The Rhino Horn Group

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Introduction: Figurative Expressionism, New Humanism, and Rhino Horn

Our art is involved with life; it is concerned with humanity, with emotion. We will not listen to explanations from or about the technically minded artist of yesterday. Just as abstract expressionism—the art of the fifties—was superseded by pop, op, hard edge, minimal and color field—the art of the sixties—so now a new art, a humanistic art, will characterize the seventies.

—from the Rhino Horn manifesto

In 1969, Rhino Horn was founded in New York City by a group of artists who were bound together by their dedication to figurative art and by their collective notion that artistic practice should have both a critical and a social function. The seven founding members were Peter Passuntino (b. 1936), Benny Andrews (1930-2006), Jay Milder (b. 1934), Peter Dean (1934-1993), Ken Bowman (b. 1937), Michael Fauerbach (1942-2011), and Nicholas Sperakis (b. 1943). Between 1969 and 1978, active members of the rotating roster also included Bill Barrell (b. 1932), June Leaf (b. 1929), Leonel Góngora (1932-1999), Isser Aronovici (1932-1994), and Joseph Kurhajec (b. 1938). In addition, Rhino Horn counted a coterie of exhibiting guest artists, which included Christopher Lane (b. 1937), Red Grooms (b. 1937), and Lester Johnson (1919-2010).

As the epigraph for this introduction—a passage from the first paragraph of the group’s inaugural manifesto—implies, Rhino Horn consisted of an alliance of nonconformist figurative artists whose members refused to adhere to the art-as-business ideology that transformed fine art into an object of consumer culture in the United States during the 1960s. The members were optimistic that a form of art focused around themes

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such as social justice, civil rights, overcrowding and poverty in urban environments, the horrors of war, and imperialistic exploitation would raise awareness of these poignant contemporary socio-political issues. Indeed, although each of the artists in the group had a unique style and imagery, there was a collective emphasis on depicting the human condition as subject matter, criticizing social ills and cultural myopia, and encouraging a range of emotional responses. As cultural activists, moreover, the Rhino Horn artists had something in common with their contemporaries in the anti-Vietnam War movement. They promoted a non-violent approach to social commentary, and they envisioned that by interjecting their artwork into American culture they could help prompt the power of individual expressionism.

At present, there is little public or scholarly awareness of the work or impact of this ideologically high-minded yet artistically unpretentious coterie. No one has authored an extensive account of the group, or a predominant biography. Rhino Horn published three catalogs in the early 1970s using their personal funds or trading artwork for printing and publishing. The first, an accompaniment to their inaugural exhibition aptly titled by the artists _The White Catalog_ (1970), featured the group’s manifesto and an essay by art historian Stephen D. Pepper. The second publication called _The Black Catalog_, (1974) featured an introduction by Peter Fingesten, an art historian from Pace University in New York and an essay by critic and former editor of _ArtNews_ Lawrence Campbell. The third publication of the Rhino Horn group was called _Rhino Horn: Personal Interiors_ (1974),

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and contained interviews and artist statements from Rhino Horn artists; Jay Milder, Nicholas Sperakis, Peter Dean, Leonel Gongora, Peter Passuntino, and Peter Dean.

More recently, on March 25, 2010, I moderated a panel that included Bill Barrell, Jay Milder, and Peter Passuntino. The event was produced by the New York based non-profit organization Artists Talk on Art and was entitled “Figurative Expressionism: Then and Now.”³ The panel discussion was well attended, and afterwards many of the audience members expressed an interest in learning more about the Rhino Horn group. This led me to explore Rhino Horn’s origins and to begin the construction of an account of the group based on the recollections of the surviving members regarding how their experiences in Rhino Horn affected their artistic careers. This account grew into a broader art-historical and critical examination of the work of the members and of the role of the group, which became the present thesis. This thesis is a history of Rhino Horn based on articles, catalog texts, & interviews by others and myself. The acknowledgment of the importance of Rhino Horn’s history presents an alternative art historical account of the period following Abstract Expressionism (the end of Modernism) and the era, which is often labeled as Postmodernism. Furthermore, the existence of Rhino Horn (throughout the 60’s and 70’s) contradicts the narrative in many art historical texts that Neo-Expressionism was a return to mythological, audacious and boldly charged figurative painting.⁴

As existing literature on Rhino Horn remains sparse, it is hoped that this work will provide much-needed documentation of matters pertaining to the group’s origins and history, while also presenting Rhino Horn as a serious artists’ collective that deserves a

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place in the history of American art. This thesis is concerned with American art of the mid to late twentieth century that has been overshadowed by work within other, sometimes contrasting schools whose work received more contemporary critical attention and more subsequent popular acclaim.

