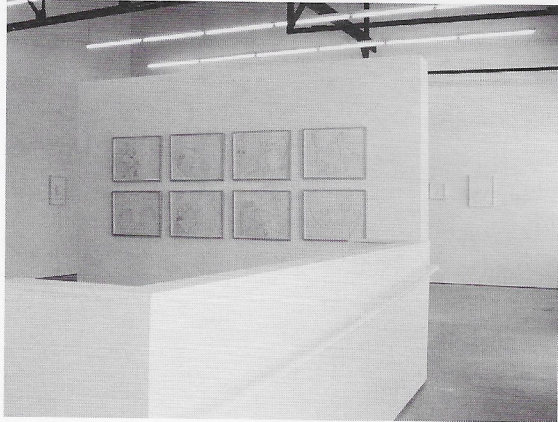
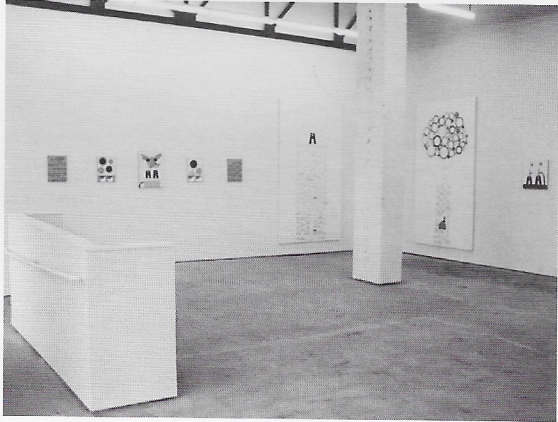


MONDAY AFTERNOON CLUB



JOSHUA ABELOW



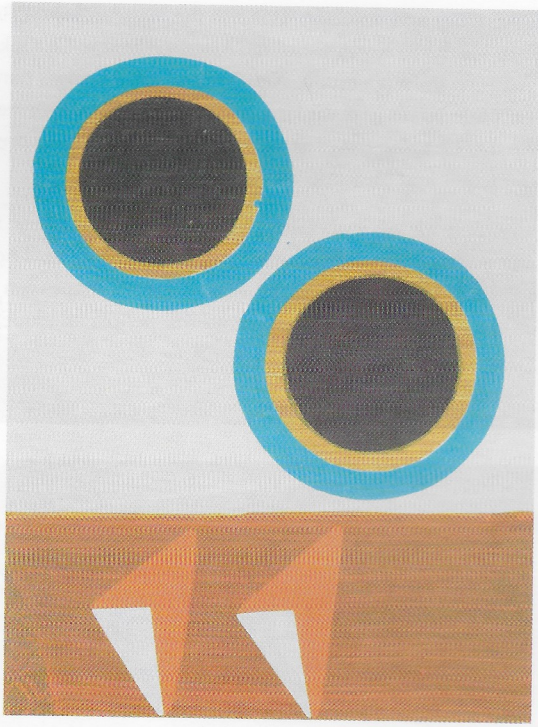


This exhibition presents ten works on paper and nine works on linen and canvas created in New York City between 2003–2005. This is the first cohesive exhibition of Joshua Abelow's paintings and drawings. It is also the inaugural show for Branch Gallery's new home in Durham, North Carolina. *Monday Afternoon Club* takes its title from the victorian mansion in Binghamton, New York where Abelow's parents were married in 1973. This title serves as a winking tribute to his now divorced parents. The title *Monday Afternoon Club* also serves as a metaphor for the unified presentation of Abelow's works on paper and his works on canvas and linen.

Josh's paintings remind me of games for children—games that use shapes to teach how placing one shape next to another can create meaning. These games teach in the simplest manner how the relationships between shapes can represent the relationships between people: people in a crowd; people all alone in a city; and like people trying to have sex...—*Ross Bleckner*

FOREWORD

The exhibition presents ten works on paper and nine works on canvas created in New York City between 1947-1957. This is the first extensive exhibition of Jackson Pollock's work in the United States since his death in 1956. The exhibition is organized into three sections: the first section, "The New York Years," features works created between 1947 and 1951; the second section, "The Los Angeles Years," features works created between 1952 and 1956; and the third section, "The Final Years," features works created in 1957. The exhibition is organized chronologically, showing the evolution of Pollock's work over time. The exhibition is organized into three sections: the first section, "The New York Years," features works created between 1947 and 1951; the second section, "The Los Angeles Years," features works created between 1952 and 1956; and the third section, "The Final Years," features works created in 1957. The exhibition is organized chronologically, showing the evolution of Pollock's work over time.



