



THE
AMES
GALLERY



UB01, Ursula Barnes, Eve, nd, oil on canvas, 34 x 52.5"

The Age of Excess: from Vice to Virtue

Our current gallery show, *The Age of Excess: from Vice to Virtue* offers the viewer a glimpse of the Gallery's newest acquisitions. Featured are five large and exuberant paintings by Ursula Barnes; a group of watercolor drawings to illustrate a lecture on the evils of alcohol; and a large, hand-drawn religious banner on cloth.

We first encountered Ursula Barnes' paintings more than 20 years ago, when her *Cat and a Ball on a Waterfall* inspired the survey exhibition *200 Years of California Folk Painting and Sculpture* at the Oakland Museum in 1986.

Little is written about the artist, who was born in Germany in 1872 and came to San Francisco at the age of 19. As to her art, it was unknown even to her own family. The little we do know indicates that Ursula Barnes' life was colorful. Her marriage to an itinerant Evangelist

preacher allowed her travel in both Asia and Africa. She danced on the New York stage, was an actress in Hollywood, a parlor maid in Chicago, and a pastry chef in San Francisco.

Her lush, flamboyant canvases remained in her run-down bead-festooned apartment on San Francisco's Geary Street. At her death in August, 1958 the county coroner came upon the small group of her works. We are delighted to be able to offer a few of the paintings from this very limited collection.

Along with these select paintings, we are showing six watercolor panels by an artist we know only as Sewell. They were created to accompany the lecture of a Berkeley doctor, Mrs. Carrie F. Young, M.D., who it appears was active in the late 1800's. Announcing her lectures on "The Stomach in Health and

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Gallery Notes



UB04, Ursula Barnes, *Goodbye, nd*, oil on canvas, 39.5 x 59"

Disease” an advertising poster stated that the talk was “Illustrated by Sewell’s celebrated Plates and Portraits, of Life Size and Color.” Though touted as “One of the best speeches on the Pacific Coast” by the California Agriculturalist, these naïve illustrations provide an almost comical approach to the serious problem of alcohol abuse.

Finally we have the very large banner, *The Fall and Restoration of Man*. Drawn on bolts of pillow case cotton, the 10-foot banner was probably used as a teaching tool at Southern

revival meetings. Bold black lettering reverberates against the subdued palette of the drawings.

The banner starts with Eden, then shows detailed steps of hate leading to the fall of man. On the way it shows the world in a pie-chart made of 950 million heathens, 388.2 million Christians, 8.6 million Jews, and the rest “moralists,” universalists,” and “infidelity.” Through love, the steps are taken toward restoration. The church and Christ are part of the path to heaven. It is said the stains that appear on the banner are the blood and tears of the repentant. ■



Pentecostal revival banner, c. 1910, mixed media, 41.75 x 116.25 inches

Mends and Make-Dos

For more than twenty years, we have sought out simple possessions that have been lovingly and creatively mended and repaired to preserve their lives. We have been intrigued by the use of metal staples to make cracked glass and china whole, wooden bowls with tin patches or sewn up cracks, wire- or string-wrapped basket handles, broken stemware with replacement wood or tin bases, and tin handles replacing the original china ones...all are fascinating. The ingenuity of the repair often outshines the object in its original state.



Pair of graters

Preserving a treasured wedding gift or the last piece in a set of eight or the spout of the pot in a tea set may be looked at as a reasoned decision. More puzzling is the effort to replace the handle of a hammer or soldering iron by attaching a piece of pipe or, odder yet, a corncob. What necessity,

or lack of goods, can explain such a mundane repair?

To us, the mending of a C-clamp by cutting and filing metal strips and bolting them to the clamp seems the height of penny pinching frugality. The mystery is in the lives of the users...what prompted these repairs, and what were the alternatives? Are these home repairs, or did the tinker pass by months before the peddler was due? Did such mending simply reflect the economics of the time, or was there a satisfaction in keeping an old tool in working order? We can't know, but can admire the creativity, thoughtfulness and often the elegance of the various solutions people found.

Sometimes confused with the mend, the make-do is another category of interest. The make-do is an alteration or reworking of an object by salvaging the usable parts and creating an article with a new use, e.g. a pin cushion made on the stem and base of a broken goblet, or a



45M/0708, Cake Stand, Glass and Wood, 7.5" high, 9.5" diam

grater created by making multiple jagged nail-holes in the salvaged tin of a burned out coffee pot.

Again, we admire and marvel at the simple genius of people "making do"...a mend extends the life of an object, while a make-do reworks the salvageable parts to create a new use. Both are relevant as we use recycling to help us toward a "greener" future.

The "waste not, want not" ethic of the past has returned, but it may take some time for the art of the "visible" repair to find its audience and be celebrated. ■



45/8208, Spode Tureen mended with 23 staples in lid and 33 staples in bowl, c.1795, Ceramic, 9 x 13 x 9"



2661 Cedar Street
(at La Loma)
Berkeley, CA 94708
www.amesgallery.com

The Gallery is open by appointment and chance. Our small staff is present most weekdays from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. Evenings or weekend appointments are also possible.