**Post-War Commercial Art versus the New Humanism**

In the wake of World War II, New York City had emerged as the new epicenter of the art world. Abstraction dominated criticism and is still discussed in art history books as the predominant cultural expression in New York during that era. Clement Greenberg’s self-described “historical apology for abstract art,” “Towards a Newer Laocoon,” published in 1940, argued that in order for art to be as pure as music it must abandon all properties except for the material/medium itself.\(^5\)

By the time Rhino Horn and its artists emerged, the mainstream art world of the 1960s differed sharply from that of the previous decade. At that time, Abstract Expressionism had completed its ascendancy; many wealthy collectors now owned paintings of this school, and more commercial galleries were being founded than ever before. The New York School of Abstract Expressionism, with which America’s pioneering avant-garde artists were associated, was treated with reverence. Its most famous members, Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), Willem De Kooning (1904-1997), and Mark Rothko (1903-1970), were celebrated icons in the years following World War II. American art historians, critics, and institutions, at least, were content to bestow

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enormous praise upon them,⁶ even if doing so marginalized some of the other important movements and artists of the time, such as the alternative mode of Figurative Expressionism and other styles that were rooted in quasi-representational art.⁷

The new major schools of art-making in the United States during the 1960s, Pop-Art and Minimalism, wanted to separate themselves from the previous canon and to reject the need for self-expression, social commentary, narrative, or allusions to history, politics, or religion. To the extent that some of these artists did make a connection to these elements, as in the case of Pop Art, it was an ironic and satirical one. Instead of the poignant social and political iconography, which is seen extensively in the Rhino Horn work representing a degradation of man’s spirit and freedom, banal imagery of mass made products and popular culture distinguished Pop Art. Almost as soon as Pop Art arrived on the art scene it became popular.⁸ At the time highly influential critics like Henry Geldzahler lauded it as a movement that produced “artifacts of the brave new world of the postwar era, and that attracted intellectuals, and quite soon a large audience.”⁹ Within Minimalism, artists reduced their work to formal values, focusing on creating work that was stripped down to its most fundamental features: material, form, and space. Indeed, the art market of the sixties had seemingly little interest in political and social issues, and often disregarded such themes as emotion, spirituality, and the

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poignancy of our contemporary ethos. Instead, as Robert C. Morgan points out in his book _The End of the Art World_, collective consumer culture and mass production were celebrated and promoted.

Despite facing the possibility of being portrayed as unfashionable by an art world that championed Pop Art and Minimalism, at least one artistic faction made work intended to counter the economically driven perspective of the art market and the marginalization of humanitarian-inspired artistic production. These artists focused on social engagement and, in a phenomenon that behavioral psychologist Barry Schwartz dubbed “New Humanism,” they openly made allusions to political, social, metaphysical, and spiritual themes. Unlike the Abstract Expressionists, however, the New Humanists were not the purveyors of a competing or consistent style but rather a loose and mainly theoretical association of diverse American and international artists whose work was focused on social, political, and metaphysical expression. Above all the movement was, in Schwartz’ words, “characterized by the artist's willingness to oppose ‘the way things are,’ to provide a cultural criticism, [and] to help us see that optimism is a lie.”

Schwartz also claimed that there were two distinct trends in Modernist art, which he labeled “pattern one” and “pattern two.” Pattern one is described as “paralleling or complementing science and the seemingly bold forces of technology, thereby playing a supporting role to historical patterns.” Examples of this pattern are seen in the styles of

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13 Schwartz, 15
14 Ibid., 16.
Impressionism, Futurism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Geometrical Abstraction, Neoplasticism, Constructivism, Op Art, Minimalism, and Pop Art. The second pattern is described as expressing “human resistance to the blind technocratization of the human and natural environments” and thus as “seek[ing] a central role for art within the human situation.”^{15} Examples of this pattern are seen in Dada, Surrealism, Expressionism, Social Realism, and Humanism.

Humanist art is certainly not a twentieth century innovation: it draws upon a range of different sources and has evolved over many centuries. Since the advent of the Renaissance, artists as diverse as Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Pieter Breughel (1525-1569), Francisco Goya (1746-1828), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), Käthe Kollowitz (1867-1945), Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), Phillip Evergood (1901-1973), John Heartfield (1891-1968), The Guerilla Girls, and Keith Haring (1958-1990) have visually expressed elements of humanity that are in part inherent traits of human nature and in part experiential responses to contemporary successes, failures, and aspirations.^{16} The term “Humanism” may have first been used by the German historian and philologist Georg Voigt in 1856, as a description of certain ideals that arose in connection with the Renaissance—the movement to revive classical learning—in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.^{17} Although religious art was still dominant during the Renaissance, art came to function as the medium for empirical visual study of our relationship to the universe; as such, it formed a vital component in the quest to achieve scientific and spiritual knowledge that was previously thought to be beyond human

^{15} Ibid.
comprehension. Accompanied by a similar rebirth in the areas of science and literature, civilization flourished throughout Europe and allowed artists to create works that were more experimental and individualistic than those of their recent predecessors, detached from previously rigid dogma, yet still associated with spiritual sublimity.\textsuperscript{18}

In the mid-eighteenth century, a different use of the term “Humanism” appeared, one that focused on the need for human betterment. This form of Humanism was expressed by both philosophers and revolutionaries, who saw the need for ethical justice and a moral constitution for humankind. In 1765, the author of an anonymous article in a French Enlightenment periodical spoke of “The general love of humanity [which was] a virtue hitherto quite nameless among us, and which we will venture to call ‘Humanism,’ for the time has come to create a word for such a beautiful and necessary thing.”\textsuperscript{19}

However, beginning in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, with rapid advancements in technology and industry came the horrors of modern warfare, xenophobic nationalism, and unwholesome conditions of living in heavily populated and industrialized urban environments. The autonomous Humanism of the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras seemed in some ways irrelevant in light of the dehumanizing problems that arose in the post-industrial world, and these developments also had an enormous impact on the course of art history. Since the early twentieth century, some of these stylistic movements (Cubism, Futurism, abstraction) have complemented the technological development and the technocratic direction of society; others, however, have resisted the technological urges and focused on humanity and on the vision of what we as a society have become.

