

MICHAEL CLARK

MICHAEL CLARK

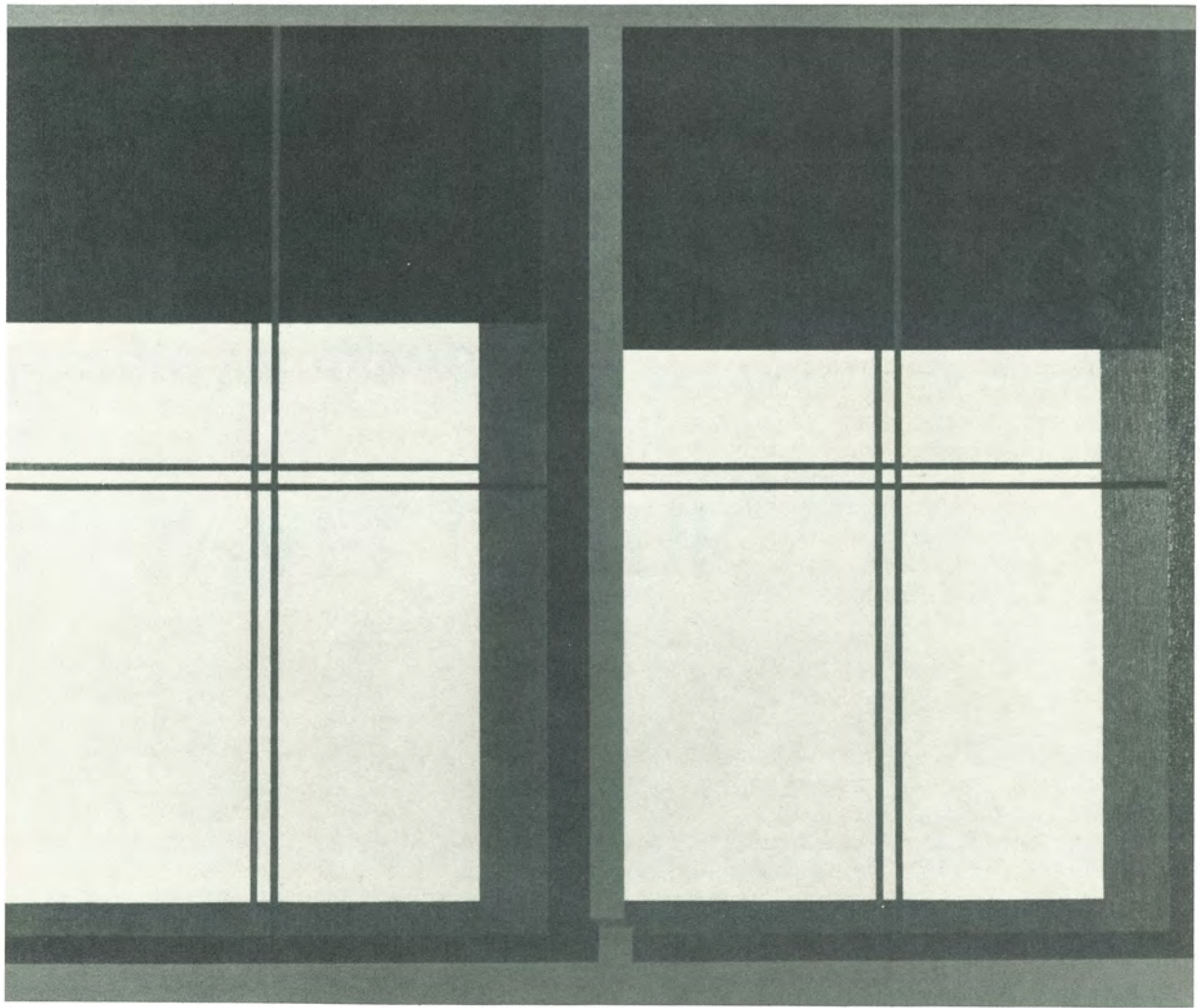
Picture Windows

24 May - 29 June 1979

The Dimock Gallery
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd.
Washington, D.C.