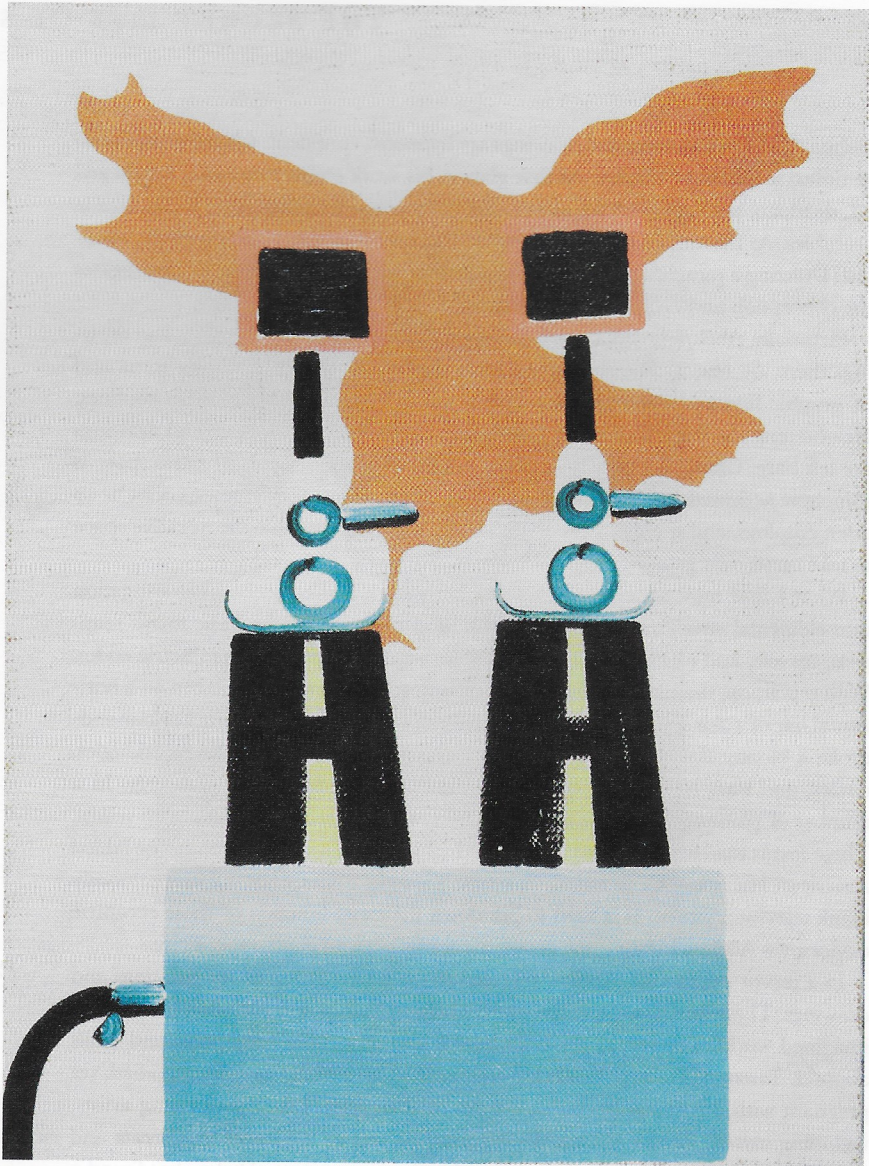
THE SECRET LIFE OF SHAPES

Joshua Abelow's paintings and drawings are hypnotic, confident, self-referential, and at times, surprisingly bizarre. At first glance, his work seems somewhat lighthearted, deadpan, perhaps even whimsical. Yet from image to image, the playful façade crumbles. As the viewer examines further, a secret code or language is made manifest. Utilizing a minimal palette and simplified geometric forms, Abelow investigates the conception and evolution of structures.

