Front and back covers: 1 | Paul Feinberg, *Manon – 1985*

THE CONSTANT ARTIST

June 9–August 12, 2012

Photography and interviews by
Paul Feinberg

Paintings and drawings by
Manon Cleary | Sam Gilliam | Lisa Montag Brotman
Tom Green | Rebecca Davenport | Fred Folsom
Clark V. Fox | Margarida Kendall Hull | Joseph White

the KATZEN
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES

THE constant ARTIST
foreword

Some 36 years ago, Paul Feinberg spent his days as an engineer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, but by night he could be found in downtown D.C. in the neighborhoods around the Greyhound Bus Station. Feinberg always took his camera, documenting the people and places that would soon be torn down or moved out in the name of progress. Alice Denney believed these insightful and compassionate photographs and interviews could form the core of a multi-media exhibition (with painted signs and installations by Val Lewton and writing by Joel Siegel) in her newly created alternative space, Washington Project for the Arts (WPA), also located in the bus station neighborhood. I still believe the resulting exhibition, *Another Washington*, was one of the most important WPA ever offered.

Over the years, Paul Feinberg has continued his obsession with capturing our past before it is gone. His photographs and interviews, or "word portraits," have enlivened magazine articles, books, and exhibitions both locally and nationally with their empathetic documentation. Feinberg has been particularly interested in the lives of artists in Washington, D.C. The American University Museum is also dedicated to the artists of its own region and is pleased to present an exhibition of early and late paintings by nine major artists who were photographed by Paul Feinberg over the course of their professional lives. The exhibition is a kind of retrospective of Washington's art world as told by its most talented painters and beautifully recorded by its most dedicated voyeur.

The art and life of Manon Cleary is a good place to start a discussion of where Washington's art has been over the past thirty-five years. A supremely gifted draftsman and painter, Cleary was also a close friend of Feinberg's over all those years. Her recent death was a great loss for everyone who recognized her technical virtuosity combined with an uncommon sensibility. Her hallmark was her amazing nudes, and Feinberg's photographs of Cleary, naked and facing death, rise to the sublimity of Cleary's own paintings and drawings.

◀ **2 | Paul Feinberg, *Manon and Randy*, 1976**

Sam Gilliam, easily the most recognized and successful of Feinberg's subjects, is fortunately very much with us. Gilliam first took his paintings off their stretchers in 1965, using the liberated canvases to transform gallery walls into three-dimensional abstractions. The great innovations of his early career are matched by his continued explorations of form, material, space, and color. Feinberg captured Gilliam in black and white as a young man (p. 11), covered in paint and confidence.

While Sam Gilliam has long been renowned as a lyrical abstractionist and heir to the legacy of the Washington Color School, Lisa Brotman was humorously categorized by *Washington Post* critic Paul Richard as an alumna of the Washington Color Pencil School. For over forty years, Brotman has crafted haunting, often alarming images of young women caught in the physical and psychological no-man's-land between childhood and adulthood.

Suspended somewhere between Sam Gilliam and Lisa Montag Brotman is the art of Tom Green. Balanced ingeniously between figuration and abstraction, Green has created his own language of formal rigor and playful chance. Washington still must come to terms with this quiet, generous master. Feinberg most recently captured Green just as illness had begun taking away his physical gifts, while leaving his spiritual center firmly intact.

It is perhaps not surprising that Washington, a city of great art museums, should have produced so many contemporary artists influenced by the best art history has to offer. Rebecca Davenport, Fred Folsom, Clark Fox, and Margarida Kendall Hull also took their inspiration from the abundance of great art here in town.

Rebecca Davenport moved away from Washington many years ago after a great early career here, but she had such a powerful impact on figurative art in the Washington region that we felt she couldn't be left out of The Constant Artist. Feinberg's recent photograph of Davenport posed next to her early *Self Portrait* is instructive of just how beautifully observed her paintings and Feinberg's photographs are.

▲ 3 | Paul Feinberg, *Sam Gilliam – 1984*

▲ 4 | Paul Feinberg, *Installation view, Tom Green: 12 Pictures, at Washington Project for the Arts*, 1977

▼ 5 | Paul Feinberg, *Clark V. Fox – 1980*

Fred Folsom is another major figurative artist in Washington. His ambitious and amazingly detailed bar scenes like *Last Call (at the Shepherd Park Go-Go Club)*, against which Feinberg chose to pose Folsom for an earlier portrait, are religious triptychs in the guise of almost Boschian degradation and despair. They are loaded with symbolism and at the same time manage to be loads of fun. *Last Call* cleverly includes many figures from the Washington art world in its rowdy composition.

Clark V. Fox (the artist formerly known as Michael and, more recently, just Clark) actually set up his easel in the National Gallery of Art and taught himself to paint and draw standing next to the Old Masters. Fox very successfully married his Post-Pop, Pre-Punk sensibility to the high craft of his museum inspirations. Paul Feinberg's lens captured him in an early identity and later as the elder statesman of an imagined artistic tribe.

Margarida Kendall Hull has also brought the superb craftsmanship of the masters to the service of her wonderfully weird vision of a world where natural and unnatural forces come up against powerful women. *Lilith* and *Eve* are just the best known of her heroines. Kendall Hull's paintings offer conclusive proof there are decidedly un-corporate spirits lurking beneath the surface of official Washington.

Finally, there is Joseph White, who made a big reputation with hallucinogenic semi-abstractions early in his career before slowly evolving into a figurative minimalist without peer. His paintings of K Street revolving doors are much more than inside-the-beltway jokes. They are meditations on the passage of time and human experience.

Feinberg's photographs and interviews offer a sensitive portrayal of the way things were and the way things are in the cultural life of Washington. Shown together with the old and new art of Manon Cleary, Sam Gilliam, Lisa Montag Brotman, Tom Green, Rebecca Davenport, Fred Folsom, Clark V. Fox, Margarida Kendall Hull, and Joseph White, these portraits invite us to embrace the beauty of growth and change even as we accept our own impermanence.

Jack Rasmussen
Director and Curator
American University Museum

manon CLEARY

INTERVIEWS | September 2007 and July 1984

The pleasures of artistic life are not many now. The generosity of spirit among D.C. artists has almost disappeared; galleries aren't artist career makers anymore. Bad critics are panning or not even covering good artists. The big D.C. art purchasers—lawyers and real estate developers—aren't buying much art.

But if I could begin my life again, I'd still choose to be an artist. What else could I be? Can't spell; poor memory; terrible at math; not athletic. Nurse?—Germaphobic. School teacher?—Kids in mass are irritating. Broker?—No earth or practicality in my astrological chart. Wife?—Yawn. Lawyer?—Truth, not law, is fair.

I believe I was meant to make art; to me it's like having a hobby and a job that are one in the same. I like the solitary aspect of it. It's very masturbatory. The whole process of creating a painting is extremely pleasurable for me. I feel arrogantly special because not many people can do what I can do.

I enjoy the show biz quality of the art world. A good review from a good show is an ultimate high.