100. *Warehouse Windows, Wooster Street, N.Y.C., 1977.* Oil on canvas.



Passing through by train—blurred, the blank stares of warehouse windows; only rhythms are remembered. The repetitious groupings of shapes. Red, green, dark, light contrasts. The specific details of place and time are forgotten, subdued by the gray wash of urban sprawl.

Windows are functional components of architecture. They give order and variety to a building's facade. They can be decorative. They are mysterious (What's going on inside? Who's watching?). Michael Clark has devoted his artistic energy to an exploration of windows as subject matter—and by extension, the fraying fabric of industrialized American cities in his Architectural Series done between 1969 and 1979. Paintings of windows and building facades were displayed at the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi in 1978, where Clark was artist in residence. The paintings were uniquely installed in an "over-wall" environment. The visual impact of the non-traditional display impressed me, and the artist was invited to do a similar installation at The Dimock Gallery. The key to our installation will be to activate an entire wall surface by grouping the paintings "salon fashion." The large proportions of the gallery allow the paintings to breathe. Hanging the paintings high and low, instead of "hanging on the line" should create an exciting visual environment, akin to the actual experience of the diversity of urban structures. Instead of making comparisons between paintings, the viewer will be responding to a multiplicity of images, one playing off another. If modern architects dematerialized the wall by expanding window areas into curtains of glass, Michael Clark asks the viewer to contemplate the windows and architectural details of an earlier time when fenestration was an art.

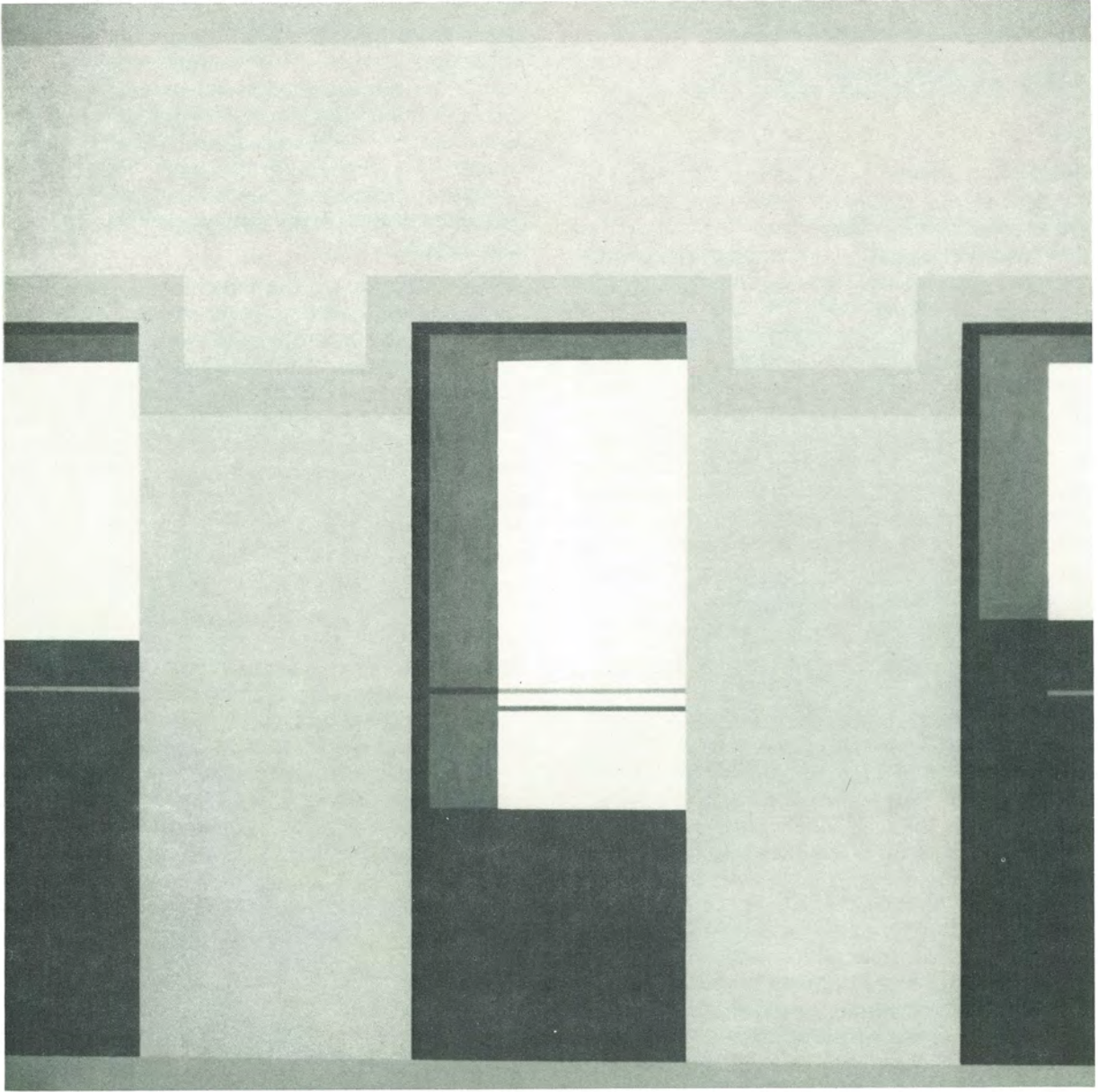
Windows have long been a favorite subject of artists. In the Renaissance, paintings were viewed as "windows on the world," the picture frame being equivalent to the window framing a view. The use of the window motif was widespread in modern art. Matisse, Picasso, Bonnard have used windows to introduce depth or an exterior lighting source into their compositions.