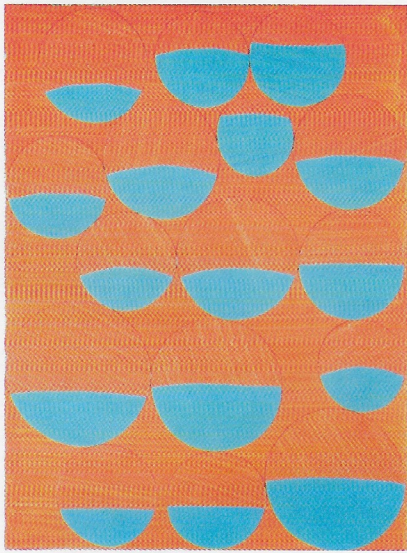
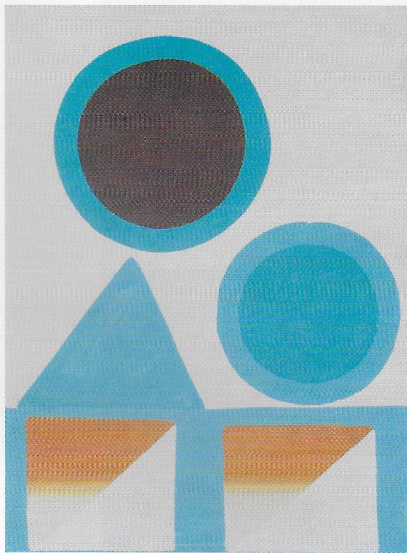
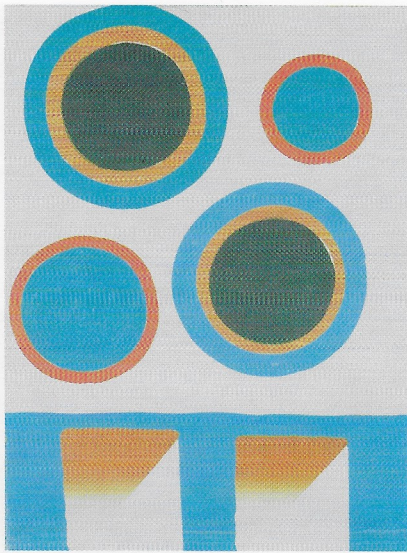
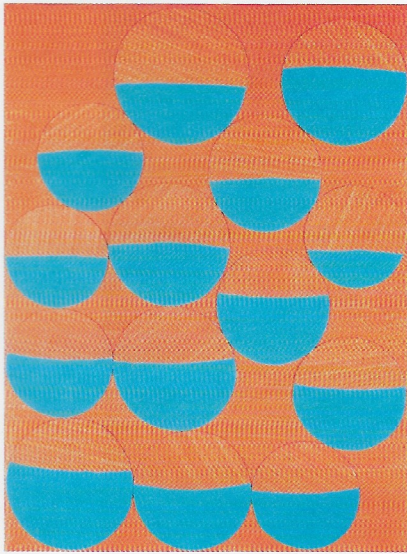
Pictorially, Abelow favors a flat, two-dimensional space. In his paintings and drawings there are few, if any, illusions to great distance or depth. Abelow's command of graphic line and minimal color thrives and reverberates within these confines. Heightening the flatness of the image, large sections of his paintings and drawings are left bare. Charged with vibrancy, yet devoid of markings, this negative space is somehow activated. It is the exactness of Abelow's forms, the symmetry that he so often employs, and the tightness of his compositions that enable the negative space to take on its own geometry.

What I find most seductive about Abelow's work is the consistent investigation into elemental structures—circles, squares, and triangles. These basic forms reappear, recycle, and regenerate creating new arrangements of sober geometric codes. With repetition, these codes take on new meaning: a green triangle placed on a horizontal bar of color indicates a lush mountainous landscape; floating white diamonds evoke a cloudy sky. Pushing these same forms further, Abelow employs triangles, circles, and stars to render facial features and clothing in his line drawings. In a number of paintings thick rectangular chunks of lamp black are striped with yellow. These forms read like uprooted sections of highway, neatly clipped from some fabled American interstate. Occasionally a square emerges calling to mind an ominously blank television screen. It is hard to pin down the exact function of these eccentric devices, yet Abelow instills these geometric forms with an elusive specificity.