\textsuperscript{19} “L’amour général de l’humanité...vertu qui n’a point de nom parmi nous et que nous oserions appeler ‘humanisme’, puisqu’enfin il est temps de créer un mot pour une chose si belle et nécessaire.” Ephémérides du citoyen ou Bibliothèque raisonnée des sciences morales et politiques 16 (December 17, 1765): 247. Quoted in Giustiniani, op. cit., 175n.
During the 20th century, the need to render the figure in a naturalistic manner—as was typical of Renaissance and Romantic figuration—lost some of its importance, as the new brand of humanist and civic artists came to see naturalism as a limitation in rendering the authenticity of the human experience. Reference to the classical figure was, at the same time, used to depict a modern engagement with the plight of the once ideal man in his struggle with modernity. In 1905 a group of German Expressionists founded a group called Die Brücke (The Bridge) that emphasized expressing meaning and emotional experience over physical reality. Broadly speaking, “modern art” from the early to mid-20th century can be said to be deeply rooted in humanist ideals, with Dada, Surrealism, Expressionism, Social Realism, and Humanism all having been inspired largely by political and/or social issues and conflicts. All of these movements, for example—or at least many of their practitioners—took stances against war or wars, both on and off the canvas. Indeed, artists throughout the twentieth century and since have been no strangers to protests, revolutions, and revolutionary organizations. Nonetheless, the legacy of modernism is more commonly associated with various sets of formal and stylistic properties than with idealistic content, and, as various modernist movements have come into favor while others have been ignored, the focus has been...

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21 See Peter Selz, German Expressionist Painting (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).
22 Modern and post-modern humanist artists have at times gone beyond a mere focus on artwork for its own sake to incorporate their ideas, through art, into society. Examples include David Alfaro Siqueiros’ involvement in the Mexican Communist Party while conveying socio-political messages through murals and John Heartfield’s photomontages satirizing Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, which often subverted Nazi symbols such as the swastika in attempts to publicly undermine their propaganda message. In the 1950s and 1960s Benny Andrews was involved in activism focusing on the rights of African American artists and workers, and Irving Kriesberg made banners for peace demonstrations and marched in anti-nuclear/anti-war rallies. In the 1980s Keith Harring created murals promoting education to combat drug abuse. More recently, Shepard Fairey has created graphics for use in connection with grassroots movements like Occupy Wall Street.
primarily on aesthetics rather than on a particular message or on the intention of the
artists to express humanistic concepts.

The Rhino Horn group and its members were no exceptions to this trend. Despite
the fact that some critics, most notably Hilton Kramer, responded to their
humanist/figurative enterprise by seeking to turn them into artistic and perhaps even
social pariahs, many of the members had already established solid reputations on the
basis of their prolific solo work. Hence, it proved impossible to deflate their enthusiasm
altogether or to prevent them from having an impact on the artistic and social scene in
America in the late 1960s and 1970s.

New Images of Man and the Emergence of Rhino Horn

In 1959, a decade before the founding of the Rhino Horn group, art historian Peter
Selz (b. 1919) curated a controversial exhibition of contemporary avant-garde humanist
painting at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City entitled “New Images of
Man”. This groundbreaking exhibition was one of the first at a major American
museum to introduce a legitimate alternative mode of modernism in the wake of the
celebrated Abstract Expressionist movement. The artists represented in this exhibition
employed diverse styles, but they shared a common interest in portraying the struggle of
the contemporary human condition in order to foster individual freedom. Some artists
depicted contemporary humanity from an existentialist point of view, while others
presented glimmers of optimism, using their art as a means of cathartic release of
aggression. The show was also noteworthy for its inclusion of both European and

American artists as well as of both established and relatively unknown artists. Established European avant-garde artists represented in the show included Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Francis Bacon (1909-1992), Karel Appel (1921-2006), and Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985). Among the established Americans were Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Two of the emerging American figurative artists represented were Jan Müller (1922-1958) and Leon Golub (1922-2004).

Paul Tillich, a theologian, contributed the main essay for the exhibition catalog. In it he aptly characterized the dilemma facing both contemporary art and contemporary life. Mankind, Tillich wrote, was losing its humanity and becoming “a thing amongst the things he produces.”25 This was a foreboding comment in light of Pop Art, Op Art, and Minimalism, schools that were technically centered and that focused on the work of art as material product, as well as on other material issues that had more to do with aesthetics and with the value of art than with societal issues.

Unfortunately, however, the impact of this dynamic exhibition—which hindsight, at least, can identify as a much needed corrective or counterweight to the mainstream artistic preoccupations of its day—may have been lessened by the harsh derision with which it was met by the majority of the critics who wrote about it. Because it took place during the aftermath of Abstract Expressionism, the most successful art movement that the United States (in particular, New York) had thus far seen, the exhibition was much anticipated. However, because Abstract Expressionism was the “it” movement of the day, critics found the exhibition—with its figurative imagery and its roster that included European artists and Americans who were from outside of New York or who were relatively unknown—to be of little consequence compared to the “triumph of American

painting” that had so recently preceded. Moreover, Selz included lesser-known figurative works by Pollock and de Kooning rather than the Abstract Expressionist work for which they were renowned. And while the reputations of Pollock and de Kooning—as well as those of the established European modernists in the exhibition—remained intact, the negative response to “New Images of Man” had an unfortunate impact on the reputations of some of the lesser-known participants.

