

Dickson Carroll shows brightly colored, beautifully crafted, slickly surfaced wood constructions with a surrealist orientation at the West Broadway Gallery. While so glossily painted and varnished, and so neatly put together that one expects to see them materialize into something as thoroughly utilitarian as a dishwasher, a bird feeder, a toilet or some kind of small kitchen appliance, part toaster, part blender, part 21st century gadget, these pieces by Carroll, with their sometimes zany biomorphic loop-the-loopings, are strictly the productions of a mordant wit and social commentator.

Geometric forms evolve into twisting, curving, swooping ones that can suggest hoofs, pseudopodia, horns, spigots (getting practical again) or Mirotized, twittering bird-worm-insect combinations.

Two works, 4'5" high, are free-standing like bellies; one, a foot tall, curving with short stubs of tubes and pipes, suggests a slightly deformed heart in cross-section. Another hanging curvilinear piece called "Destination Unknown" is like the gas tank of a motorcycle with attendant muffler and exhaust pipes.

This is a quirky, imaginative, colorful, interesting show, coolly humorous on the surface, yet perhaps more than mildly threatening, suggesting that our world is not nearly as solid, stable and rationally predictable as those few among us would like to believe who may possibly not yet have realized the essentially chaotic, destructive nature of the 20th century. In Carroll's work, too many partially hidden "tongues" and bits of semi-human plumbing are sticking or hanging out, "thumbing their noses" or leering strangely at us to leave us with the feeling that all is right with the world.

Constance McMillan and Dominick Lombardi show paintings at the Alternate Space Gallery on West Broadway. McMillan's pictures are an attractive combination of Paul Cezanne (in structural areas) and Phillip Guston (the centering of a strongly colored, slightly expressionistic area surrounded by textureless tints of the central image). The titles range from "Winter/Oswego Lake," "Shipwreck," to "Pool-side," but except for the suggestion of a reclining red figure in the latter, the pictorial means are the same. Curving horizontal, vertical and diagonal wedges, much like walls seen from above in an architectural floor plan, structure the pictures, partially separating

looser, Guston-like swatches of color.

Lombardi's surrealist, dream-like works combine the wildly visionary, unusual combinations of figures and animals and elaborate color-texturing of the entire picture surface that has a certain convulsive, obsessive quality. Some use of photos is apparent, though only as a starter, to be distorted or elaborated upon by the artist's imagination. Kukla, Fran and Ollie make their appearance in one picture, though they are among the least elaborated in the show. Perhaps they are an unusual enough combination in reality. "Shadows" and "Listening to the Radio" are key pictures of this very striking, almost demonic, type.

Ralph Derven, at 14 Sculptors Gallery, shows well-made marble sculptures with a geometric basis. In one sculpture, perhaps three feet high, curving shelf-like forms are supported by repeating curved vertical forms, pinned to and supported by two vertical faces laminated at right angles, creating the suggestion of a corner enclosure. What we are dealing with here is formal manipulation, the play of curved shapes against straight edges and right angles, reflecting a classical orientation.

In another piece somewhat smaller in size, a vertical rectangle, fastened to and rising above a horizontal one (like the top part of a cross), has a smaller semi-circular piece attached at a right angle, something like a very stylized profile, giving this piece connotations of humanity, though extremely deindividualized. The artist speaks of ideograms, Mosaic in character.

A third work has two curving parts, like segments from a tire and doughnut, one astride the other at right angles to it, the top part a smooth, continuous elliptical curve top to underside, while the lower part, suggesting more of a fragment, has 90 degree angles and edges creating four equal sides.

Obviously a sculptor of experience, Derven understands his craft and has a command of the technical means. Some of these pieces exhibit, as well, a sensitivity not to be found in the crassness of the metal sculptors, for example, that goes beyond the difference in materials. But, they are inextricably linked with the tradition of Brancusi and others, robbing them somewhat of their own identity. •

Written by Critics Don Gray and Jessie Benton Evans Gray



D. Dominick Lombardi
Kukla, Fran and Ollie
1978
oil on linen
69" x 69"



D. Dominick Lombardi
Shadows
1978
oil on linen
54" x 48"



D. Dominick Lombardi
Listening to the Radio
1978
oil on linen
48" X 42"