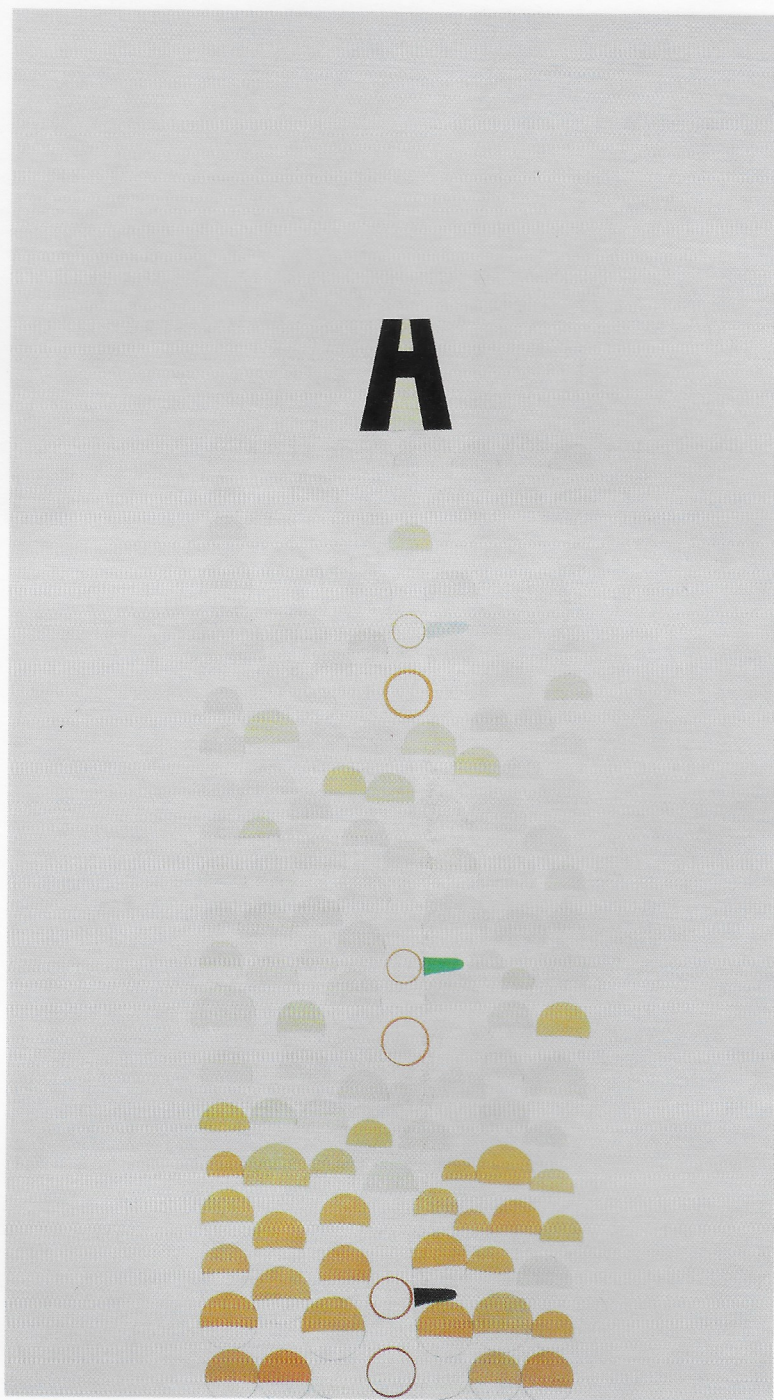
In a recent studio visit, Abelow revealed to me a new group of his paintings and drawings. These images explore the sources behind change and evolution in Abelow's imagined world. The results are both honest and disturbing—weapons, and skulls abound. Totem-like orange heads are emblazoned with triangles—disembodied, yet pregnant with the blueprints for structures of their own. Like many young artists, including myself, Joshua Abelow depicts what he sees as the forces that create and destroy both the inanimate and the living. Unlike many artists, Abelow has found a visual language that, with grace and absurdity, addresses the pleasure of play, and the pervasiveness of brutality. His work delves into the secret life of shapes; their ability to reproduce, mutate, to insert themselves within larger forms, and above all, to survive.—*Peter LaBier*, Brooklyn, New York, 06/30/06

