

Irving Feller: Monochrome Drawings

Organized by Jenn Nielsen

August 16th - September 4th, 2011

Opening: August 16th, 6-8pm

Cleopatra's

110 Meserole Ave.

Brooklyn, NY 11222

www.cleopatras.us

Exhibition hours

OPEN: Tuesday-Sunday 12-6pm

“When the least you do, does more than the most you do, then you have found something.”

— Irving Feller, 1996

Cleopatra's is pleased to present IRVING FELLER: MONOCHROME DRAWINGS, organized by Jenn Nielsen. This installation marks Feller's first gallery exhibition. Irving Feller was born in Astoria, Queens in 1928, the son of a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant, Feller was trained to nail, glue, and assemble fur in his family's shop at a young age. Feller graduated from The High School of Music and Art in New York City in 1946, and went on to attend The Art Students League of New York, École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles.

Feller studied with significant American artists including Reginald Marsh, Harry Sternberg, Nahum Tschacbasov, Morris Kantor and M. Peter Piening. After Wassily Kandinsky and Henri Matisse, Feller was inspired most by his teacher artist Yasuo Kuniyoshi, whose refrain, “Attitude! Attitude!” encouraged emotion and instinct in his practice. Feller's drawings promote directness, simplicity, and self-expression; His is a pragmatic path that removes impediments to creativity, evident in his choice of materials—copy paper, ballpoint pen, and dollar-store markers.

In 1952 Feller took over his uncle's fur shop on Greenpoint's Manhattan Avenue, continuing the family's business. The storefront served as a shop as well as a studio and a place to discuss his ideas about art, religion, love and revolution with customers and neighbors alike. Fur sales were slow in the summer months and Feller made cross-country road trips to Native American reservations. Trading furs for turquoise jewelry and other objects, Native American design came to inform Feller's artwork as well as store inventory. Although he was operating outside of the conventional

art world, Feller was not in isolation.

Feller's Greenpoint storefront-studio closed in April 2011, this exhibition brings to light only a portion of Feller's work. Selected from thousands of drawings and hundreds of paintings, this excerpt of monochrome drawings introduces Feller's essential modes of abstraction.

Jenn Nielsen (b.1979), a Brooklyn-based artist, met Irving Feller in his storefront in 2005. A copy of Kandinsky's *Concerning The Spirituality in Art* sitting on the store's radiator caught Nielsen's eye as she was then programming events for the Solomon R. Guggenheim's exhibition *RUSSIA!*. After discussing the power of the pyramid and values of modern painting, it was clear to Nielsen that Feller had something to important to share; she is now directing a forthcoming feature length documentary about Irving Feller, entitled *How Big Little Is*.

(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)