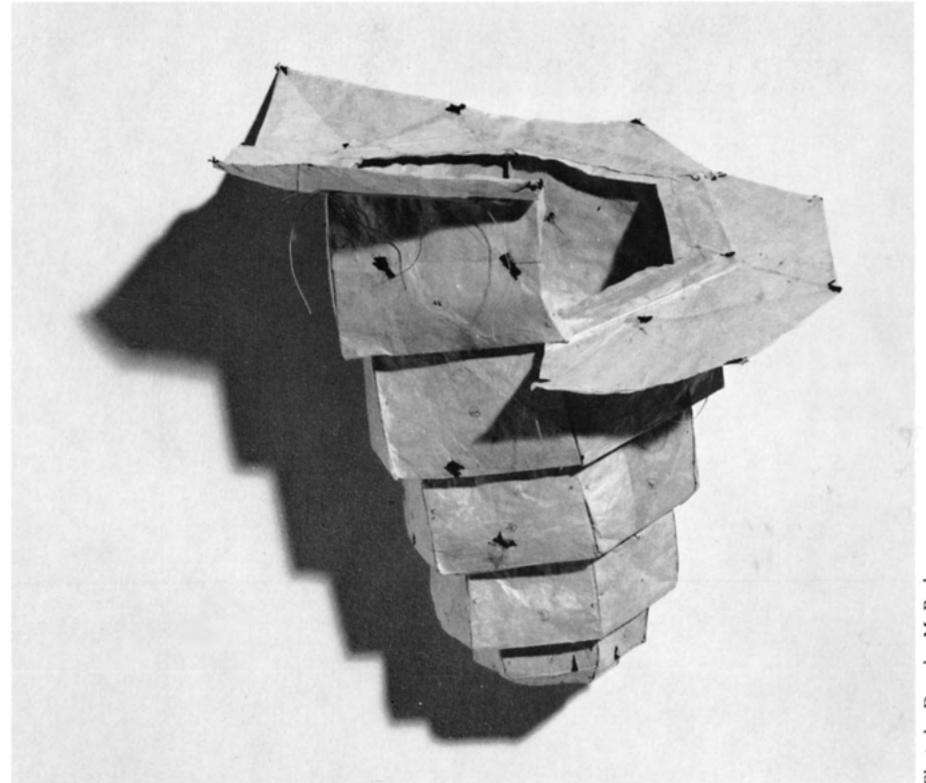
Butler University, Indianapolis, IN, 1958-60

John Herron Art Institute of Indiana/Purdue University, B.F.A., 1965

Lives and works in Los Angeles

*The pieces definitely lean toward the organic, both in the material and in the treatment of that material. Their geometry is a natural and imperfect one that has been altered by interaction with other systems. I want to imply that material forms are indeed of an ephemeral nature, as well as that all things, no matter how objective we think we are, are dealt with subjectively and through our associations. Thus although there is a "structure", there is not a specific identification. That identity can become as varied as the viewers of the work. Finally, everything seems to be a composite of networks, interlacings, knots and strands of interval which become receivers, transmitters and filters interacting on many levels.*

Ann Page



*Cup*, 1985

Nepalese paper, Jade 405 glue, birch dowels, ink  
21 1/2" x 19 3/4" x 15 1/2"

Collection of Jeri Coates, Los Angeles

# Barbara Schwartz

Born, Philadelphia, PA, 1948

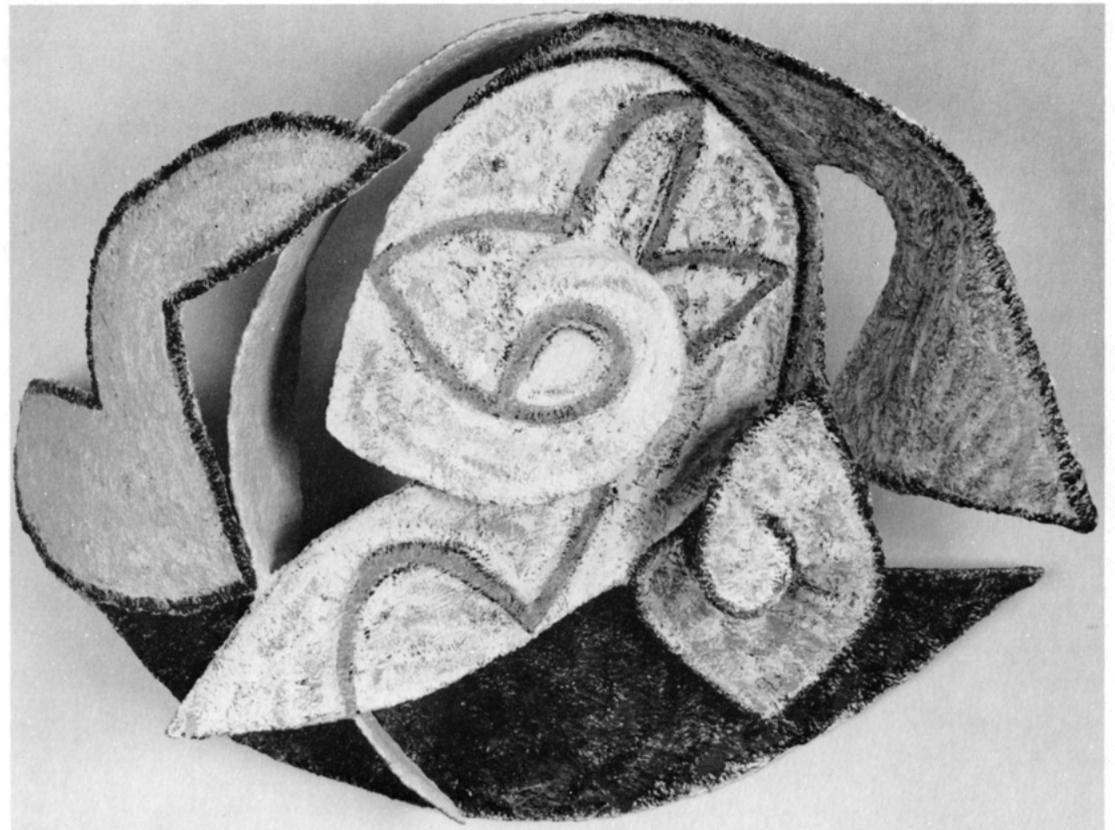
Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, B.F.A., 1970