A good body of my work is self-portraiture. Being an identical twin, I need to confirm a personal identity separate from my sister. And as I age, I want to preserve what is slowly disappearing—my physical self.

As a photorealist, I work primarily from photographs. I use graphite or oils to produce works that are photographically convincing but not necessarily with fidelity to my photo sources. I would like the viewer to notice the unique interpretation—the "me"—I bring to my work, as well as the overlooked beauty and color I bring to an image.

In my work, as well as in my life, I have always tried to maintain an "enchanted cottage" vision where everyone and everything is transformed into something beautiful; where Robert Young hasn't been scarred by war, Dorothy McGuire isn't plain, every flower is flawless, and my friends and I haven't aged a day over 35.

I believe everyone has a period of peak physical beauty, a time when they discover and feel satisfied with their exterior beauty, and then that remains their self-image for the remainder of their life. No Sandra Dee or Marilyn Monroe, I am angular with small breasts and boyish hips—I found my "peak" in my 30s when I first discovered my own beauty after years of feeling skinny and tit-less in my teens and twenties. Luckily, I took enough photos in my 30s that I could do nude self-portraits long after my body sagged. My self-portraits look the way I saw myself in the mirror—minus all my imperfections. A reviewer for *Art in America* said my self-portraits were a "triumph in narcissism!"—perfect!

My art is my legacy, my children. I'm creating a history for myself the same way someone else would carry their genes forth. I care where my paintings go and how they do in the world, every one of them. When I recently had my retrospective it was really good to see them again. They held up and were as good or better than I remembered them.

INTERVIEW | September 2011, shortly before her death at age 69

My life stopped about three years ago. Now instead of making art in front of the TV, I just sit in front of the TV. As my health declines, I am losing everything I love, everything that made my life worth living—conversation, laughter, dancing, but most especially making art. Now I'm afraid to go into my studio. If I go in there, I feel like I'm drowning. It's not a choice I can make easily.

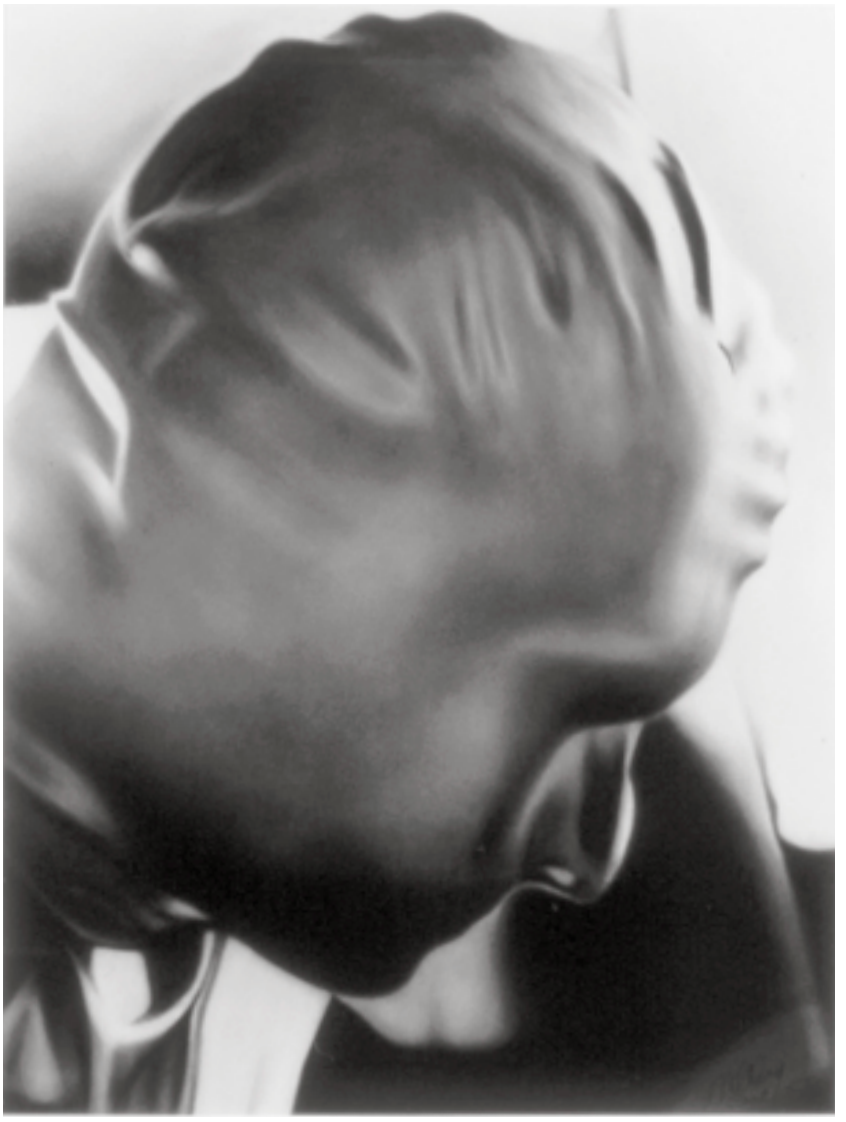
It's my whole life that's now missing. I didn't have kids. I'm reading through my 50th high school class reunion book thinking, OK, I made a choice and wouldn't change it, because I had a pretty exciting life. But at the end of life my classmates will have genes to carry forth into the world and stories to come—while my story's told. Done.

What will happen to my work? Will it find good homes or get placed in garage sales? It's frightening for me to think of any of my pieces being bought as cheap art by someone not recognizing or appreciating it as wonderful.

▲ 6 | **Paul Feinberg,** ***Manon Cleary – 1982***

▼ 7 | **Paul Feinberg,** ***Manon Cleary – 2011***

▲ 8 | Manon Cleary, *Big J,* 1977
▶ 9 | Manon Cleary, *Man in Rubber Mask # 1,* 2005



sam GILLIAM

Some think of me as a colorfield or lyrical abstractionist. I am what I am. I'd call myself a mirror, a mirror that reflects, borrows, and steals from different art movements, reorienting them in order to squeeze out new life.

Art is the way I work. I visualize each new painting before I start painting. I know where I'm going. My work is based on continuously updating my understanding of the processes and other factors that I used in past successful paintings and applying that knowledge to the next piece I do.

I work to better myself. Just like any good worker, I want people to feel the pride I feel in making art. When they look at my work, I want people to think, "Gosh, that work belongs in a museum."

Rather than the form and color, I want them to see and feel the excitement of the painting, which is something totally judgmental. I hope they feel the energy and joy of life that comes out of the painting.

I paint what it's like to be alive. I simplify each painting into a single theme. The easier you make the level of content of art, the more direct it is and the better it is. I activate the theme through color or color statement.

Often my work recapitulates past work and repeats certain paths I have taken before. Similar to a musical composition played multiple times by a musician, the spirit of what an artist paints is within the artist as much as it is in the objective work of each painting—repeated but nuanced and never exactly the same.

I work before a Washington audience that is familiar with my work. I hold their judgment of my art in esteem. I hope they hold me and my accomplishments in esteem, and I hope I don't let them down.