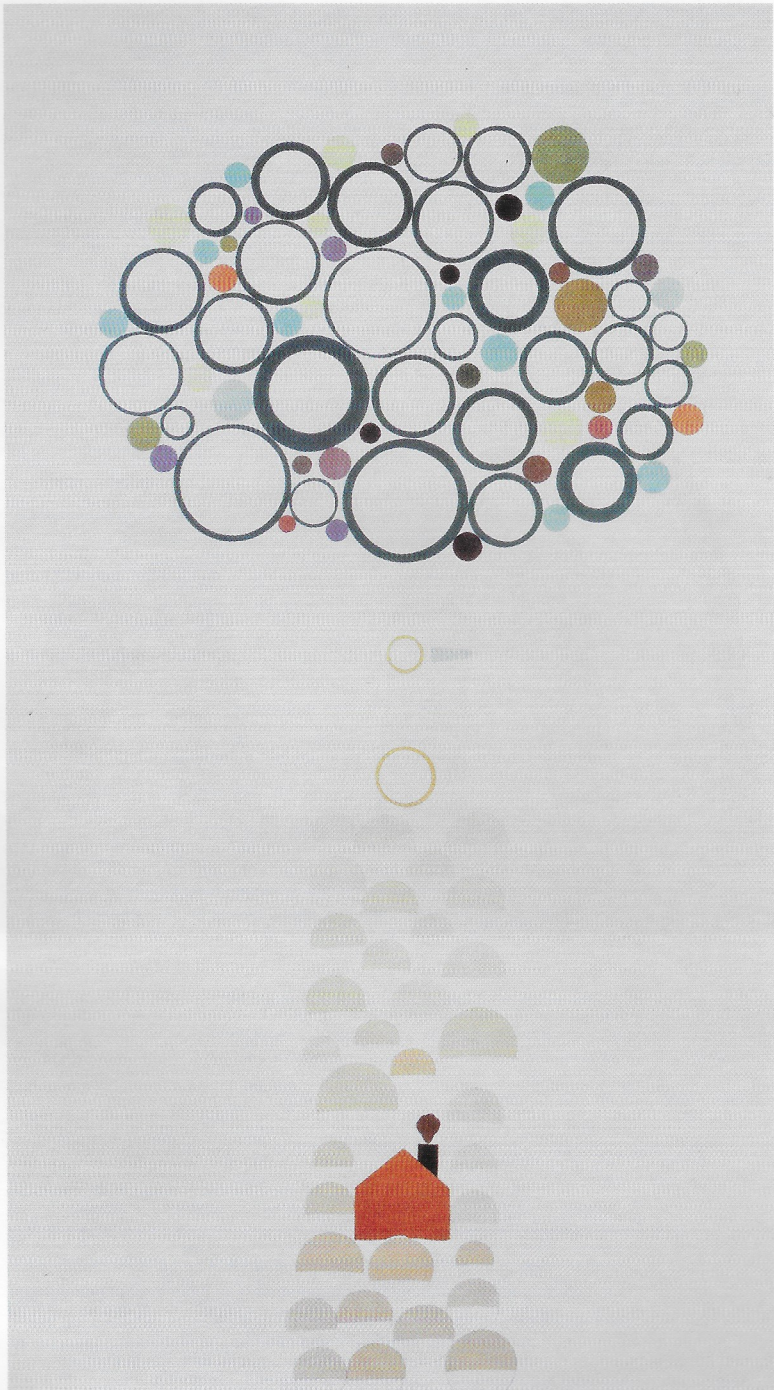


...the process of learning. His work shows that the way we think and the way we feel are not separate matters, but intertwined. He shows us that the way we think and the way we feel are not separate matters, but intertwined. He shows us that the way we think and the way we feel are not separate matters, but intertwined.