A call ahead is always advised:
510-845-4949.



02C/00109, Memory Decoy, c.1925, 7 x 13.5 x 7"

At the Gallery

**The Age of Excess, from Vice to Virtue
Recent Acquisitions**

through April 12, 2009

**Out and About in California
California Country Show**

March 21 – 22, 2009

Costa Mesa, CA

With special exhibit *No Longer Hidden:
An Exhibit of Black Cloth Dolls 1870-1930*

Music by Pacific Chamber Jazz.

www.californiacountryshow.com

Los Angeles Antique Show

April 22 – 26, 2009

Barker Hangar, Santa Monica, CA

www.psartsantiques.com

2009 Decorators Showcase

April 25 – 26, 2009

2830 Pacific Ave, San Francisco

Information: 415-447-3115.

Benefits San Francisco University
High School's Financial Aid Program



Left to right:

85/7109, Mend Oil Lamp, c. early 1800s, Glass and Wood, 5.5 x 4"

85/6209, Mend Glass Lamp, Glass and Wood, 8" x 4 x 4"

85/7109A, Mend Pressed Glass Oil Lamp, c.1860, Glass and Wood, 9" tall

Deborah Barrett on amesgallery.com

Take a look at our website; we have added a page to show the work of Berkeley artist Deborah Barrett. We have collected her work personally since the early 90s; it has always been so well received by visitors that we have decided to show her work "officially." We think you'll like it as much as we do.



89/7809, License Plate Basket, c.1930, 15 x 14.5"

American Folk Art Festival in Napa

Sunday, May 2, 2009

noon - 5pm

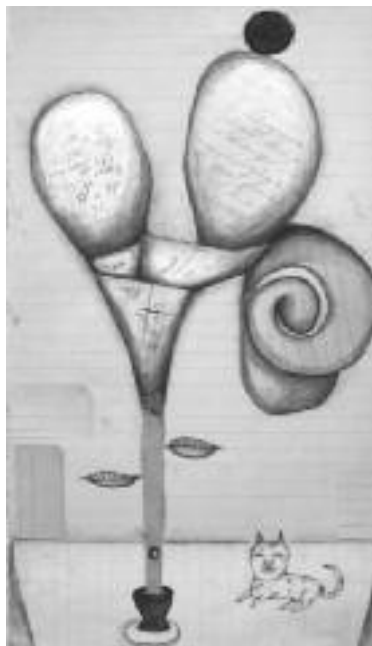
Laird Family Estate Winery
5055 Solano Avenue, Napa, CA
Proceeds to benefit the San Francisco
Museum of Craft and Folk Art
Music by Pacific Chamber Jazz.



20P/00Y07, Mary McEwen Black Doll, c1900s, 16"



DEB65, Deborah Barrett, *Nude in Red Cape*, 2000, Mixed Media, 13.75 x 9.75"



DEB63, Deborah Barrett, *Flower with Black Berry and Cat*, 1996, Mixed Media, 15 x 7.75"



DEB84, Deborah Barrett, *Untitled Construction*, 1992, Mixed Media, 38.5 x 13 x 4"



JB306, Jim Bauer, Oakland Dog, 2003, Recycled aluminum, 16 x 16 x 10"

Art Centers

American Studios and Galleries for Artists with Developmental or Mental Disabilities

By Betty-Carol Sellen

A new book by Betty-Carol Sellen has been published by McFarland and Company, Inc. It is a comprehensive survey of the many art centers around the United States that provide services for artists with special needs. Biographies of nearly 500 of the artists round out the valuable information this book provides.

This is Betty-Carol's third book focused on self-taught, outsider and folk art; full disclosure demands that I tell you that I was surprised and truly touched to discover that it was (in part) dedicated to me, as the person who introduced B.C. to this world of art center art.

Check with your local book source, or go to www.mcfarlandpub.com.

Found Object Art 2

by Tina Skinner

A brand new release, a sequel to an earlier book on found art, has just been published by Schiffer. Some 80 artists from the United States and Europe have been selected for this project, including our own Jim Bauer. The book is amply illustrated with over 450 photographs of original pieces of art made from once cast-aside objects. "Creative reuse" is at the heart of this full color volume compiled by Tina Skinner.

Check your local book source or e-mail shifferbk@aol.com, ISBN 978-0-7643-3162-6.

Vertical Art

The Enduring Beauty of Antique Canes and Walking Sticks

Photography by Umberto Barone

Another book we need to tell you about is one on which I had the honor to be a consultant. After a very long wait, we're pleased to announce the publication of *Vertical Art*; a spectacular coffee table book on antique canes. This exceptional volume was printed and bound in Italy in association with Hudson Hill Press LLC. A forward by Wendell Garrett sets the mood for this amazing collection of lush photographs.