I try to work alongside what has been done, mostly the works of classical painters, and make it mine. It's my way of connecting to great art and getting the best from myself. So if I see a classic painting that I really like, I do a comparable painting to see what I can add or bring to it. It's an attitude I call "passing"; I pass by and see something intriguing, and I have to make it my own.

I want to be as good as the great artists from the past that I hold in esteem. I have confidence in my abilities. I'm always trying to pull off something special. I want to be a one-of-a-kind. When you think about the great artists of the past, you refer to their pieces by their last name. Like a "Rothko" or a "Rembrandt." I'd like my work to be remembered as just a "Gilliam."

When I was a young artist, I was scared. It was so shaky for artists. But I got lucky because of my shows at the Corcoran. Each show elevated my work. When the Corcoran survived, the artists survived. That's why it's so dead now. Now there are more artists doing bad work than ever before.

The older I get the more nervous I am when making art. I'm also a little jealous of what I did when I was younger, much like an athlete feels as he ages, "Will I be able to do it again? Do I still have it?" I don't know if my work is better now, but because of the wisdom of age, my work is smarter.

▲ 10 | Paul Feinberg, *Sam Gilliam – 1969*
▼ 11 | Paul Feinberg, *Sam Gilliam – 2012*

▲ 12 | Sam Gilliam, *Architectural Notions for a New Nursery,* 1980
▶ 13 | Sam Gilliam, *Remembering Gifts Ajar,* 2009

Lisa MONTAG BROTMAN

There is a period in women's lives—especially my own—that I remain fascinated, mystified, and frightened by. Through my paintings, I'm able to express my feelings about those troubling times in ways I can't express as well in words.

That period in girls' lives when they transition from teens to women was a difficult, challenging, and exciting time for me. It is a time when girls can look mature but are really still children emotionally and aren't prepared to fully understand many experiences and situations.

That period of transformation has stuck in my mind. I relive it. I redo it. I keep reprocessing it as an artist by making images born from feelings that I couldn't or wouldn't share. But I need to share or I will explode. Making art feels to me like a dialog even though I am not there with the viewer.

So art became a way of processing my life—transforming my feelings and experiences. Making art calms me, and after all these years it still fulfills my emotional needs.

The art scene has dramatically changed in recent years. People of this generation have grown up so used to seeing images digitally or on computers or iPhones that they are not as much interested or educated to appreciate or value the differences in seeing a painting in real life.

The people who used to buy art to live with and love and not care whether it was a blue chip investment—I don't know where they are now. I don't know if young people care about the textures and feel of real materials or if they buy everything on print because, for them, it's just about the concept or image.

My artist friends and I think about this all the time. Something basic has been taken away in the appreciation of art. Yes, I can post an image on Facebook, but that isn't satisfying to me in the same way as someone coming to the gallery and looking at my work. In the gallery the colors and textures are real; the size of the painting is what I made it to be. If people aren't interested in seeing the painting in real life, my ability to communicate what I set out to do is limited.

But I still make art because, even with that disappointment, my need to do the work is stronger. I'm doing it for myself, but I also hope viewers have a visceral reaction to my work, that they are engaged both visually and emotionally, and that the work is thought provoking. Just in the physical act of doing it though, painting gives me both sensory pleasure and insight. It helps me process my existence.

▲ 14 | Paul Feinberg, *Lisa Brotman – 1999*
▼ 15 | Paul Feinberg, *Lisa Brotman – 2012*

Lisa MONTAG BROTMAN

▲ 16 | Lisa Brotman, *The Rituals of Invitation,* 1980
▶ 17 | Lisa Brotman, *Exposure,* 2012

TOM GREEN

It's like a disease. It gets into your mind and body and takes over. I've been addicted to art all my life. I used to read biographies of artists and think, "This is the life." I looked and looked at great art in galleries, art magazines, museums. I found fellow travelers; I found minds and sensibilities that I took from and learned from.

In the beginning, my work was somewhat derivative of many art styles. But I wasn't original yet. Eventually, I found my own voice.

Now art is my job, and the hours are flexible. Being creative is being as free as you can get. You don't have to answer to anybody. Except yourself.

I go on walks and look around me. I notice things that resonate with me. Ideas and images fly around in my head that I sometimes catch with my "net" and put in my black book, which I always carry. Later I go back and develop my ideas into my work.

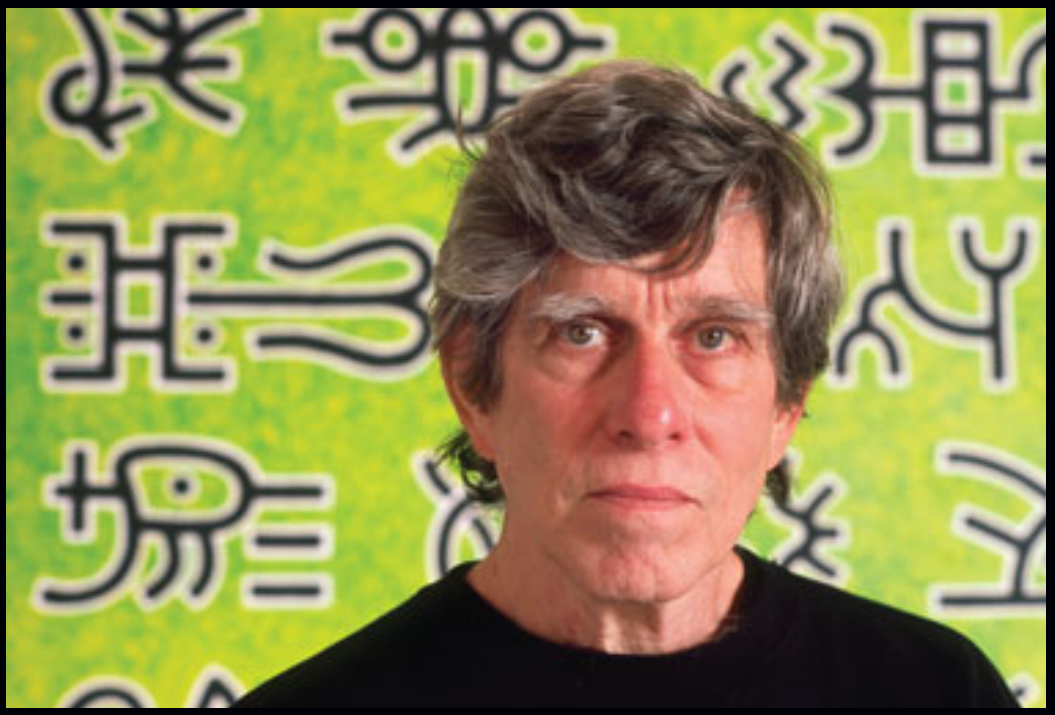
My goal is not to make beautiful paintings. If it's interesting or puzzling, then it's alive. If it resonates, it works; it provokes a curiosity that goes beyond the visual image. The pleasure I get from painting is like the pleasure one gets from play. I'm totally absorbed. I suspend thinking. My curiosity and instincts guide me to make things I've never seen before. It's like a mathematician solving a problem that's never been revealed before.