Barry Schwabsky, for example, an art critic for The Nation, described the impact that participation in the exhibition had on Leon Golub, an emerging American figurative artists who painted imagery that was both socially conscious and critical of Western hegemony, as follows: “The event was attacked by critics as a retrograde exercise and was a professional disaster for the emerging American painter Leon Golub, who was ferociously criticized by William Rubin, then a professor at Sarah Lawrence College and later the powerful director of the museum’s Department of Painting and Sculpture.”

Rubin, who was a champion of major contemporary painters like Jasper Johns (b. 1930) and Frank Stella (b. 1936), said that Golub’s form of Figurative Expressionist artwork was “inflated, archaizing, phonily expressive, [and] badly painted.”

Similarly harsh criticisms were expressed when the Rhino Horn group was formed a decade later. In particular, Hilton Kramer, the controversial outspoken art critic of the New York Times, wrote a scathing review of Rhino Horn’s inaugural exhibition in which he dismissed the members as vulgar expressionists who lacked both style and

29 Quoted in ibid.
technique.\textsuperscript{30} In reality, however, the objection was more likely doctrinal and ideological than aesthetic. Like the more influential critic Clement Greenberg, Kramer championed an essentially content-neutral modernism. Unfortunately for the critical and commercial success of the group, the efforts of the Rhino Horn artists to produce artwork with a message that could also serve a cause did not fit well with the Kramer/Greenberg program. Like the artists represented in “New Images of Man”, the members of Rhino Horn openly manifested their resistance to the forces of technology and popular culture and sought to place their art on a par with ordinary human experience. Ignoring current aesthetic trends, the members engaged in direct criticism of the fabricated and overly sophisticated commercial world in which they lived. Their ideology centered on the notion that art should be removed from the constraints of the institution, viewed subjectively, and celebrated as a language of truth that reaches out to the viewer. They believed that as artists they were responsible for encouraging viewers to develop their emotions and to consider new modes or channels of behavior.\textsuperscript{31}

This attitude put the Rhino Horn artists at odds with the mainstream artists of the 1960s, many of whom had turned away from art with moral and ethical overtones in favor of new conceptual and material trends. Nonetheless, Rhino Horn artists managed to gain a public following, to attract the interest of collectors, to obtain invitations to participate in museum shows, and to have their work reviewed in the national media. Rather than wait to be invited or promoted, however, Rhino Horn employed a “do it yourself” (DIY) collaborative approach to showing its members’ work. Each member


\textsuperscript{31} Interview with Peter Passuntino by the author October 16, 2009.
would contribute to the operation, whether it was through designing exhibition materials like catalogues and posters, arranging venues for shows, writing press releases, fundraising, shipping and transporting artwork, or facilitating sales. There were no assigned roles; the idea was for all participants to share equally in the responsibilities associated with organizing, promoting, and maintaining the exhibitions, many of which did in fact travel throughout the country to various museums, universities, and commercial galleries.\footnote{Ibid.}

Rhino Horn’s DIY approach to exhibiting further distanced its members from the mainstream commercial art world. The members could not compete financially with artists who had greater commercial and critical representation, and this fact may have contributed to the relatively small place that they have thus far been afforded in histories of twentieth century American art. Of course, they were not without sympathizers and proponents, even within powerful, mainstream media. Their most prominent early positive write up was Peter Schjeldahl’s \textit{New York Times} review of their inaugural show at the Wollman Gallery at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1970.\footnote{Peter Schjeldahl, “A World of Raucous, Challenging Images,” \textit{New York Times}, March 22, 1970.} Generally, however, critics were both perplexed and taken back by the members’ primal approach to painting and by their steadfast dedication to producing art that appeared to be and indeed was both countercultural and un-fashionable, as well as to extending the influence of art from the sphere of aesthetic entertainment to the realms of social consciousness and individual soul-searching.\footnote{See Joan Marter and David Anfam, \textit{Abstract Expressionism: The International Context} (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).}
American Figurative Expressionism and Its Roots

No specific criteria had to be met in order to join Rhino Horn; however, over and above being figurative artists, the majority of Rhino Horn members were distinguished as Figurative Expressionists, and through their Rhino Horn activities they preserved and continued the American Figurative Expressionist movement that had otherwise faltered in the late 1960s. Indeed, the majority of Rhino Horn artists were conscious proponents of the Figurative Expressionist mode, and Jay Milder, Peter Passuntino, Peter Dean, Benny Andrews, and Bill Barrell had been pioneers in the Second Generation East Coast movement during the mid to late 1950s.

American Figurative Expressionism had initially arisen in the late 1930s, at which time the movement had been centered in Boston owing to the work done there primarily by members of a recent wave of German and European-Jewish immigrants. Key artists in the Boston Figurative Expressionist movement included David Aronson (b. 1923), Jack Levine (1915-2010), Hyman Bloom (1913-2009), and Karl Zerbe (1903-1972). Zerbe, who taught at the Museum School in Boston at the time, set the tone for the movement. He and his cohorts openly challenged a statement issued by the Boston Institute of Modern Art under the heading ‘Modern Art’ and the American Public. The rebel artists felt that no doctrine should dictate what kinds of artwork they should create. Instead of following a set policy of their own, therefore, they engaged in a modernist dialogue that presented an alternative approach to the hegemonic European modernist and avant-garde painting of artists like Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), Henri Matisse (1869-1954), Joan Miro