Architectural subject matter has advantages for the artist: it is static in that it is a good foil for the display of light and shade, and it suggests human presences. Clark is concerned with form

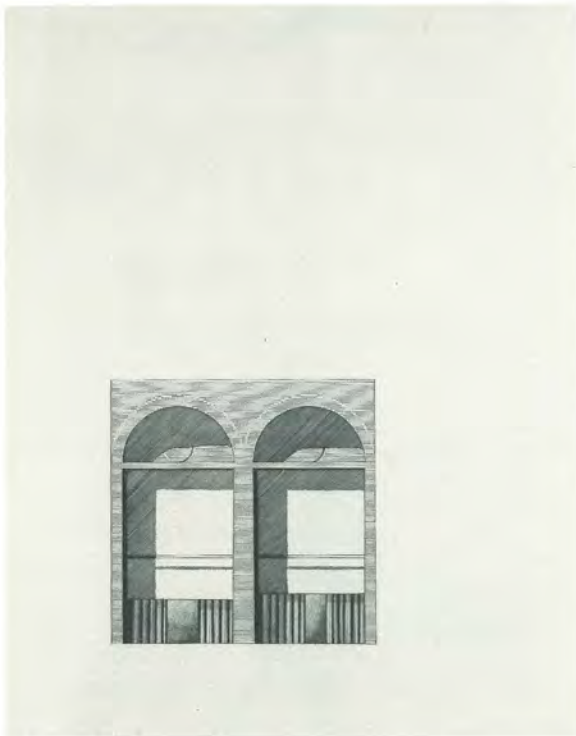
and structure in his paintings. He uses various ways of modulating form: textured dots, dashes (he admired the stippled works of the late Howard Mehring), and painted tonal stripes. Early on, he pioneered a type of pattern painting in which form, made up of distinct varieties in color related more to printing processes than Pointillism, comes together when the viewer stands at a distance. Color is used structurally. Clark was influenced by the theories of Tom Downing, an interpreter of Noland's teachings, and has also studied color theories from Chevard to Itten and Albers.