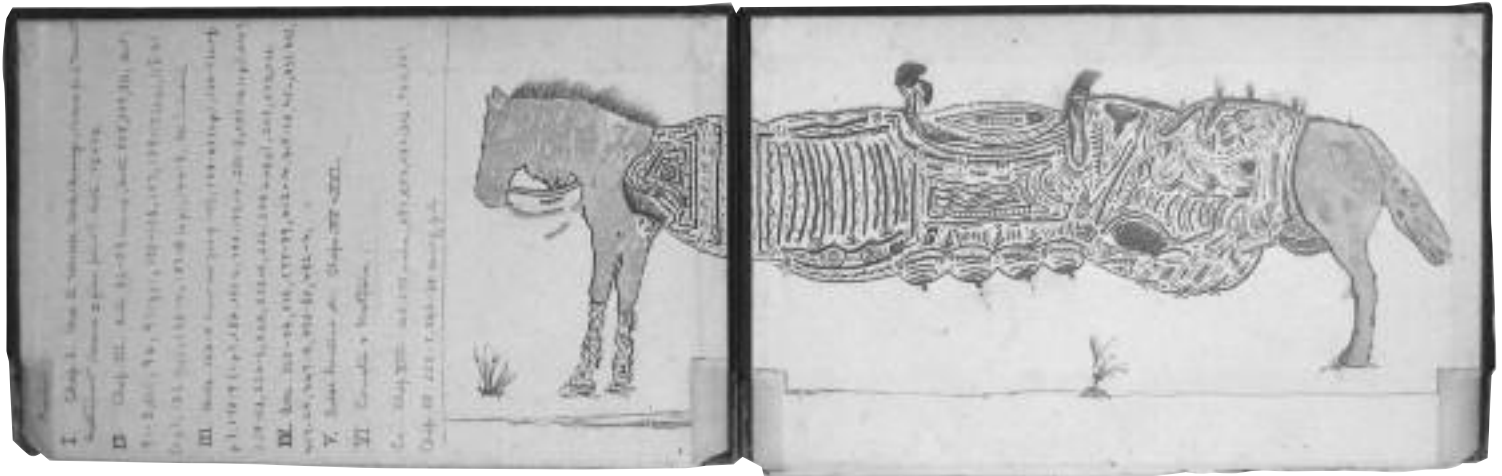
To read the glowing review in the *New York Times* in December, go to: www.nytimes.com/2008/12/26/arts/design/26anti.html

For ordering information, and to see some of the photographs, go to: www.verticalartcanebook.com.

Adding a page for Christopher Dalton Powell

In our last newsletter, we mentioned an artist new to the gallery, whose work was then on exhibit at the Halles Saint Pierre gallery in Paris. That show proved to be a tremendous success for Chris, and his work continued to impress our clients at the recent Outsider Art Fair.

Powell uses old book covers and found illustrations as material for his collages. His choice of objects is unusual, and his finely detailed ink drawings are masterful. Keep checking our website, where we will soon have a page devoted to his work including a short biography.



CPI3, Christopher Dalton Powell, *Curtain Call at the Horse Opera*, 2008, Ink / Collage, 6 x 18.75"



CPI6, Christopher Dalton Powell, *Ramirez's Tunnel Angels have failed*, 2008, Collage, 19 x 14.5"



CPI4, Christopher Dalton Powell, *One's Sister Was and One Was Not*, 2008, Ink / Collage, 14.25 x 16.75"



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No. 27

C O N T E N T S

Ames News

**The Age of Excess:
from Vice to Virtue**

Mends and Make-Dos

Calendar of Events

Books

2009 began for us with a trip to New York, starting with our setting up for the annual Outsider Art Fair. The new earlier date made for some problems, but the change of venue allowed a more comfortable, bright and open Fair. In the *New York Times*, there was an expansive review of the show by Roberta Smith, mentioning our Ursula Barnes paintings and also helping prepare the public for the new and different space.

We stayed on to catch the other shows: The American Antiques Show, The Ceramic Show, The Stella Armory Show, and the Winter Antiques Show. All good events, but I'm sure sales suffered from the current state of the economy.

This past October we attended CANEMANIA 2008, the cane conference that was held in Paris. We saw an extraordinary collection entitled *Popular Art Canes in Europe from the XVIIIth to the XXth Century*, assembled by Laurence Jantzen, with a well-illustrated catalog of the same name. Also at the conference we were treated to the unveiling of the long awaited book, *Vertical Art*. (See Pg. 6)

Check our Calendar, (Pg. 4) for our upcoming show schedule. We hope you'll join us in Costa Mesa, Los Angeles, and/or Napa. We also hope you'll continue to check our website for fresh updates throughout the year.

I don't think we are too far into this year for us to extend our very best wishes for 2009. We have high hopes for a brighter future as we move forward.

Bonnie



23C/9208, Cane: Carved
Eagle Head, c1900, Wood,
35"