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(1893-1983), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), that was making its way into the United States at the time.36

Stylistically, the Boston Figurative Expressionists’ fluid brushwork and disinterest in the precise academic rendering of the subject contrasted on the one hand to the realistically rendered figurative paintings of the Social Realists and, on the other, to the technical precision of the avant-garde abstractionists. Instead, the work of this school showed affinities to the contemporary German strain of figurative painting in artists like Otto Dix (1891-1969), Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938), Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), and Emil Nolde (1867-1956), both in style and in subject matter.37 Like their German counterparts, these American painters chose predominately to portray scenes and images in which they expressed profound emotions, horrors, and fantasies in a largely allegorical manner. Spiritual and fantastical scenes were thus common, and depictions of sublime religious displays, political satire, and treatments of the theme of human mortality by members of this school all contributed to the progression of figurative painting and to the evolving definition of modern humanist art.

Among the more prominent artists of the Boston Figurative Expressionist movement, fascination with themes associated with spirituality, mystery, and mortality is perhaps most pervasive in the work of Hyman Bloom. Bloom’s subjects range from séances to bodies rotting in the morgue to Hassidic rabbis engaged in intense spiritual jubilation (Fig.1). The rendering of the figures expresses modern ideas of mortality in light of the horrific conditions that humankind experiences, but the images nevertheless

36 Ibid.
37 See Piri Halasz, “Figuration in the 40’s: The Other Expressionism,” Art in America (December 1982): 111.
convey an optimism that carries spiritual overtones. This quality may well derive from Bloom’s intense engagement with his own personal faith.

Dubbed the “greatest artist in America” in 1940, Bloom was once immensely well regarded in the U.S. art world, by fellow painters Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning and the influential critic Clement Greenberg (1909-1994).\(^{38}\) During the 1950s, however, figurative painting, which had established a reputation as a socially conscious art form in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, became a target for condemnation. Leading the anti-figurative criticism was Greenberg, who, as art critic and self-appointed arbiter of taste, helped to establish the widespread perception of the greater importance of Abstract Expressionism.\(^{39}\) A milestone in this regard was Greenberg’s 1955 essay “American Type Painting,” in which he promoted the work of such Abstract Expressionists as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Hans Hofmann, Barnett Newman, and Clyfford Still as the next important stage in modernist art.\(^{40}\) Greenberg’s influence was established by his 1939 essay “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” in which he condemned the degrading influence on taste in modern consumer culture of the artifacts of mass production, and he equated the contemporary form of so-called academic art—i.e., traditional, representational figuration that followed the formal principles of the European schools. Collectively, he denigrated these cultural expressions and their influence under the German term *kitsch*, or “tasteless(ness)”: 

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\(^{39}\) In his 1955 essay "American Type Painting," Greenberg promoted the work of Abstract Expressionists, particularly Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Hans Hofmann, Barnett Newman, and Clyfford Still, as the next stage in Modernist art, stating that they were moving towards greater emphasis on the ‘flatness’ of the picture plane.

Kitsch, using for raw material the debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money—not even their time.”

Greenberg claimed that modernist art had become a tool of academics and argued that academic art, with its emphasis on rules, stripped art of its expression and value. Against this tendency he held up the work of the Avant-Garde artists, which he praised for its subjectivity and for its formal qualities, asserting that the medium and the form (line, shape, color, texture, etc.) were of utmost importance in a painting’s function and perception. Thus, when Pollock began to drip paint on canvas—a profoundly non-academic exercise that was followed by related work from other painters such as Robert Motherwell, Phillip Guston (1913-1980), Franz Kline (1910-1962), and Willem de Kooning, who painted through automatic spontaneity and force—the United States had found a style that was, for Greenberg, worthy of the label “expressionism” and worthy of the international attention that it soon began to receive.

Abstract Expressionist painting signified freedom of expression. Yet even though this movement became the prominent style of American art in the mid-twentieth century, the message that Greenberg championed remained somewhat troubling to those outside the literary and artistic circles. In fact, Greenberg eventually withdrew his equation of academic art with kitsch, acknowledging a widespread sense that he had gone too far. Thus, while Abstract Expressionism represented a new way of painting that mainstream culture eventually embraced, there was a problematic relationship to the

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perception of Abstract Expressionist work that troubled not only many casual art viewers but certain artists as well. Decades later, for example, Irving Kriesberg would point to a quality of “false modesty” in the myth that artists can be innocent tools of something vast and greater than themselves.43 This perspective contrasts sharply to Greenberg’s theory that Avant-Garde art was too innocent to be effectively used as propaganda.44 However, as the painter Leon Golub has stated,

If an art becomes too ‘free-floating,’ that is, disassociated from representative contents, it may lose identification and become somewhat anonymous. Such anonymous objects have been functional in some collective cultures (wherein anonymity was a general social phenomenon integrated in the ways and means of the culture), but are certainly not in evidence in the highly mobile, individualistic Western world—although the aggregates of power (social) and the mechanics of modern society certainly predispose towards anonymous responses.45

**American Figurative Expressionism of the Second Generation and Beyond**

Many of the abstract artists remained successful throughout the 1950s without ever returning to figurative representation. However, Pollock and de Kooning (and, in the late 1970s, Philip Guston) eventually reverted to more obvious attempts at figuration. After all, the direct quality that Greenberg valued so highly, unmediated by “rules” of painterly representation, need not in fact exclude the expression of recognizable images, especially those as basic to the human experience as the face or body. Thus, not only did Pollock produce, toward the end of his life, a series of black and white quasi-figurative works, he stated of his own work that he was “very representational some of the time and

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43 Irving Kriesberg, interview with the author, November 14, 2008.
44 See Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch.”
a little all of the time,” and he pointed out that “when you’re painting out of your unconscious, figures are bound to emerge.”  