It's a process of putting down something and seeing what follows. The magic is in what follows. There's not much deliberation but a spontaneous reaction to what comes before.

I know enough about the formal qualities of art: form, color, composition. I know it when I see it. It's similar to music when your ears tell you something is right; you don't need someone to explain it. It's content that I often don't fully understand, but I'm not preoccupied with content because the audience carries so much perceptual baggage. I like to make my art ambiguous in order to keep things open to interpretation. That said, the best response to a painting is to get into it as a child would—not trying to interpret it but reacting to it at an emotional level.

When I finish a piece I let it go. I send it out where it lives in the world, open to interpretation. The response to it is part of its life and also an extension of my life into other lives.

▲ 18 | Paul Feinberg, *Tom Green - 1981*
▼ 19 | Paul Feinberg, *Tom Green - 2010*



TOM GREEN

▶ 20 | Tom Green, *Sultana,* 1968
▶▶ 21 | Tom Green, *Passage,* 2012

Rebecca DAVENPORT

I was born in the South, and my work is greatly influenced by the Southern narrative traditions—the ironic mixture of good and evil, humor and sadness, imperfect heroes and emotions seething just under the surface. A wild, rebellious, depressed teenager, I was saved by art. By my early 20s, I had been in and out of schools and in and out of mental wards, was an alcoholic and into drugs, had been rejected by my parents, and, at 23, living for several years with Johnny Pancake, a country western musician who worked in local honky-tonks around the D.C. area.

Then at 23 I took some art classes. I discovered I had talent and a passion, and I felt that maybe as an artist I could do something I could be proud of, and I could have a visual voice to help me understand my life experiences and pain. I told myself, "I'm going to be an artist. That will be my work." And that's what I've been doing for over 40 years.

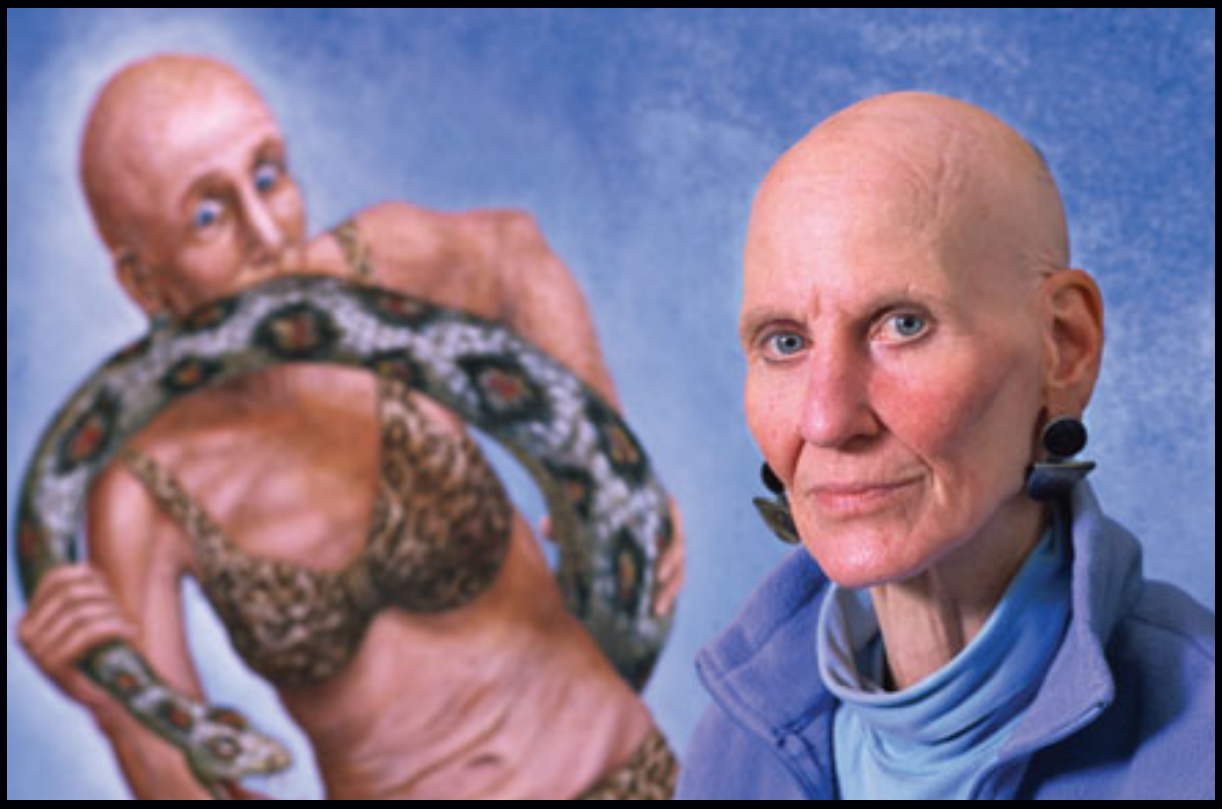
I'm happiest when I'm painting. I'm alone in my studio but I feel connected to the world, and I value myself.

I paint what I know, not as an outsider or onlooker, but as someone who has had experiences or feelings like those of my subjects. I look at people in a subjective way and create a story in my mind of who they are. I am not a portrait painter; an exact likeness is not my concern. I draw on my own observations and understandings and try to communicate that in the portraits of my subjects.

My portraits have gotten gentler and less confrontational as I've gotten older. My early portraits had an "I'm who I am; I don't care what you think" look. Now I don't want the viewer to feel threatened but rather to come in more and find an interesting person, maybe a friend.

All the people I knew who were connected with the museums and galleries have all moved on, retired, or died. It's much harder now to get shown. It's also harder for me to sit through the tedium of rendering details. But I must paint. Every time I start a new canvas, I start a new journey and wonder where it will take me.

▲ 22 | Paul Feinberg, *Rebecca Davenport – 1985*
▼ 23 | Paul Feinberg, *Rebecca Davenport – 2012*



Rebecca DAVENPORT

▲ 24 | Rebecca Davenport, *Self Portrait,* 1984

▶ 25 | Rebecca Davenport, *Low Country Lawyer,* 2009

Fred FOLSOM

It's a race when I begin a painting. I start in acrylics. I can change things; I can move a leg or an arm, change hair, re-arrange furniture. Once the whole picture is balanced out, I put oil paints on top of the acrylics. Then the process becomes tough, and I have to move fast. Now, I'm painting on a dead run. I've got to figure what's drying at what rate. A head is painted and by the time I get to the neck and arms, the head is gone—I can't touch it anymore because it's turned tacky. I work sometimes from 6 a.m. to midnight; it's brutal.

When the picture is oiled out, I stand back and examine what I've done. If I see a vibrancy, vitality, and life in the work, I know why I make art. I'm exhilarated. I feel like Igor when he first saw Frankenstein and said, "It's alive! It's alive!" and I do a little "happy dance" in my mind.

My paintings are narrative although I used to call them post pre-Raphaelite, neo Flemish! I like to tell stories. A painting works if ten people looking at the painting see ten different stories; that means the painting is open enough that each person sees something to call his own.