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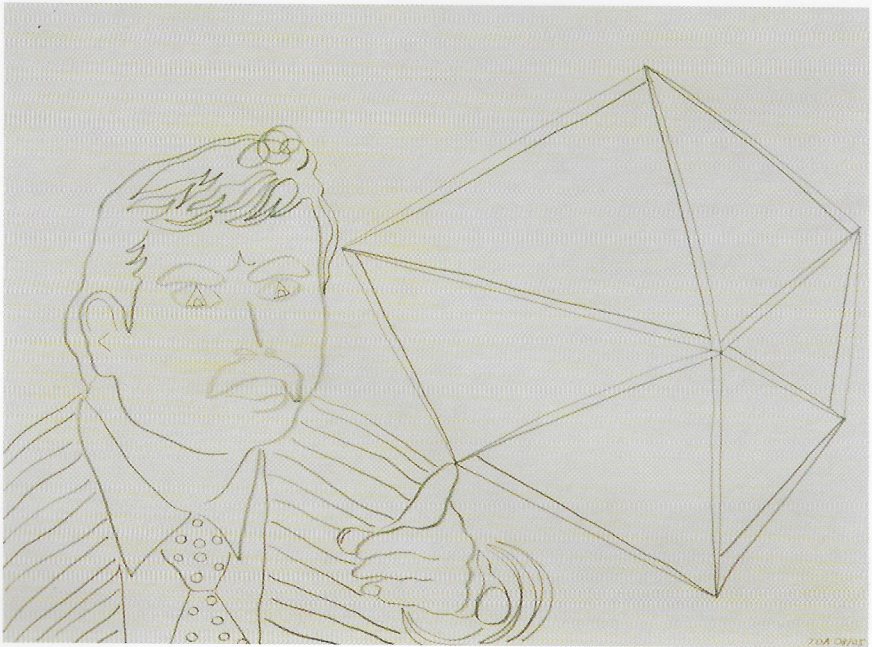
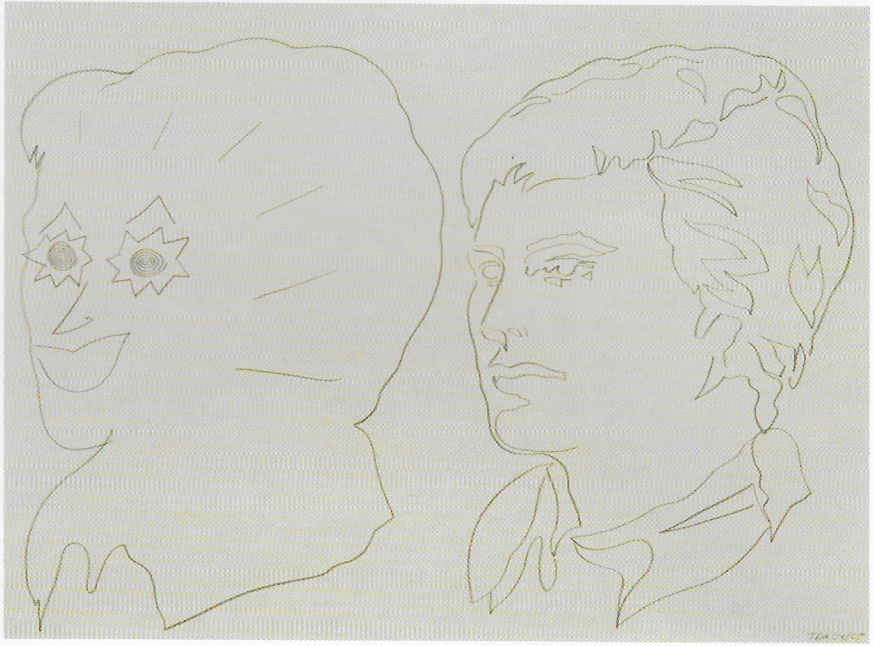