Similarly, De Kooning shocked many of his contemporaries by painting recognizable depictions of women using the same technique that he had used in completely abstract paintings. In this regard, Thomas B. Hess (1920-1978), critic and editor of *Art News*, recounted the following anecdote in his 1967 book about de Kooning’s then-recent work: “‘It is impossible today to paint a face,’ pontificated the critic Clement Greenberg around 1950. ‘That’s right,’ said de Kooning, ‘and it’s impossible not to.’”

For the Abstract Expressionists, the ability to convey the complexity of human life as they experienced it through contemporary culture could be augmented by expressing a common language and emotion through the physical act of painting abstract gestural constructs. The artists of this school therefore sought an absolute aesthetic style that was representative of the modern psyche, an art form based on a philosophical elevation of aesthetic over cognitive and ethical forms of judgment. As Robert Motherwell (1915-1991) explained, “Abstract art can convey…feeling in its ‘essence,’ in a way that naturalism cannot: [the latter] has far too many extraneous details and loses its emphasis, its focus…” Critical thinking of this kind led to abstraction being “chosen” as a more spiritual and hence more suitable alternative artistic language than figuration.  

Yet the crossover work of some of the abstractionists and, indeed, the work of the

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Figurative Expressionists demonstrates that the mere presence of figuration does not prevent art from participating in the spiritual freedom and formalist energy that was so highly prized in mid-twentieth century abstraction. Indeed, the American Figurative Expressionists typically avoided the blatant iconography of literal visual narrative that Motherwell felt threatened the “essence” of the artwork. Their paintings are not naturalistic depictions of the world around us, but rather reflections of the human condition expressed by a new image of man, one that represents an elevated psychological and spiritual awareness. These artists thus sought to do more than just comment on the world in which we live: they tried to surpass the natural world and to achieve mystical effects while juxtaposing a certain allegorical beauty with a logical discourse on contemporary themes and an increased psychological and spiritual awareness. These artists were not only commenting on the world around them, they were seeking to surpass the natural world and achieve supernatural affects.

As Hess wrote,\(^{51}\) “the ‘New figurative painting,’ which some have been expecting as a reaction against Abstract Expressionism, was implicit in it at the start, and is one of its most lineal continuities.”\(^{52}\) Indeed, the representational figurations constructed by members of the second generation of American Figurative Expressionists had some similarity with the work of the Abstract Expressionists, including the shared humanistic

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51 Hess’ 1951 book *Abstract Painting: Background and American Phase*, was one of earliest publications to address the development of abstract art in America. The book had some controversial passages, when Hess implied: "The tendencies toward and of abstract painting and Expressionism may be the most important movements in the art of the first half of our century, and the most relevant ones to more recent developments." This statement that abstract painting and Expressionism were interconnected, almost interchangeable, was disputed by artists of the New York School who felt unfairly labeled as “Abstract and Expressionist.”

ideology that art should be true to life as it is experienced.\textsuperscript{53} For the Figurative Expressionists, in fact, art making was a powerful form of dialogue that expressed the nature of the human condition. This dialogue was presented through a dramatic process that was similar to poetry, music, and theater. The artists’ emotions and expressions were displayed in paint that was impulsively applied (dripped, splashed, or gesturally spread) onto a flat surface. This led the art historian Harold Rosenberg (1906-1978) to describe the practitioners of this approach as “action painters.”\textsuperscript{54}

Despite the formal and ideological affinities of their work with abstractionism, however, the Humanism of the Figurative Expressionists was envisioned as a narrative that unfolded through the incorporation of figures and landscapes into allegories drawn alternatively from traditional or imagined subject matter, fueled by the artists’ experiences and spirituality. Because Figurative Expressionism bordered on representational or narrative art, it bridged the distance between the artist and the observer, confronting the viewer with an image that conveyed both the introspective essence of the artist and an explicit yet poignant expression of human nature. The work that emerged from this approach was, as Golub observed, less intangible and more committed to establishing a dialogue between the artist and the viewer than Abstract Expressionism had been;\textsuperscript{55} and whereas Abstract Expressionism often appeared to contain an implicit element of ethical, psychological, or social commentary, Figurative Expressionism engaged openly in these vital modes of critique.

\textsuperscript{53} See Katherine B. Crumb, \textit{Figural Art of the New York School: Selections from the CIBA-GEIGY Art Collection} (Baruch College Gallery, November 15-December 20, 1985).