Clark prefers to work in series. It is a search for the perfect form in painting as expressed in the essential beauty of an architectural concept. The architectural paintings are serial paintings like others Clark has done (George Washington's portrait, Coney Island seascapes, cars.) Like Monet's series of paintings based on Rouen Cathedral, Clark has studied the changing effect of light on forms. In the project series, the artist has drawn from his life experiences of living in public housing projects all over the country. It was the sameness, the familiarity of these structures which led him to explore 50, 60 variations of the same theme: the large window flanked by two windows divided vertically. By changing color or height and disposition of window shade or curtain within such emblematic bilateral symmetry, the artist has found endless variety and enigmatic interpretation. Simplification of form, a structural necessity in Clark's paintings, is exemplified by *Classic Grisaille* (1978). Done in grisaille, it is viewed as a culmination of the series. Classic references abound in the Greek key pattern and paired columns. It is based on the windows in the Romanesque Revival style of the Heurich Mansion at 20th and New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington.

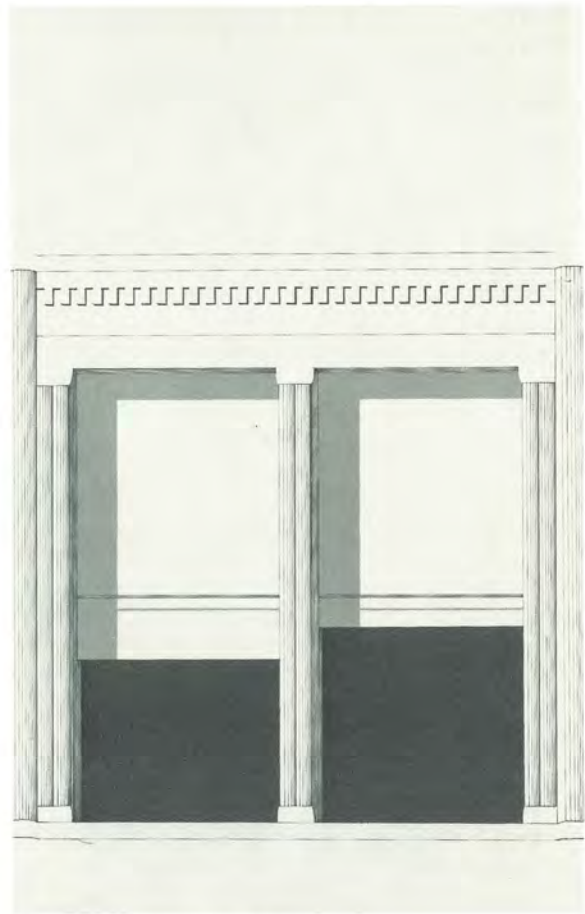
Clark's work is both modern and classic at the same time. He owes a debt to Ingres for an approach to ideal beauty and has utilized the proportions of the Golden Section in his work. His classic style as I interpret it is achieved by painstaking observation, comparing many examples, distilling the clearest or most typical forms, and ordering these in a rational manner by balance of the elements of design: line, form, color and tone. Clark is an artist who keeps coming back to his roots. He finds an encyclopedic array of building types in Washington, D.C. Sometimes the artist uses photographs as



17. *Orange—Grey—Black*, 1978. Oil on canvas.



137. *Road to Coney Island*, 1978-79. Mixed media.



124. *Classic*, 1977. Mixed media.

the symmetry that often makes his paintings (like several of those of his idols Ingres and Seurat) seem intellectually conceived and worked out, rather than guided by feeling.