For years, I hung out in bars and was a dedicated drinker. In 1975, I got sober and started painting realistic people in sometimes unrealistic settings—social Rorschachs. These frozen soap operas told stories, often with religious undertones, through props, cryptograms, and other clues—an Easter egg hunt for obscurantists.

Returning to my favorite bar, Shepherd Park, for inspiration, I began painting the loud, smoky world of stilted and stunned emotions, exploring the numbing vacuum that had absorbed a decade of my life.

Last Call, my painting of the Shepherd Park Go-Go Club, is my lonely prayer for redemption. That's me, bottom center, weighing 40 pounds more than I do today and not much fun to talk to. We're all alive, and we're all going to die sooner or later, and nobody thinks about what that means. It just might be time to pay your bill and get the hell up and leave. With God's help, I got up and found my life again.

I've got to paint. If I don't paint, there's something missing in my soul, and if I don't stuff some art work in that hole, I'm afraid to find out what happens.

I'm now spending too much time on very small paintings; it's not a good career move, but I'm compelled to do it.

My artist uncle, Joe Viner, a very wise man who spent his whole life not getting artistic recognition, used to tell me there isn't enough recognition to go around for all the artists. So you might as well not worry about what others may think; "Do what you damn well want. I'm telling you from the mountain top. Do what you damn well want." And that's what I've damn well been doing.

▲ 26 | Paul Feinberg, *Fred Folsom – 1998*
▼ 27 | Paul Feinberg, *Fred Folsom – 2012*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▲ 28 | Fred Folsom, *Last Call (at the Shepherd Park Go-Go Club)*, 1987


BUD
LIGHT

cLark v. Fox

Art chose me. I'm an American Indian, and Indians make stuff. My father carved. My mother painted. When I was five, I'd go up and down the street trying to sell my small paintings. By high school, I was a full scale artist selling my pieces at the shopping malls.

I spent millions of hours in museums copying the great artists. The security guards at the National Gallery voted me the artist who could best do Rembrandt. Artists in the National Gallery, like Rembrandt, are super-geniuses and are way out there. They are benchmarks for me. Part of the reason I came to Washington was because it is the most important city in the world; from Washington we can and have destroyed nations. Part of my art thing was to try to humanize people. Unfortunately, they're not fanning the flames of creativity in Washington. There is tons of dough here but very little interest in art. Artists are treated as lightweights.

Much of my work is political and socialistic but incorporates classical art traditions of still life, color, and portraiture. In the '60s, my still life studies of oranges were done as a meditation on form and color, but they were also my tributes to the Mexican migrant workers making less than $1.00 a day selling oranges on the highway.

Through the use of icons as subjects, I see myself as a painter of American history through the use of icons. My paintings of American heroes such as George Washington, Lincoln, and JFK are stand-ins for much more. These are American heroes I once looked up to, but the more I read, the more they all seemed to have more than a little blood on their hands.

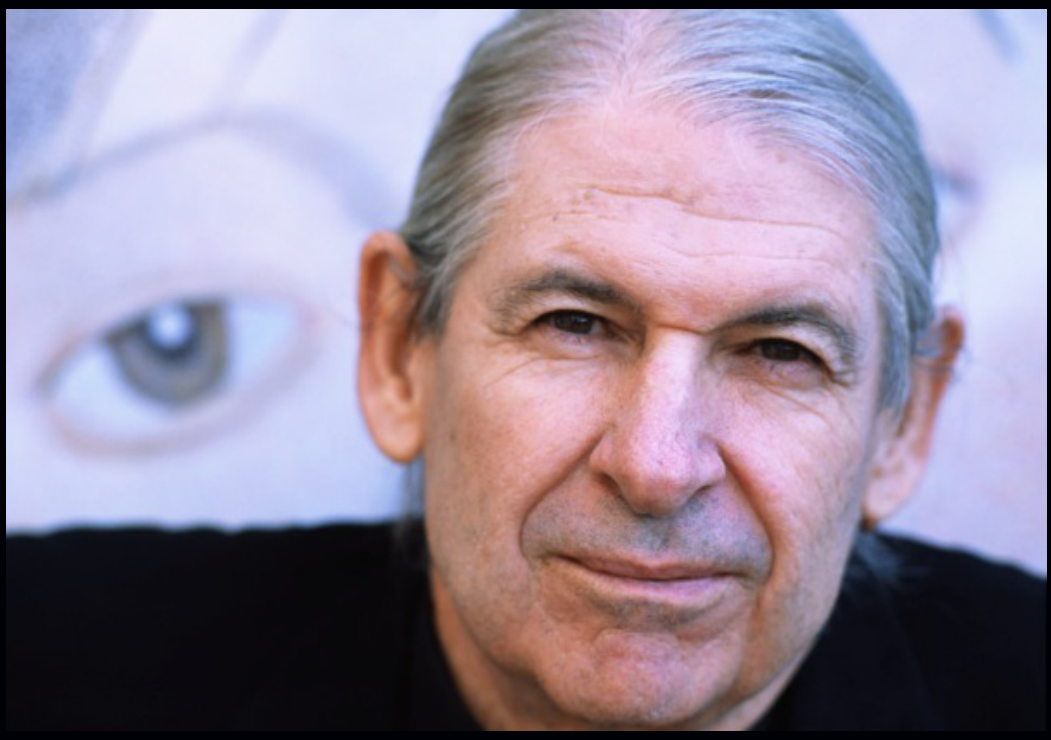
I lived in modern art history. I argued about art with Julian Schnabel. I painted for Gene Davis and Tom Downing. I hung out with Rivers, Rauschenberg, and Warhol.

After Warhol, who produced a shorthand version of art, you didn't have to worry about composition or any of the basics. In the beginning, most artists considered Warhol an airhead. But influential critics turned his work into a super intellectual comment on the '60s and '70s. That's what can happen to art. Like Warhol said, "If it sells, it's art." The art market has turned into the stock market.

