



Broad Strokes

The Richmond, Virginia-based, nonprofit gallery art6 seeks to feature, promote, and foster the contemporary visual and performing arts, thereby providing a supportive space for creative expression and appreciation. In so doing, we hope to educate and entertain while elevating the public's consciousness, awareness, and understanding of the importance of the arts and humanities in a heightened and informed society.

Richmond's newest art gallery, **art6 at 6 East Broad Street**, seems to have undergone a fairly seamless transition and metamorphosis, emerging rather rapidly and assuredly from the popular and long extant **Artspace** gallery. Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, **art6** appeared born fully formed at its opening reception on March 5th for its inaugural exhibition, **Artists Collect, Too, II**. But make no mistake, the co-founders of **art6** have knocked about the Richmond art scene for years, toiling tirelessly for the growth and betterment of Virginia arts. For "the Six" (as some have dubbed them) founding members—**Henrietta Near**, **Chuck Scalin**, **Mitzi Humphrey**, **Marian Hollowell**, **Doug Hayes**, and **Thomas Humphrey** (with their discriminating eye for scouting talented and involved members)—are no doubt all well schooled in their particular capacities, possessing years of collective experience in the arts and humanities as well as academia and the avant garde.

The **Artists Collect** curator, **Mitzi Humphrey**, hopes to achieve several objectives for this truly unique exhibition—what essentially amounts to an eclectic time-capsule and compendium of styles, movements, media, techniques, and personalities—a sort of pantheon of artists, and as interesting, provocative, and

comprehensive a cast of characters as you are likely to assemble in one show. Above all, **Humphrey** wanted to get these works out of private collections where they could be seen and shared by appreciative viewers. What she and **art6** ended up with is a veritable "Who's Who" and history of area art and artists from roughly the past fifty years.

ACTII features works from the collections of the six founding members of **art6** by local, regional, and international artists. Included are such acclaimed artists as **Francisco Toledo**, **Theresa Pollack**, **Bruce Onobrakpeya**, **Sister Mary Corita**, **Lorraine Brevig**, **Frederick Chiriboga**, **Philip Wetton**, **Sheryl Humphrey**, **Thomas Daniel**, **David Freed**, **Davi Det Hompson**, **Aggie Zed**, **Laura Pharis**, **Willie Anne Wright**, **Nicholas Cossitt**, **Myron Helfgott**, **Norman Akroyd**, **Emiliano Lopez**, **Crispin Valladares**, and many other esteemed talents too numerous to mention. [An online catalog documenting **ACTII** will soon appear on **art6**'s website www.art6.org].

The exhibition really is a case where something is better seen than described in review; it's simply too encompassing and culls from so many sources that it's difficult and perhaps wrong in this instance to be reductive. There are however some real gems to be found in the collection: Maverick photographer **Thomas Daniel**'s two pieces are outstanding. New York painter **Sheryl Humphrey**'s quasi-trompe l'oeil studies of foods, figures, and a cigarette butt have to be seen to be believed; **Humphrey** is a master of shadow and highlight and depicts the falling of light on subject about as well as an artist could. Then there is **Philip Wetton**'s screenprint: provocative, problematic, and brilliant. The show also boasts works by Nigerian printmaker **Bruce Onobrakpeya**, perhaps his country's most acclaimed contemporary artist, and the eminent Mexican artist **Francisco Toledo**. It is also a delight to see three startlingly original porcelain sculptures by **Aggie Zed**, taken from two different collections, reunited, and arranged in choreographic fashion. And any show that features two bravura studies by the seminal and late **Theresa Pollack** as a postscript to her long life and sphere of influence is deserving of notice.

March 2004, with its emergence of the promising new **art6** gallery, will be remembered as a benchmark year for the Richmond arts scene. For this is indeed a seasoned, diverse, and talented bunch; and given the success and impact of the inaugural show, this vastly capable new gallery has many intriguing chapters still to be written.

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