It's possible that Michael learned the usefulness of asymmetry from the Frank Stella print that he used to have hanging up during the days when he lived in Washington. To me, Stella's prints with their eccentrically positioned images and his painterly watercolors on graph paper, also made after his large shaped canvases, are superior to the actual canvases themselves. Painterliness is something that Michael Clark has not yet explored (he never followed up the direction of his first gouaches

shown in a George Washington's Birthday exhibition several years ago), but his love of asymmetry is increasing, and helping his art. I saw how his paintings benefitted from being hung in an "all-over-the-wall," syncopated way—how the large ones "brought out" the small ones, and vice-versa—on a visit to his New York studio a few months ago. If the present retrospective exhibition of his "Window" paintings is similarly installed at the Dimock Gallery, I fancy these canvases will reveal themselves to us in an entirely new and exciting way, and lead to some changes of mind.

Andrew Hudson
April 17, 1979

Michael Clark: An Appreciation

In the first installment, entitled “The Modern Artist,” of his *Salon of 1859*, Baudelaire deplores the lack of “soul” and “education,” of “erudition, imagination, knowledge of the past and love of grandeur” among the artists of his own day, compared with the artists of former times such as David or Lebrun. And he goes on to characterize the contemporary artist as a “spoiled child” who is incapable of uttering a single witty or “profound, brilliant, or acute remark, to make one ponder or dream—in short, a *suggestive* remark.” However, he mentions five exceptions to this rule: Chevanard (a close friend and regular walking and talking companion of Delacroix), Préault, Daumier (who lived next-door to Baudelaire), Ricard and Delacroix himself. As Baudelaire puts it:

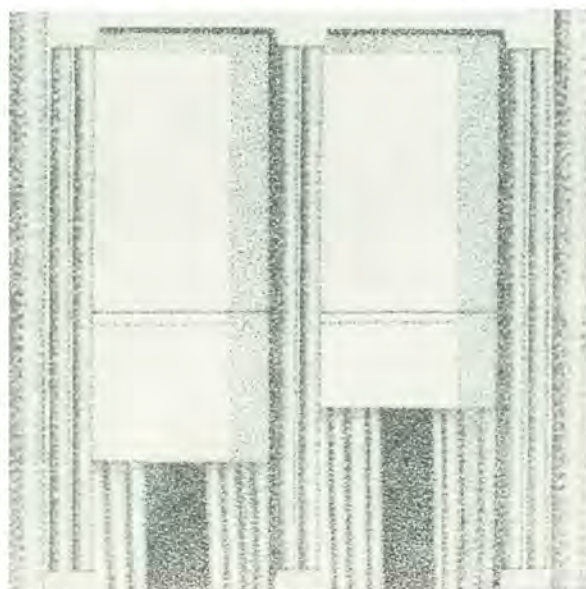
... I am certainly far from advocating the introduction into an art of means which are alien to it; and yet to quote an example, I cannot prevent myself from feeling sympathetic towards an artist such as a Chevanard, who is always agreeable in the way that books are agreeable, and graceful even when he is dull and pompous. What do I care that he is the butt of every dauber’s jokes? At least with him I am sure that I can have a conversation about Virgil or about Plato. Préault has a charming talent, an instinctive taste which hurls him upon the beautiful like a hunting animal upon its natural prey. Daumier is gifted with a radiant good sense which colours all his conversation. Ricard, in spite of the dazzle and elusiveness of his talk, never fails to let one see that he knows, and has compared a great deal. It is unnecessary, I think, to speak of the conversation of Eugène Delacroix, which is an admirable mixture of philosophical solidity, of witty lightness and of blazing enthusiasm. But apart from these, I cannot think of any other artist who is worthy to converse with a philosopher or a poet.

Michael Clark is one of the artists with whom I have most enjoyed looking at and talking about art, over the past twelve years. I would deem him “worthy to converse with a philosopher or a

poet,” for he has something of that flair of Préault’s for leaping upon the beautiful “as a natural prey” and, as with Baudelaire’s friend Ricard, “one can see that he knows, and has compared a great deal.” His conversation has not only “dazzle,” “witty lightness,” “blazing enthusiasm” and “philosophical solidity,” but also an invigorating sarcasm not unlike that of Degas (some of whose utterly deflating retorts and epigrams survive).