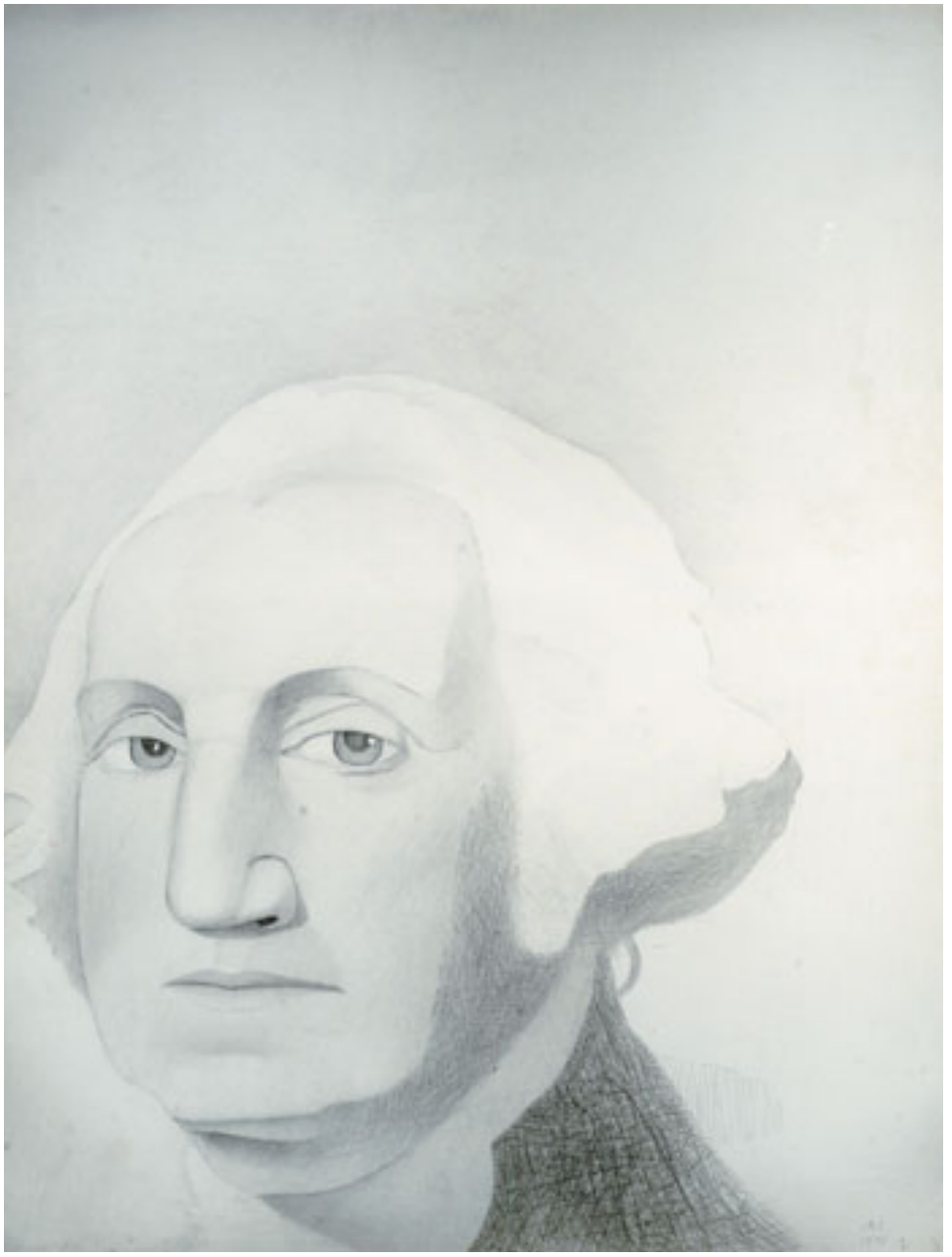
Now I'm up in years. The scene today is totally different. But most of the people who will go for my work aren't even been born yet. It was the same for Van Gogh and a lot of other great artists. There's a great tradition that goes back to Titian and Giovanni Bellini. It's a torch that gets passed. I don't think I'll make it to that level, but I try to keep the artistic torch going. It's my compulsion. Some people get into Jesus and go to church. My church is art; it's a sacred trust. I'm competing with the ages now, not with the artists of the moment.

◀ 29 | Paul Feinberg, *Clark V. Fox – 1985*

▶ 30 | Paul Feinberg, *Clark V. Fox – 2012*



cLark v. Fox



▲ 31 | Clark V. Fox, *George Washington,* 1973
▶ 32 | Clark V. Fox, *Suzonne,* 2011

Margarida KENDALL HULL

As a child, I was taught by nuns who still lived in the medieval ages. I grew up with fearful visions—like the devil coming into my room at night while I was asleep—and they have affected me all my life. In some of my paintings, I become the faceless nuns who hovered over my childhood in my native Portugal. In these paintings, I become the powerful authority figure; I am ageless without past or present.

My work, greatly influenced by my Catholic upbringing, deals with the angst of modern life for me and the adjustments one has to make to survive. Fear, suspicion, and striving for free will are recurring themes in many of my paintings. In my mind, our free will is very limited because from the time we are born we are controlled by parents, teachers, and outside events.

My painting style combines influences from the Color School, Old Masters, Major Realism, and even the Impressionists. I call my style "Super Realism of the Fantastic" where, for narrative and symbolic purposes, I place recognizable images in imagined situations. Dark illusions of figures of authority permeate my work.

I want the viewer to enter my universe—a world of my desires, frustrations, thoughts—where images of the past, present, and future flow back and forth in a continuum. But I want the viewer to come up with his own narrative, not necessarily mine. What does a painting mean? It means whatever the viewer sees in it.

I try, and have a strong desire, to establish an intimacy with the viewer. I have the hope, the illusion of a great encounter—someone will view my painting, understand my language, and get something out of it.

A viewer's connection with my work reassures me of my existence, as does the process of painting. If I didn't paint, my existence would be empty. There would be no lasting memories of me. I would just disappear, reduced to a handful of ashes.

Did I want to be rich and famous? Sure, why not. Maybe in my 20s, like most artists, I dreamt about how I might be lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. But I'm not a self-promoter, and I don't have a star complex. Maybe if I were taller.

▲ 33 | Paul Feinberg, *Margarida Kendall Hull – 1984*
▼ 34 | Paul Feinberg, *Margarida Kendall Hull – 2012*

Margarida KENDALL HULL

◀ 35 | Margarida Kendall Hull, *Maps to Nowhere, Number 1,* 1991
▶ 36 | Margarida Kendall Hull, *The Survivors II,* 2012

Joseph WHITE

My early career was as an abstract painter, where I made something from nothing. Later my style became representational, where I make something from the world about me.

Theories on abstraction are a dime a dozen. My abstract paintings are all about me. I start making marks and just messing around and see what happens. I use whatever art knowledge and technique I have to struggle until I see forms and shapes. Then I start choosing and refining until a final image evolves.

Representational painting is more of a challenge for me than abstract. In a representational piece I don't want the image I'm painting to be about me. I don't want to be between the image, an image in which I found mystery, beauty or other values, and the viewer. I just want the viewer to see or feel what I felt at that "magic moment" of time and light. My job as an artist is to technically do a good job of painting and to enhance the life I depict with mystery and beauty.

I don't care if the viewer reacts to or "gets" my painting. I may do a bad painting of a cat; if the viewer likes cats, they might like the painting. You just can't trust the viewer.