The second generation of Figurative Expressionism, which was distinctly American, began in Provincetown, Massachusetts during the mid-1950s. In addition to their affinities with abstractionism, the artists of this school were influenced by the Renaissance and Old Master paintings, and they drew subject matter from the Old and New Testaments, from Romantic poetry and theater, and from other visual and literary archetypes, much of which was filtered through notions of the human psyche and of human experiential horizons that were derived from or inspired by the psychoanalytic theories of Carl Jung. One of the seminal artists in this stage of the figurative movement was the German refugee Jan Müller (1922-1958), who attended the formalist painter Hans Hofmann’s (1880-1966) school in Provincetown from 1945 to 1950. Müller’s early work shows the unmistakable influence of Hofmann’s style of abstraction, with paintings from the period 1948 to 1950 consisting of erratic squares and primary colors. However, Müller’s mosaic-inspired abstractions soon shifted toward gestural figuration, and Müller eventually clashed with his mentor by returning to completely figurative painting. In his breakthrough work, the artist presents the horrors of fascist utilitarianism revealed through the idyllic lyricism of biblical and classical mythology. He began painting dreamlike landscapes and idyllic and bacchanalian narratives from the bible and from classical mythology. Some of his greatest monumental figurative works, such as The Great Hanging Piece and The Search for the Unicorn (Fig. 2), were produced in Provincetown in 1957. Around this time Müller remarked, “Abstraction is no

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56 Hofmann broke away from the linear perspective technique that had been popular for centuries by teaching and employing a compositional method that he called “push and pull.” Hofmann demonstrated that the illusion of space, depth, and even movement on a canvas could be created abstractly using color and shape rather than representational forms. See Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism (New York: Praeger, 1970).

57 Stein 41.
longer enough for me. So I am returning to the image. The image gives me a wider sense of communication.”


The post-WWII American Figurative Expressionist movement was not, however, limited to Provincetown. Chicago was notable for the work of Golub, Nancy Spero (1926-2009), and other figurative artists whom the art critic Franz Schulze dubbed in 1959 as the “Monster Roster.” In New York City, key artists of this movement included Larry Rivers (1923-2002), Irving Kriesberg (1919-2009), and Nicholas Marsicano (1908-1991). There was also a distinct Bay Area Figurative Expressionist School that flourished from 1950 to 1965 and that included, among others, David Park (1911-1960), Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993), and Elmer Bischoff (1916-1991).

The critical impact of this diverse movement was, however, short-lived, lasting only about a decade before the bulk of attention shifted from the rough and emotional style of expressionism to the cool stance of Pop Art. When this new form of figurative artwork superceded Figurative Expressionism, some of the artists who had been working in this mode sought ways to maintain their distinctiveness from the popular trends in the American art scene. Some found success through solo careers, but many began to form loose alliances and to show their art as groups. In Chicago, there were the Imagists and

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The Hairy Who. On the West Coast, there was the Underground Comix and the Kustom Kulture scene. In New York there was the No! Art Movement and the Rhino Horn group.

Over and above the use of figuration, these groups shared a generally assertive and confrontational approach to art, in which they sought to expose the darker side of humanity and the complacency, coarseness, and banality of contemporary life through poignant and often grotesque imagery. Not surprisingly, given this tendency, their work often coincided with the goals and activities of contemporary countercultural and socio-political movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-Vietnam War movement, and some of their imagery is most widely remembered for such associations. Apart from such socio-historical landmarks and reminders, critical retrospectives have served to remind the public of the work of the The Hairy Who, the Underground Comix movement, and the No! Art movement. The contributions of the members of Rhino Horn, however, have been largely obscured through time. Indeed, the last Rhino Horn exhibition took place in 1994, and the group has been virtually ignored in many recent art

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61 The term “Chicago Imagists” is often used broadly to designate figurative artists trained or influenced by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. More properly, however, three separate groups can be distinguished: The Monster Roster (Leon Golub, Nancy Spero, H.C. Westermann, George Cohen, and June Leaf), The Hairy Who (Jim Nutt, Art Green, Gladys Nilsson, James Falconer, Suellen Rocca, and Karl Wirsum), and those whose work was shown in exhibitions curated in the late 1960s and 1970s in exhibitions curated by Don Baum, whom others termed “The Chicago Imagists (Roger Brown, Elanor Dube, Phil Hansen, Ed Paschke, Christina Ramberg, and Barbara Rossi). See Richard Vine, “Where the Wild Things Were,” Art in America (May 1997): 98-111.


63 Kustom Kulture is an American term used to describe the artworks, vehicles, hairstyles, and fashions of those who drove and built custom cars and motorcycles in the United States from the 1950s through today. It is usually identified with the greasers of the 1950s, the drag racers of the 1960s, and the lowriders of the 1970s. See Pat Ganahl, “Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth: His Life, Times and Art,” Cartech (January 15, 2011).

64 The No Art! Movement was an avant-garde “anti-art” movement founded in New York City in 1959 by Boris Lurie, Sam Goodman, and Stanley Fisher. Artists associated with this movement created politically conscious art that was shocking to many members of the complacent consumerist society of the time. See Emanuel K. Schwartz and Reta Shacknove Schwartz, “NO-Art: An American Psycho-Social Phenomenon,” Leonardo 4, no. 3 (Summer, 1971): 245-254.
historical discussions regarding the figurative artwork of the 1960s and 1970s.

Nonetheless, there are clear links between their work and popular movements like the Neo-Expressionism in the 1980s, and a re-examination of the history and achievement of Rhino Horn is thus important in establishing a full account of the continuity of American Figurative Painting. The following chapters will account for the formation of Rhino Horn, a history of its members, an analysis of their artwork, and a look at how they relate to the critical dialog of figurative art during the time they were active.
Chapter 1: The Growth of Rhino Horn

A Group of Friends

The establishment of Rhino Horn came about primarily due to the friendship and numerous collaborations of later members Jay Milder, Bill Barrell, and Peter Passuntino, among themselves and with their friends and fellow artists Christopher Lane and Red Grooms. All of the original Rhino Horn artists had shown together in various locations, such as the Paul Kessler Gallery and the influential Sun Gallery (1955-1960),\(^\text{65}\) both in Provincetown, Massachusetts, the Tenth Street Galleries (1952-1962)\(^\text{66}\) and the “happenings” of the Downtown art scene in New York City, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and with the Exhibition Momentum Group at the Art Institute of Chicago (1948-1964). The majority of the artists in Rhino Horn were young, but they were not inexperienced. Indeed, despite their diverse upbringings, each had already established a lucrative personal career.

