

Zvi Lachman's "Poets Portraits" exhibit

Shown at:

- The Rubin Museum (February 2007), Tel Aviv.
- Yeshiva University Museum, New York (April through August 2007).

Has been covered by:

- "Arts and Antiques"
- "New York Art"
- "New York Sun"
- "Jewish Week"
- "the Jewish Press"
- "Yediot America"
- "Sculpture Magazine" (forthcoming)
- "Parnasus Poetry Magazine"

Here are some experts of the criticism:



THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

ART IN BRIEF

**POETS' PORTRAITS:
LINES FOR MY IMAGE:
Drawings and Sculpture
by Zvi Lachman, Tel-Aviv**
Center for Jewish History

"Poets' Portraits," on view at the Center for Jewish History, consists of charcoal and pastel drawings on paper by the 55-year-old Israeli artist Zvi Lachman. They are all portraits of well-known — and not-so-well-known, at least in this country — poets and writers, including Avot Yeshurun, Taha Muhammad Ali, and Yona Wallach. Many of the drawings of poets are accompanied by the text of one of their poems. Mr. Lachman makes drawings that are constructed with agitated linear fragments, a network of short, blunt and feathery marks that vacillate between solidity and chaos. The solid form of the head becomes clearer when the drawings are viewed from afar, but close up it is easy to focus on isolated areas. Mr. Lachman's art



CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY
Zvi Lachman, 'Lea Goldberg - My Pictures' (2006).

suggests that the human psyche is always in a state of transition.

Often the eyes of the sitters are drawn in a faint and hazy manner, or one eye is rendered much more sharply than the other. Like Cézanne, Mr. Lachman gazes again and again at the subject at hand

in order to discover complex relationships that avert the naked eye. These agitated and fluid portraits represent the restless and shifting minds of the sitters and the portraitist. The interplay between dark lines and faint smudges and erasures indicate depth in space, varied skin tones, and the rhythm of the sitter's body.

A few small figural sculptures are placed on wooden pedestals in an enclosed outdoor space that can only be seen by viewers indoors, from behind glass. The sculptures follow in the tradition of such existential humanists as Rodin, Medardo Rosso, and Giacometti, in that the textures and contours of the figures resonate with psychological meanings. The figures, some seated at sepulchre-like tables or wedges, are pockmarked and penetrated by space. We look into them as much as we look at their surfaces.

Eric Gelber

Until August 30 (15 W. 16th St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues, 212-294-8301).

Geoffrey Hartman from Poet's Portraits:

Zvika Lachman's Portraits of the Poets is an ambitious project that breaks new ground. It innovates by its comprehensiveness, its revision of the concept of mimesis, and its technique. Instead of singling out this and that poet, Lachman is producing an entire gallery of Israeli and Jewish writers, while adding some world-class figures from other countries...

... Frontality, then, intrinsic to this genre of representation, is not sacrificed by the attempt to catch an impression of a writer's inner or virtual thoughts. The painterly imagination, here, uses a kind of overwriting, sometimes a frustrated scribble, more often a modeling, to bring to mind, paradoxically, that inner life, as well as the Veronica veil instantaneity of the impact we call a face. But in most of these images an important tension remains between face and head, between a stabilized solidity and what compels the viewer's glance to move over and into a highly restrictive space-- the head frame within the picture frame, that boxy container of what is mobile, fugitive, perspectival, difficult to gather and close-off.

Sheba Salhov

WOULD MY FACE

...The profound nature of its pictorial laws is revealed as the surface of portraits whose expressions are torn to shreds, atomized, disheveled, and can barely be identified as complete, articulate, and unified. The deconstruction of the surface that we usually define as "a face" occurs as a result of Lachman's grasp of the object – the world of things or "essences" – as a dynamics of particles, a totality, a dynamics occurring as multi-directional entropy, as a wild, unraveling complex of contradictory and identical gestures that ceaselessly attract and move in all directions.

In the world of things, from Lachman's point of view, there is no such thing as a clear-cut, frozen moment of arrest that creates and defines the "frame:" exact and defined boundaries establishing the separateness of objects. The law of appearances as a never ending movement reveals itself, according to

Lachman, in its maximum acuity in the appearance of the face. And this is because the portrait is but a frayed fabric that hauls to the surface from the depth of interiority or of soulfulness – for a swift and severed moment – its burning and pulsing heart, like the heart of the very same law which unsettles everything in the world. The face is the soul, and the soul is at the heart of the wavering that impels everything from void to void. Foremost it removes and uncovers the veil of the visible line that defines, orders, breaks and shears it, leaving behind a weight blowing like a wind, flung from the depths like a spell.

Jewish Arts

By: Menachem Wecker Wednesday, May 30, 2007

... His portraits, for which he uses charcoal, pastel, paint, pencil, chalk and bronze, evoke a cross between the portraits of Anna Ticho and Francis Bacon. Like Ticho, who used to draw the patients who sat in her husband's, Dr. Avraham Albert Ticho's, ophthalmology clinic, Lachman's drawings of famous poets capture the less than happy sides of his subjects. In the catalog introduction, curator Shva Salhoov refers to the "horror [which] bursts forth" in Lachman's work. Salhoov identifies the Hebrew word for horror as always attached to the visual. "Horror is a visible event, the core of which resides in its actual presence as a shadow."

... "Each portrait is a human and spiritual identity imprinted upon a face, whose presence cannot be reduced to its tactile contours." They also view the work as anti-technology in its abstraction. "As electronic media and the boundless reach of the Internet have come to render information instantly available, presenting it in a one dimensional, sterile and simplified form," they argue, "Lachman remains committed to maintaining contact with nature and with human memory."