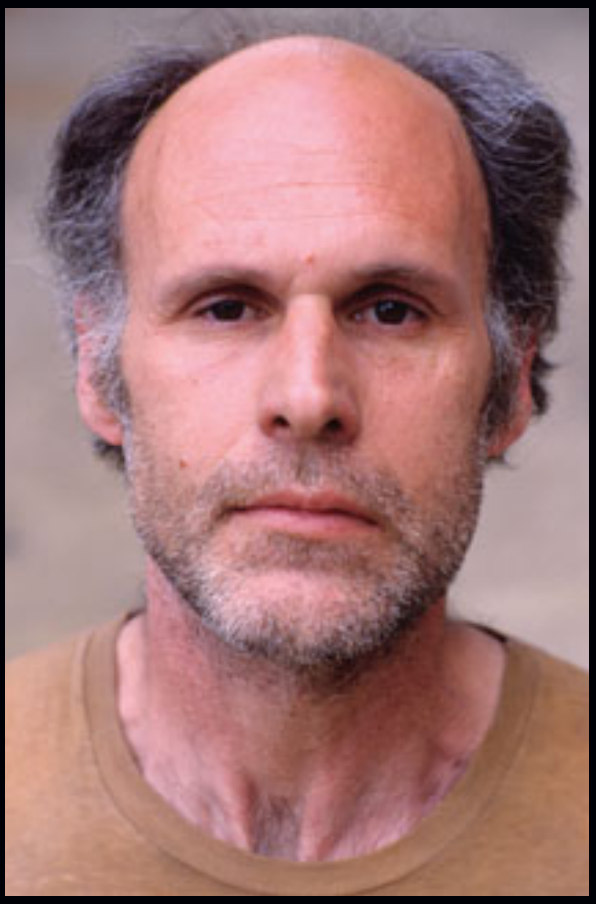
While walking around New York City doing a series on city buildings, I noticed the way the sun was shining on a building's revolving doors. I liked this image and so I painted it. Some time later, I thought, from a political point of view, a Washington, D.C., revolving door on a K Street building would be more interesting. So I painted a K Street revolving door. Most viewers of the two pieces don't get the political statement; they just appreciate the beauty of the two pieces, and that's okay.

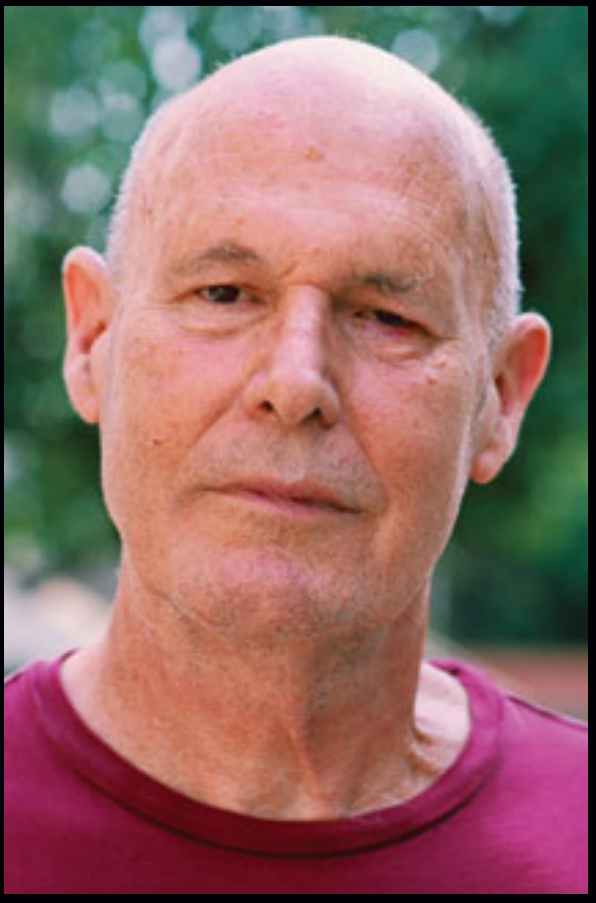
Washington is a difficult place to be an artist. Galleries here don't have big dollar backing. Clientele here who have money to buy the million dollar paintings go to New York City. You have to have a major New York gallery connection to be taken seriously.

I had a couple of good periods in my career when I showed in major New York and Washington galleries and museums. I was included in two Whitney Biennials. I had my foot in the door. But I wasn't good at playing the art game. I wasn't good at self-promotion or getting PR. They wanted me to do the "right kind' of art. I tend to paint what I like or what I'm interested in. I make art for the pure enjoyment of doing it.

After you've been an artist for a long time, you see how stupid this ego stuff is—the delusion that as an artist you're doing something important in the world and that you are a special person appreciated and respected by society. Completing a good piece of art is its own reward.

▲ 37 | Paul Feinberg, *Joseph White – 1984,*
▼ 38 | Paul Feinberg, *Joseph White – 2012*





▲ 39 | Joseph White, *Rectangle 6,* 1967
▶ 40 | Joseph White, *Revolving Door K St.,* 2006

▲ 41 | Paul Feinberg, *Manon – 1977*

then AND now
afterword

In my mind the picture is clear. A still-light evening, the air super-heated. A long line snaking back uphill from the entrance to 406 7th Street. People dressed up, dressed down, dressed outrageously. Individuals and small groups dashing back and forth across the street to the barely cooler interior of a packed bar opposite.

This was the opening of the Washington art scene's latest development, 406—an old, multi-storied commercial building just off Pennsylvania Avenue, transformed into minimalist, loft-like galleries very unlike the townhouse venues in Georgetown and around Dupont Circle that until then had been the mecca for dealers, artists and collectors.

The 406 7th Street bash kicked off the '80s in Washington's art world. It also confirmed what those of us who frequented the galleries and studios already knew—Washington again boasted a coherent albeit eccentric art scene, one with a more varied base, a different makeup than the scenes of the '60s and '70s, but just as lively and much larger.

Washington art seemed to be on the brink of a new golden age, one that would attract media attention, a new kind of corporate and social patronage, and (of course) bigger audiences to appreciate and buy.

For much of that splendid, self-conscious, over-the-top decade, that was the case. And then, it wasn't.

Mini-recessions, a new ethos (less is more, much less even more so), and the start of the more sober '90s dampened the excitement and scattered the scene. Of course the art world continued its life in multiple venues around the city. But the circles were and are smaller and separated. In the minds of many who have spent decades art-watching in this city, they don't compare to that earlier organic, interconnected, fond, and feuding scene.

The artists in this exhibition, "The Constant Artist," were all well known or making a name for themselves within art circles here and elsewhere as the '80s dawned. One already was a fixture in contemporary art history books. Others had enjoyed (or were about to enjoy) shows in New York and West Coast museums and galleries, even overseas.

All were artists who could be counted on for provocative, thoughtful, at times even humorous art that was delivered with extraordinary skill. Their gallery shows drew crowds and critical acclaim.

Respected and admired, the men and women in this show were as different from each other as could be in terms of how they painted and what they painted. But all were united then, and remain united, by their commitment, their constancy, to their art.

The years between then and now have been marked by many shifts in the art world's attitude. Its restless quest for the young, the latest, the commercial, is nothing new. But in the past two decades especially this mindset appears to have pushed many fine older artists out of the way—literally from their galleries, figuratively from the public's attention—to make room for youthful talent that so often seems to recycle work from the '60s, the' 70s, the '80s without realizing the roots.

That has never been the case with these artists. Conscious of precedent, they have faithfully explored and enlarged their vision, producing art that is uniquely, unmistakably theirs. Being in or out, having a gallery or not, receiving critical notice or hearing nothing—none of this has stopped them. Even as early dreams of fame and fortune may have gone unrealized, or ambition cooled, they continued. The need to create—not the attention, not the applause —was and remains the force that drives them.

