

Reinhold Edelschein:

An Intimate Look: Small Paintings & Drawings

Curated by Donald Meyer

Philadelphia Sketch Club January 2011

Artist's Statement

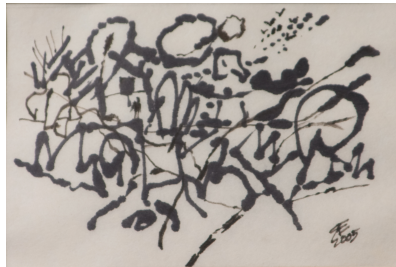
It is my belief that art springs from contact with nature. I transform my sensations of its rhythmic vitality through color keys and harmonies. My pictures, all imaginary, do not reflect a particular motif, but are rather a composite of memory and experience of the moods and aspects of nature. Above all, I want my pictures to be analogous expressions of musical tonalities. -Reinhold Edelschein, 2010.

The Woods, the Music and Hans Hofmann

Reinhold Edelschein lives with his wife Henrietta on Sedgewick Avenue in the outlying suburban Mount Airy section of Philadelphia. Giving directions, "across from the woods," he'll advise, as if you even knew that these "woods," a very salient, interior part of his life and work, existed.

Their home is lined, to every table's edge, ledge, mantel, wall and corner with the kind of exquisite notations in clay and color, on canvas or paper, that speak to a pair of lives in the process of continuous, intimate composition. For Henrietta is a sculptor, and her work dances everywhere around your view of the living room and dining room filled with Reinhold's work.

Reinhold at my first visit was quick to turn the conversation to questions of mood, tone and rhythm, as Reinhold is a musician, and to Hofmann, with whom he studied at New York and Provincetown in the late 1940's.



Ink Drawing, 2005.



Tan and Gray Forms on Black, 2008, Acrylic on board, 5" x 7"



Little Rhythm in Sienna and White, 2008, Acrylic on board, 8" x 10"

Sheet Music

It would not be off point to notice there isn't much of Reinhold's work that reaches beyond the respect for a jewel-like scale, generally having the size of sheet music you see perched on a piano or musicians stand. It has a feeling, at being seen, of a need to be approached and closely studied, akin to that of Klee's, some of Kandinsky's, even some small drawings of deKooning from the early seventies with respect to the paint, having a serious economy of touch.

Structure in the Woods

That the "woods" and his music are in his work begins with his ink drawings. The drawings actually look like briery thickets of musical notations, written without the bar lines, where dots, dashes, and linked fronds of visual "notes" dart

like a scattering murder of crows, up, and back and forth, in sweeping diagonals, side to side, to the top of a page. So most of Reinhold's work is in the spirit of the land, since even when no horizon is noted visually, it's implied as a scattering of birds and leaves swathe its contours celebrating its lilted topography in the air beneath their flight.

Black to Light

It is not the form that dictates the color, but the color that brings out the form. Color is a plastic means of creating intervals... color harmonics produced by special relationships, or tensions. We differentiate now between formal tensions and color tensions, just as we differentiate in music between counterpoint and harmony. - Hans Hofmann (editor's emphasis)

So, Reinhold begins with what his wife Henrietta claims is some of his strongest work, in black on white, in his ink drawings where you see not so much the form of Hofmann's concern, but the rhythm, beat and structure that runs through the "land" he's laying out for you. It's this swelling, linear rhythm that underlies the design of his color works in the biomorphic forms.

Monumental sound, tone, mood, rhythm

If you were asked to listen intently in a quiet room for a type of sound to occur, its slightest instance would be monumental in your ear and the same seems to be the case for your eye as Edelschein asks us to look for tones of color as expression of mood. What Hofmann said, using generally understood musical terms to apply to the visual, is embodied in the formal monumentality of Edelschein's creation of intervals, harmonies and counterpoint, however small and quiet the works seem to be. Further, hidden in Edelschein's continuing affection for his mentor Hofmann is the spark, the shaft of light, he adds to Hofmann's rock-ribbed European formalism: "not reflect(ing) a particular motif, but rather a composite of memory and experience of the moods and aspects of nature." It is exactly what art historian Barbara Novak distinguishes as an American vision, an idiom, that becomes high relief when it's placed against European ideas of abstraction: the American attachment to "things," to the physical fact, to contact with inexorable organic change, to the land, emblematic in the woods across from Edelschein's home. Not in a picturesque way do the best of American abstractionists, Dove, Demuth, Avery, Sheeler, Burchfield, Davis, even in a sense Hopper, or contemporaries like Bleckner or Johns, re-make our world, but in a way laid squarely as abstractions of sensations in the innately formal matrices of the mystery of physical reality. Always the anti-formalist Pragmatists, Americans never fail to leave open abstraction for the quotidian, uncertain reality of what they cannot yet comprehend. Edelschein's work lets us see the natural, monumental intervals, harmonies and counterpoint of this mysterious reality by asking us to look intently into his quiet vision of the woods. - Donald Meyer

REINHOLD EDELSCHN: INTIMATE PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS
PHILADELPHIA SKETCH CLUB JANUARY 2011

1. LITTLE RHYTHM IN BROWN & BLUE, ACRYLIC, 16X18, \$800
2. TAN & GREY FORMS ON BLACK, ACRYLIC, 10X12, \$600
3. INK DRAWING, INK, 9X11, \$500
4. PENCIL DRAWING, PENCIL, 10X12, \$500
5. ORANGE HARMONY, ACRYLIC, 10X12, \$600
6. YELLOW FLORAL RHYTHM, ACRYLIC, 14X16, \$700
7. LITTLE BIRD, INK, 8X10, \$500
8. LITTLE RHYTHM IN SIENNA & WHITE, ACRYLIC, 12X14, \$600
9. BROWN WOOD, ACRYLIC, 12X14, \$600
10. BRUSH DRAWING, INK, 9X11, \$500
11. LITTLE BLUE GARDEN, ACRYLIC, 12X14, \$600
12. LITTLE GREEN GARDEN WITH RED ACCENTS, ACRYLIC, 12X14, \$600
13. WINTER TWILIGHT, ACRYLIC, 16X20, \$1000
14. BIRD, INK, 8X10, \$500
15. RHYTHM IN DARK BLUE, ACRYLIC, 14X16, \$800
16. LITTLE RHYTHM IN TAN & PINK, ACRYLIC, 12X14, \$600
17. BLUE RHYTHM WITH BIRD, ACRYLIC, 10X12, \$600
18. PINK/ORANGE RHYTHM I, WATERCOLOR & PENCIL, 8X10, \$500
19. PINK/ORANGE RHYTHM II, WATERCOLOR & PENCIL, 8X10, \$500
20. PINK/ORANGE RHYTHM WITH WHITE, WATERCOLOR & PENCIL, 8X10, \$500