Independent study, Cité des Arts, Paris

Lives and works in New York

*Consciously and unconsciously an ongoing visual vocabulary emerges communicating my reactions to surroundings and experiences. Certain responses seem innate; they occur and reoccur throughout my work. Combining two dimensional (painting) and three dimensional (sculpture) concepts I feel tremendous freedom, having access to a wide range of possibilities.*

Barbara Schwartz, quoted in catalogue, *Barbara Schwartz/Hewlett Gallery* (Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie-Mellon University/College of Fine Arts, 1980).



*Serpentine*, 1986

Acrylic and oil paint on handmade paper over wire lath  
31" x 41 1/2" x 12 1/2"

Courtesy Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York

# Michelle Stuart

Born, Los Angeles, CA, 1938

Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA, 1954-55

Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, 1955-56

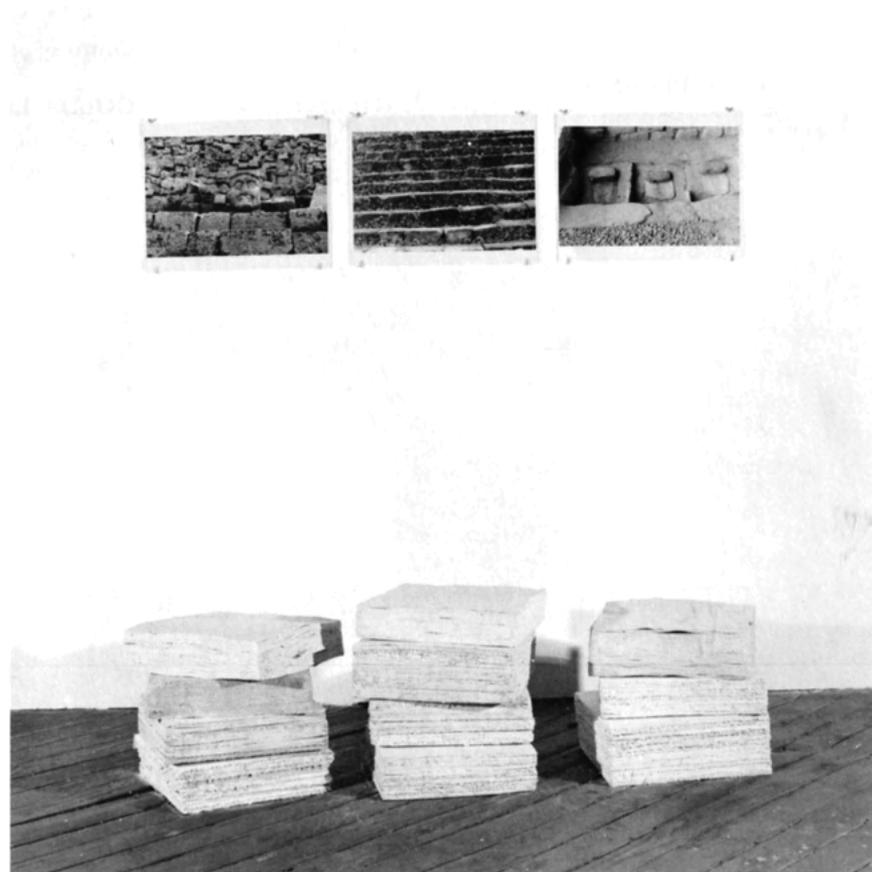
Apprenticed to Diego Rivera, Mexico

New School for Social Research, New York, 1958-66

Lives and works in New York

*The earth leaves traces of time. Man leaves of what he created. As The Grand Canyon is a monument to change, Man leaves monuments to an aging intellect. We imprint and are imprints of all that came before. Anticipating future.*

Michelle Stuart, quoted in *Michelle Stuart, Voyages* (Greenvale, N.Y.: Long Island University/C.W. Post Campus, 1985).