What makes many of Michael’s judgements so sound is the perspective provided by his profound love for and study of the art of the past (would that more of our contemporary artists looked at the old masters!). He has investigated the palettes of Seurat and Cézanne, the underpainting and glazes of Gilbert Stuart, the entire career and evolution of Picasso. And he continues to look, to read, and to compare—and to refine his own art.

I think some of his best work is to be found among his drawings, especially those in which a liveliness is given to the page by his off-placement of the image, as when George Washington’s head, nervously contoured and delicately shaded in diagonal ruled lines, or a nude sitting on a Louis XV-style chair, similarly shaded, or a house or building full of interesting windows, with the squared-up grid of the image’s transference from a photograph still evident, suddenly appear at the side or bottom of an otherwise empty sheet of paper. This syncopation avoids



20. *Brown—Yellow—Lavender*, 1971-72. Acrylic on canvas.

Catalogue

The paintings listed in this catalogue (nos. 1-117) are exhibited at The Dimock Gallery, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. The drawings (Catalogue nos. 118-147) are exhibited at the Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Project Windows

1. *Blue—Red—Yellow*, 1969. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Michael Clark, New York.
2. *Black—Grey—Canvas*, 1969. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Mary Swift, Washington, D.C.
3. *Orange—Purple—Blue*, 1970. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection E. Sanford, New York.
4. *Black—Grey—White #II*, 1971-72. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
5. *Black—Grey—White #III*, 1971-72. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
6. *Yellow—Red—Blue*, 1972. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection James M. Younger, Washington, D.C.
7. *Red—Grey—Blue*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 24.
Collection Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
8. *Tan—Red—Blue*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
9. *Black—Grey—White, Series of Six #III*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
10. *Orange—Tan—Grey*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 24.
Collection James Paulauskas, Reston, Virginia.
11. *Yellow—Blue—Red*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 24.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Sutter, Washington, D.C.
12. *Black—Red—Grey*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 24.
Collection Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
13. *Orange—Yellow—Blue*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 24 x 24.
Collection Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
14. *Green—Ochre—Black*, 1973-79. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Private collection, New York.
15. *Orange—Green—Blue*, 1974. Oil on canvas. 24 x 24.
16. *Yellow—Black—Red*, 1974. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
17. *Orange—Grey—Black*, 1978. Oil on canvas. 48 x 48.
18. *Project Window with Female Nude*, 1978. Oil on canvas. 48 x 48.

Classic Windows

19. *Classic in Grisaille*, 1970. Acrylic on linen. 12 x 12.
Collection Willem and Frauke De Looper, Washington, D.C.

48. *Brown—Grey—Light Blue*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
49. *Grey—Pink—Yellow*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
50. *Red—Vanilla—Blue—Brown*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, New York City.
51. *Red—Grey—Green*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 26 x 32.
Collection Michael Clark, New York City.
52. *Blue—Red—Yellow*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on linen. 24 x 32.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kainen.
53. *Green—Black—Grey*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on linen. 26 x 32.
54. *Brown—Grey—Cream*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 26 x 32.
55. *Classic Grisaille*, 1978. Oil on canvas. 48 x 48.

Los Angeles Windows

56. *Los Angeles Window*, 1973. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Private collection, New York City.
57. *Los Angeles Window #I*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
58. *Los Angeles Window #II*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
59. *Los Angeles Window #III*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
60. *Los Angeles Window #IV*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
61. *Los Angeles Window with Curtains*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 36 x 36.
62. *Los Angeles Window without Curtains*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 36 x 36.
Collection Jane Livingston, Washington, D.C.

French Windows

63. *French Window #I*, 1975-76. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.
64. *French Window #II*, 1975-76. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.
65. *French Window #III*, 1975-76. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.
66. *French Window #IV*, 1975-76. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.