In *To an Old Philosopher in Rome*, the great American poet Wallace Stevens imagines what the philosopher George Santayana might have felt, looking back at a lifetime spent striving to reveal the eternal truths behind everyday experience: "It is a kind of total grandeur at the end...Total grandeur of a total edifice."

I like to think that over a lifetime, each artist in "The Constant Artist" has created his or her own grand edifice by remaining committed to the demanding, sublime vocation we call "making art." This exhibition illuminates their changes, their growth, their thoughts about former aspirations and current objectives. Most important, it recognizes and celebrates their splendid, enduring creativity.

Lee Fleming
Writer/Curator

▲ 42 | Paul Feinberg, *Alice Denney – 1978*
▶ 43 | Paul Feinberg, *Tom Green – 2012*

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Joseph White – 1984, 1984
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Rectangle 6, 1967
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40 | Joseph White
Revolving Door K St., 2006
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41 | Paul Feinberg
Manon – 1977, 1977
Silver gelatin print
11 x 14 in.
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42 | Paul Feinberg
Alice Denney – 1978, 1978
Silver gelatin print
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the artist

43 | Paul Feinberg
Tom Green – 2012, 2012
Color print
20 x 16 in.
Courtesy of the artist

Biographies

LISA MONTAG BROTMAN (b. 1947)

After graduating with a BFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo, Brotman moved to Washington, D.C., where she attended the Corcoran College of Art + Design and earned an MFA from the George Washington University. Brotman has received two Individual Artist Awards in the Visual Arts from the Maryland State Arts Council. Her work has been exhibited in Europe and the United States, including the Washington, D.C., area, at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Saint Mary's College of Maryland, The George Washington University, Longwood University, Washington Project for the Arts, Rockville Arts Place, School 33 Art Center, Arlington Arts Center, and Gallery Neptune. Brotman's work has been exhibited in five solo shows at Gallery K, London, England, and in a mid-career retrospective at the Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, Maryland.

MANON CLEARY (b. 1942–d. 2012)

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Manon Cleary earned her MFA from Temple University, spending her first year in Rome, Italy. There, she studied the work of old masters, an experience to which she credited her becoming a figurative artist. In 1970, she moved to Washington, D.C., and began a teaching career at the University of the District of Columbia. Her work has been displayed internationally and is in permanent collections at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona, and National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. Manon's work has been exhibited at the Osuna Gallery, Washington, D.C., Addison/Ripley Fine Art, Washington, D.C., Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, Maryland, Jackson-Iolas Gallery, New York, New York, J. Rosenthal Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, and Grand Palais in Paris, France.

REBECCA DAVENPORT (b. 1943)

Born in Alexandria, Virginia, Davenport graduated with a BFA from Pratt Institute and an MFA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and painted in Washington, D.C., for twenty years before moving to South Carolina. Her paintings are in numerous private and public collections, including Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland, and Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia. Davenport exhibited in Washington, D.C., at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the National Portrait Gallery and Osuna Gallery from 1972 to 1991. Davenport's work has also been exhibited at ACA Gallery, New York, New York, and Aberbach Fine Arts, New York, New York, Musee D'Art Moderne, Paris, France, and the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia.

PAUL FEINBERG (b. 1942)

1979

2012

Paul Feinberg's stories and photo essays of Washington life have been appearing in the *Washingtonian Magazine*, the *Washington Post Magazine*, and numerous national publications for over 30 years. Focusing on portraits of city life and personal relationships, his stories have included everything from "Days and Nights by the Bus Station" to "Mothers and Daughters." "Best Friends," his *Washingtonian* piece on long term friendships, was expanded nationally into his book *Friends*. Feinberg has had solo shows at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, the Washington Arts Museum, Washington Project for the Arts, the Picker Gallery at Colgate University, and University of the District of Columbia. He has been a part of group shows at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington Project for the Arts, Studio Gallery, Tartt Gallery, Kathleen Ewing Gallery, Jack Rasmussen Gallery, Osuna Gallery, and Arlington Arts Center.

FRED FOLSOM (b. 1945)

A native Washingtonian, Folsom attended Pratt Institute, New York, New York, School of Visual Arts, New York, New York, Corcoran School of Art + Design, Washington, D.C., and Maryland College of Art and Design, Silver Spring, Maryland. Folsom has been exhibiting his paintings of nudes and the seamier side of life in the Washington, D.C., region since 1974. Folsom's work has been exhibited at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland, and in solo shows at the Washington Arts Museum, Washington Project for the Arts, Gallery K, Strathmore, and Maryland Art Place. He has received numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Maryland State Arts Council, and Franz and Virginia Bader Fund.

CLARK V. FOX (b. 1946)

Born in Austin, Texas, Fox is the "youngest member of the Washington Color School" who worked on projects with Tom Downing and Gene Davis but largely taught himself to paint as a copyist in the National Gallery of Art. His iconic paintings are in numerous collections, including the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Phillips Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Palm Springs Art Museum.

SAM GILLIAM (b. 1933)

Born in Tupelo, Mississippi, Gilliam earned his MA in painting at the University of Louisville before moving north to Washington, D.C. Absorbing the innovations of the Washington Color School, Gilliam quickly moved beyond it, following his own original and radical impulse to take over the exhibition space and not confine his painting to the picture plane. His work is in important collections across the United States, and he has had major retrospectives at Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, and the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Texas. Gilliam's work is included in public collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary, and Tate, London, England.

TOM GREEN (b. 1942)

After receiving a BA and MFA from the University of Maryland, Green moved to Washington and became a hugely influential artist and teacher. He has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows, including *Whitney Biennial*, New York, New York, and 19 *Americans at the Guggenheim Museum*, New York, New York, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia, and in the Washington, D.C. region, at the Kreeger Museum, the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Smithsonian Museum of American Art, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art. He received two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award, and residencies at the Vermont Studio Center and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Green's work is in public collections, including the Guggenheim Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art, and Smithsonian American Art Museum.

MARGARIDA KENDALL HULL (b. 1935)

Born in Lisbon, Portugal, Kendall Hull attended the University of Lisbon/College of History and Philosophy. After moving to Washington, D.C., she graduated from the Corcoran School of Art + Design in 1973 and earned her MFA in 1982 from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. Her paintings of alternative realities were shown regularly in Washington, D.C., by the Osuna Gallery and Gallery K. For the past ten years she has been represented by Galereia de Sao Mamede in Lisbon, Portugal. Kendall Hull's work has been in museum exhibitions at Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lisbon, Portugal, and the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Her works are in numerous public and private collections in the United States and Portugal.

JOSEPH WHITE (b. 1938)

Born in San Mateo, California, White received his BA from San Francisco State University in 1963 before moving to New York in 1968 and then to Washington, D.C., in 1976. He has been exhibiting continuously since 1969, in solo exhibitions at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York, Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California. White's work appeared three times in Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, and was represented in Washington, D.C., by Middendorf Gallery, Middendorf/Lane Gallery, Baumgartner Galleries Inc., and Osuna Art. White's work is also represented in museum collections, including Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

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