*Records: Copan/Quirigua/Mesa Verde, 1977-79*  
Eleven stacks ("records"), earth from three sites  
in title, muslin mounted rag paper, each stack  
11" - 12" square; Three C-prints, each 14" x 17"  
Lent by the artist/ Courtesy Max Protetch, New York

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### ZIGI BEN-HAIM

*Anchor Roads*, 1985  
Acid-free newsprint, branches, and acrylic paint, on burlap and wood  
80" x 116" x 10"

*Nightline*, 1982  
Acid-free newsprint, wire mesh, rope, pigments and concrete  
50" x 78" x 21"

*Urban Forest*, 1980  
Acid-free newsprint, wood, pigments and concrete  
17" x 130" x 145"  
Courtesy of the artist

### ANNE ELLIOTT

*Ping-Ling-Ssu*, 1980  
Reinforced rice paper  
6' x 12' x 6"

*Volcano III*, 1984  
Reinforced rice paper, acrylic paint, rhoplex  
5' x 4' x 3'  
Courtesy of the artist

### KYOKO IBE

*White Wind*, 1988  
Washi, fiberglass, illuminator  
8' x 4' x 10' (diameter)  
Courtesy of the artist

### SHOICHI IDA

*Descended Level — Between Vertical and Horizon — The Level Between a Leaf and Fossil — F.No. 2*, 1979  
Lithograph on two sides of molded paper — kozo paper  
56.5 x 42.5 x 5.5 cm.

*Descended Level — Between Vertical and Horizon — A Stone Between Paper and Paper — Gravity — F.No. 14*, 1980  
Drawing on pasted paper and molded paper with a stone — Nepalese paddy paper  
61 x 57 x 6 cm.

*Descended Level — Between Vertical and Horizon — Two Twigs No. 10 — F.No. 26*, 1979  
Lithograph on molded paper with a twig — kozo paper  
31.5 x 64.5 x 7.5 cm.

Courtesy Suzuki Gallery, New York

### KATHY LEVINE

*Rock and Can*, 1987  
Photograph and cast paper  
13" x 14" x 2 1/2"

*Shelter*, 1983  
Photograph, papier mâché, acrylic  
17" x 19" x 3"

Courtesy of the artist

### GOLDA LEWIS

*Altos de Chavon*, 1984  
Paper handmade by the artist  
26" x 33 1/2"

*Citisea*, 1988  
Paper handmade by the artist, wood, metal, pigments  
27" x 19"

*Citiwood*, 1988  
Paper handmade by the artist, wood, metal, pigments  
27 1/2" x 19"

Courtesy of the artist

### WINIFRED LUTZ

*Correspondent, Not Equivalent (Hat and Stick Version)*, 1987  
Cast paper, wood, rock, linen cord  
Height approximately 53"

*In the belly,  
Of the bone,  
From the water,  
Bred of stone.* / *If Tatlin had a boat without a hull,  
He would ride it  
Upside down in the sky,  
Unthwarted.* 1986  
Cast flax paper, wood  
28" x 27" x 74"

*Untitled*, 1986  
Cast ramie paper, oak, stone  
79" x 21" x 77"

Courtesy of the artist

### CREIGHTON MICHAEL

*Cromlech VI*, 1988  
Paper, wood, wax, fiberglass, pigments  
45" x 87" x 47"

*Emperor*, 1985  
Paper, wood, acrylic, charcoal, brick  
77 1/4" x 56 1/2" x 26"

*Samurai*, 1986  
Paper, wood, wax, fiberglass, pigments  
53" x 49" x 28"

Courtesy David Beitzel Gallery, New York

### ANN PAGE

*Cup*, 1985  
Nepalese paper, Jade 405 glue, birch dowels, ink  
21 1/2" x 19 3/4" x 15 1/2"

*Small Ripples*, 1984  
Tissue, rhoplex, waxed linen, nylon cord, birch dowels  
11" x 24" x 6"

Collection of Jeri Coates, Los Angeles

### BARBARA SCHWARTZ

*Percussion*, 1986  
Acrylic and oil paint on handmade paper over wire lath  
33" x 32" x 8 1/2"

*Serpentine*, 1986  
Acrylic and oil paint on handmade paper over wire lath  
31" x 41 1/2" x 12 1/2"

Courtesy Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York

### MICHELLE STUART

*Galesteo Strata, New Mexico*, 1977  
Earth from Galesteo, New Mexico, on muslin-mounted rag paper  
23" x 16" x 4"

*Records: Copan/Quirigua/Mesa Verde*, 1977-79  
Eleven stacks ("records"), earth from three sites in title, muslin mounted rag paper, each stack 11-12" square; three C-prints, each 14" x 17"

Lent by the artist/Courtesy Max Protetch, New York

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Kiku Fukui and Margaret R. Lunn, Curators

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