Hotel Windows

67. *Plaza Hotel Window*, 1974. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
68. *Halfmoon Hotel Window*, 1974-75. Oil on canvas. 26 x 32.
69. *George Washington Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
70. *George Washington Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
71. *George Washington Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
72. *Roger Smith Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
73. *Roger Smith Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.

20. *Brown—Yellow—Lavender*, 1971-72. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
21. *Orange—Yellow—Blue*, 1972. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Seymour and Florence Rubenfeld, Washington, D.C.
22. *Grey—Yellow—Green*, 1972. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Seymour and Florence Rubenfeld, Washington, D.C.
23. *Tan—Ochre—Yellow*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
24. *Black—Blue—Yellow*, 1973. Acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
25. *Red—Green—Yellow*, 1973-74. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Collection Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
26. *Blue—Red—Grey*, 1974. Acrylic on linen. 10 x 14.
27. *Dark Grey—Light Grey—Cobalt Blue*, 1974. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Collection Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
28. *Red—Grey—Blue*, 1974-75. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 26 x 32.
29. *Grey—Green—Black*, 1974-75. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 12 x 12.
30. *Dark Blue—Light Green—Yellow*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Private collection, New York City.
31. *Orange—Yellow—Purple*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Private collection, New York City.
32. *Green—Purple—Yellow*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
33. *Orange—Yellow—Purple*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
34. *Red—Green—Grey*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
35. *Green—Red—Black*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Collection Roberto Mittrotti, Hollywood.
36. *Black—Grey—Pale Yellow*, 1975. Oil on canvas.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Dale Cunningham, New York City.
37. *Grey—Green—Blue*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, New York City.
38. *Emerald Green—Grey—Yellow*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
39. *Dark Blue—Green—Yellow*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
40. *Red—Green—Grey*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
41. *White—Black—Tan*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Private collection, New York City.
42. *Purple—Black—Cream*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
43. *Grey*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
44. *Brown—Grey—Pink*, 1975-76. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
45. *New Classic in Grisaille*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 26 x 32.
46. *Blue—Yellow—Red*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
47. *Brown—Red—Ochre—Grey*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.

74. *Roger Smith Hotel Window*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
75. *Cast Iron Hotel Window—Tan*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 30 x 35.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Office Windows

76. *Office Window #I*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
77. *Office Window #II*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
78. *Office Window #III*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
79. *Office Window #IV*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
80. *Office Window #V*, 1976. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.

Lower New York Windows

81. *Canal Street Window #I*, 1976-77. Oil and acrylic on linen. 26 x 32.
82. *Canal Street Window #II*, 1976-77. Oil and acrylic on linen. 26 x 32.
83. *Canal Street Window #III*, 1976-77. Oil and acrylic on linen. 26 x 32.
84. *Ochre—Oxide—Black*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Private collection, New York City.
85. *Grey—Black—Naples*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Lent by Lunn Gallery, Washington, D.C.
86. *Orange—Grey—Black*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
87. *Lower East Side #I*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 26 x 32.
88. *Lower East Side #II*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 26 x 32.
89. *Lower East Side #III*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 26 x 32.
90. *Washington Street, New York City*, 1977-78. Oil on canvas. 30 x 35.
91. *Mullberry Street—Little Italy #I*, 1978. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.
92. *Mullberry Street—Little Italy #II*, 1978. Oil and acrylic on linen. 17½ x 30½.
93. *Mullberry Street—Little Italy #III*, 1978. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 17½ x 30½.

Warehouse Windows

94. *Warehouse Window, New York City #I*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
95. *Warehouse Window, New York City #II*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
96. *Warehouse Window, New York City #III*, 1975. Oil on canvas. 10 x 14.
97. *Warehouse Window, Columbus, Ohio*, 1976. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 36.
98. *Warehouse Window, Reade Street, New York City*, 1976. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 36.
99. *Chinatown building, New York City*, 1978-79. Oil on canvas. 48 x 72.
100. *Warehouse Windows, Wooster Street, New York City*, 1977. Oil on canvas. 30 x 25.