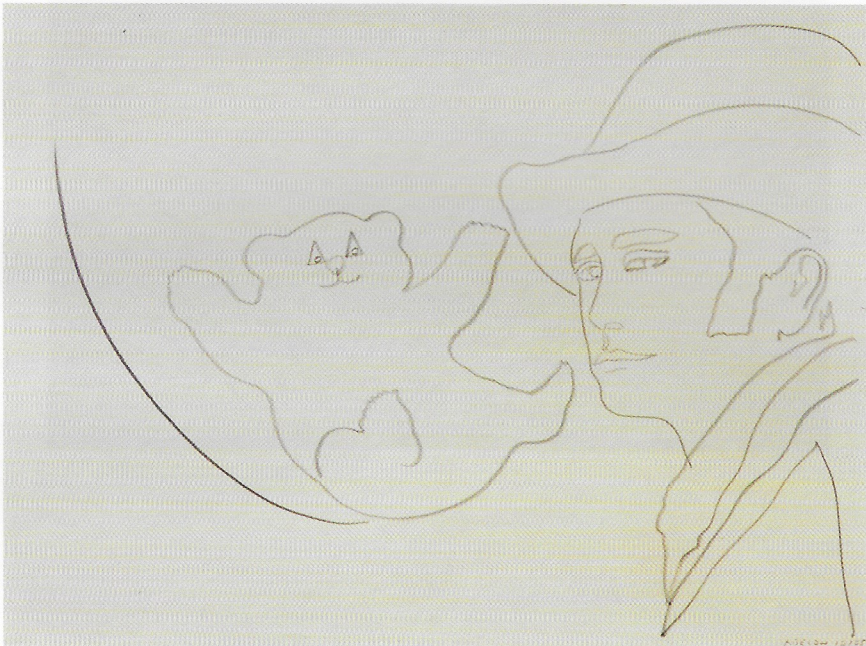


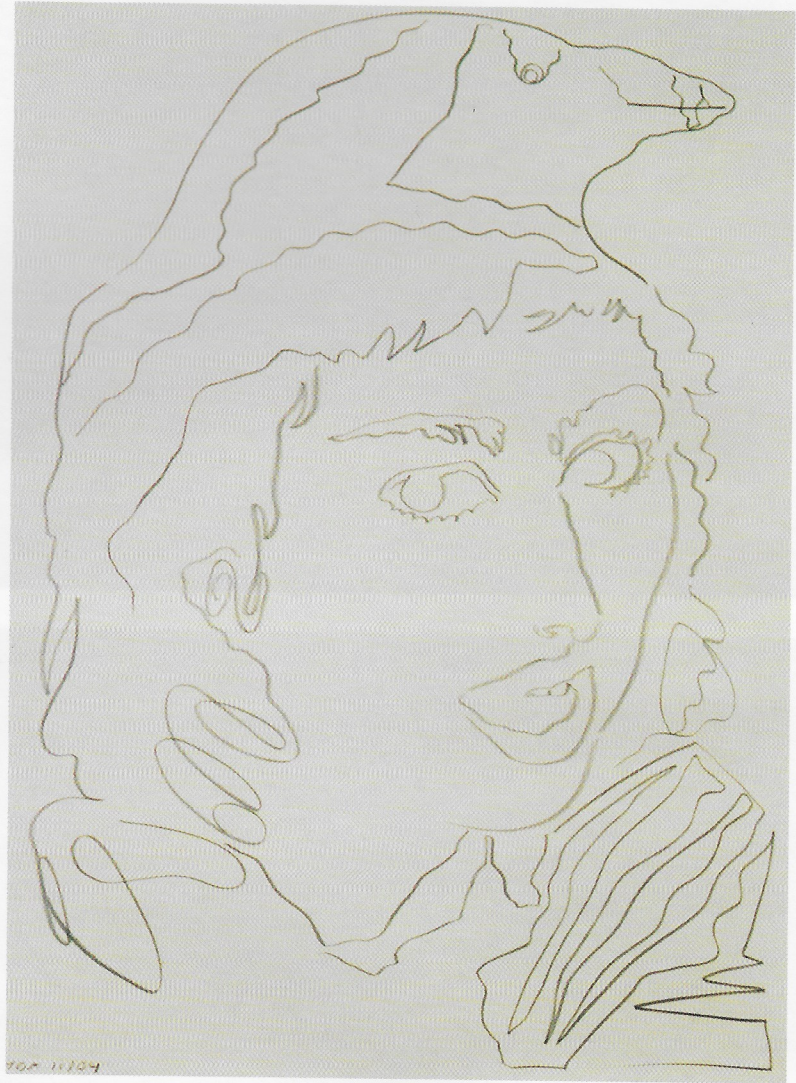


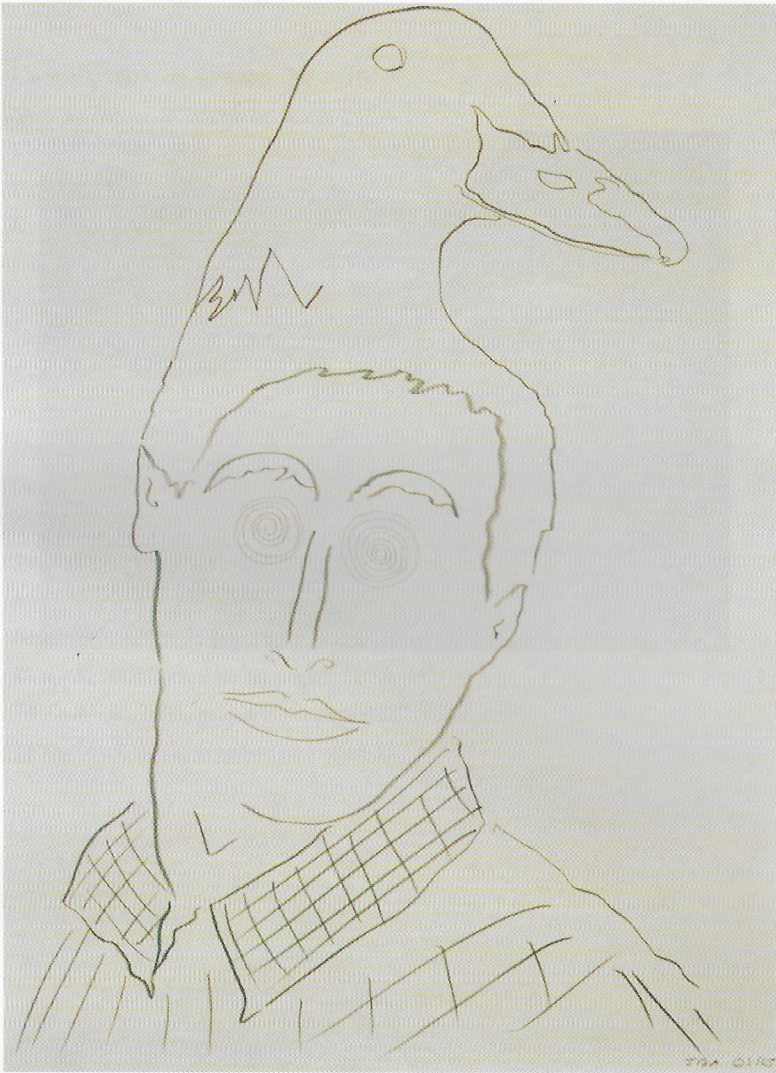














ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Untitled, 2005, oil on linen, 24" × 18"
- 2 *Study for Danger*, 2003, oil on linen, 24" × 18"
- 3 Untitled, 2005, oil on linen on linen, 16" × 12"
- 4 Untitled, 2005, oil on linen, 16" × 12"
- 5 Untitled, 2005, oil on linen on linen, 16" × 12"
- 6 Untitled, 2005, oil on linen, 16" × 12"
- 7 *Charm of the Highway*, 2003, oil on linen on canvas, 108" × 60"
- 8 *Van*, 2003, oil on linen on canvas, 108" × 60"
- 9 *Leak*, 2003, oil on linen, 18" × 18"
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- 11 *Huh?*, 2005, graphite on paper, 22" × 30"
- 12 *Cowboy*, 2005, graphite on paper, 22" × 30"
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- 14 *Starman*, 2005, graphite on paper, 22" × 30"
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- 19 *JA Duckhead*, 2005, graphite on paper, 22" × 30"

Joshua Abelow was born in Frederick, Maryland in 1976. He received his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998. He is currently pursuing his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Abelow worked as Ross Bleckner's assistant between 1999–2006.

Branch Gallery is a contemporary art space in Durham, North Carolina committed to promoting the work of local, national, and international emerging artists. The gallery was founded by husband and wife team (and RISD graduates) Chloë Seymore and Harrison Haynes, who after several years of living and working in New York City, decided to relocate to Haynes' home state. Hoping to cultivate and encourage a contemporary program in the Southeast, Branch moved into its new location in January 2006—a 3,000 square foot space in downtown Durham, housing two galleries as well as three studios for Branch artists. Since its inception, Branch has hosted large group shows in addition to several solo exhibitions by artists from North Carolina, New York, and Los Angeles. Branch is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) and has participated in both the Aqua and NADA art fairs in Miami, Florida, as well as *New Contemporaries* at Art Cologne in Köln, Germany.

Peter Labier was born in Washington, DC in 1980. He is an artist who lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He received his BA from Vassar College in 2003 and is the art editor for *Red China* Magazine.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

Joshua Abelow, *Monday Afternoon Club*

January 20–March 4, 2006

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