127. *Classic Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
128. *Classic Progressions Drawing*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.

Lower New York Windows

129. *Canal Street, New York City*, 1977. Mixed media. 22¼ x 30.
130. *Canal Street #II*, 1977-78. Mixed media. 22¼ x 18.
131. *Washington Street, New York City*, 1979. Mixed media. 17¼ x 14.
132. *Lower East Side Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
133. *Warehouse Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.

Buildings

134. *Coney Island Movie House*, July 1976. Mixed media. 17 x 14¼.
135. *3rd Avenue Building*, 1977. Mixed media. 22¼ x 30.
136. *Chinatown Building, New York City*, 1978. Mixed media. 17 x 14¼.
137. *Road to Coney Island Building*, 1978-79. Mixed media. 17¼ x 14.
138. *Baltimore Buildings*, 1979. Mixed media. 22¼ x 29¾.
139. *3 Buildings, New York City*, 1979. Mixed media. 17¼ x 14.
140. *Walker Street Building*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.

Other Windows

141. *Baltimore Windows*, 1978. Mixed media. 17¼ x 14¼.
142. *Window with Male Nude*, 1979. Mixed Media. 10 x 14.
143. *Beaux-Arts Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
144. *20th and New Hampshire*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
145. *Los Angeles Windows Drawing*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
146. *Corpus Christi Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
147. *Dallas Windows Drawing*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.

Buildings

101. *3rd Avenue Buildings*, 1977. Oil on canvas. Five panels. 30 x 40.
102. *Walker Street Building #I*, 1978. Oil on canvas. 24 x 72.
103. *North Philadelphia Buildings*, 1978-79. Oil on canvas. 12 x 36.
104. *North Philadelphia Buildings*, 1978-79. Oil on canvas. 24 x 72.
105. *3 Buildings, 21 Windows*, 1979. Oil on canvas. 60 x 70.

Other Windows

106. *D.C. Window*, 1969. Acrylic on canvas. 10 x 14.
Collection Bill and Georgia Delano, New York City.
107. *4 Windows*, 1969-70. Acrylic on canvas. 18 x 21.
Collection Steven Reichard, New York City.
108. *Highway to Coney Island*, 1976-77. Oil and acrylic on linen. 35 x 36.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Cafritz, Washington, D.C.
109. *Art Deco Movie House, Coney Island*, 1977. Oil on linen. 30 x 35.
110. *20th and New Hampshire #III*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 35.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Murray Bring, Washington, D.C.
111. *20th and New Hampshire #V*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 35.
112. *20th and New Hampshire #VI*, 1977. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 35.
113. *Beaux-Arts Windows*, 1977-78. Oil on canvas. 30 x 35.
114. *Renwick Windows*, 1977-78. Oil on canvas. 35 x 45.
115. *Corpus Christi Window—Blue*, 1978. Oil on canvas. 12 x 12.
Collection Claudia Kaim, New York City.
116. *Baltimore Window #II*, 1978. Oil and acrylic on linen. 30 x 35.
117. *Blue Windows with Male Nude*, 1979. Oil on canvas. 30 x 35.

Project Windows

118. *Project Window with Female Nude*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
119. *Project Windows*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.
120. *Project Progression Drawing*, 1979. Mixed media. 10 x 14.

Classic Windows

121. *Classic Windows*, 1975-78. Mixed media. 18¼ x 20.
122. *Classic—Classic*, 1977. Mixed media. 22½ x 15.
123. *Orange—Yellow—Grey*, 1977. Mixed media. 12 x 15.
124. *Classic*, 1977. Mixed media. 11 x 10.
125. *Classic*, 1977. Mixed media. 17 x 14¼.
126. *Classic*, 1977-78. Mixed media. 17½ x 14¼.
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Murray Bring, Washington, D.C.