Jay Milder

Jay Milder was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1934, a descendent of the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), the patriarch of Hasidism and mystical Judaism and the Hasidic mystic Reb Nacham (1772-1810) of Breslov, who founded a branch of Hasidic Judaism that

\(^{65}\) In 1955, Yvonne Anderson and Dominic Falcone founded a gallery called the Sun Gallery on Commercial Street, Provincetown’s lively main street. The Sun Gallery established an experimental setting to show artists who were working outside of the mainstream artistic modes. The goal of the Sun Gallery, as Yvonne Anderson explained, was to find new artists, primarily those who had not had shows before and who had attractive work to offer. During the gallery’s five-year lifespan, one hundred different artists would have solo exhibitions. Interview with Yvonne Anderson by the author, September 21, 2009.

\(^{66}\) During the 1950s and through the mid 1960s in New York City, many seminal Figurative Expressionists became either founding or original members of the cooperative collective galleries located between 8th Street and 14th Street and between 5th and 3rd Avenues, which came to be known as “The Tenth Street Galleries.” The Tenth Street gallery scene would eventually become the ignition for the SoHo art scene, which would remain the largest art community in New York until many of the SoHo galleries relocated to Chelsea during the 1990s. See Joellen Bard, Tenth Street Days: The Co-ops of the 50s (exhibition catalogue, 1964), III-IV.
emphasizes joy and intensity in living life through God. In his teenage years, Milder would begin to explore this mystical lineage, which fueled him with a desire to journey across the globe. Milder began his travels at the age of twenty, when he went to Paris to study the cubist style of painting at La Grande Chaumiere and the Sorbonne. He also took painting classes with Andre L’Hote (1885-1962) and studied sculpture with the Russian born sculptor, Ossip Zadkine (1890-1967). Milder later recalled that he received praise from his teachers for incorporating a very rough, expressionistic, and organic approach to the Cubist style. Zadkine introduced Milder to the work of Chaim Soutine (1893-1943), and Milder’s acquaintance with Karel Appel, whom he met in Paris, undoubtedly made Milder aware of the European avant-garde group called CoBra, which bore some similarities to Rhino Horn, such as elements of color, form, experimentation with pigment, and spontaneity. 67 Both Soutine and the CoBra group would influence Milder’s signature blending of organic Cubism and spontaneous Figural Expressionism coupled with his unique interest in Helena Blavatsky’s teachings of Theosophy, which unified the ancient spiritual religions of the world, and organized the fundamental nature of various spiritual teachings into a comprehensive synthesis. 68

After Paris, Milder traveled to Morocco in late 1954, where he lived briefly in the Arabic section of Tetouan. Like Paris, North Africa has a rich painterly history that inspired many of the great modernists, together with its colorful environment and daily life. For Milder, his time in North Africa would be key to developing a vibrant palette that became even bolder and more energetic over the years.

Following a brief period from 1956 to 1957 at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Milder traveled to Mexico, where he exhibited in Puebla and where he received the Mexican government’s Honor Award for artists. Milder then traveled to Provincetown in the summer of 1958, where he initially planned to study painting at Hans Hoffmann’s school; however, while there he found the work of other artists of his own generation to be more compelling. In particular, he met Barrell, Lane, Thompson, and Grooms, and they all formed a strong bond as artistic collaborators as well as friends.

Milder showed his first major series, called “Subway Runners,” in 1960 at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York City. Then, in the late 1960s, he began a series of approximately 250 fully expressionistic, earth toned, smaller paintings entitled “Messiah on the IND and Other Biblical Tales,” which was based on themes from the Old Testament. When 40 of these paintings were shown in 1987 in a traveling exhibition that premiered at the Richard Green Gallery in New York City, the renowned art critic Donald Kuspit declared them to be “Impressive enough for me to say…that after Nolde’s biblical pictures, these are the best and most integral group of biblical pictures of the 20th century.”

Bill Barrell

Bill Barrell, another core member of Rhino Horn, was born in London, England in 1932, which meant that his formative years encompassed World War II and the Nazi Blitzkrieg (1939-41). He later vividly recalled sitting down for family tea one Sunday night when the sirens went off throughout the city, warning of incoming Nazi bombers. However, his mother was a strong willed woman who would never let the chaos disrupt family routines such as tea time. At the age of 22, Barrell immigrated to The United

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States, where he lived first in Philadelphia and then in New York City. Then, in 1956, he set off for Provincetown to begin his career as a painter.

From 1957 to 1960 Barrell lived in Provincetown year-round. Barrell was unable to afford the tuition to attend Hoffmann’s art school, but he did attend the public critiques that Hoffmann would give on Fridays. Like many of his contemporaries who returned to figurative painting, he was heavily involved in the art scene that centered on the Sun Gallery, where he had his first exhibition in 1959. In fact, Barrell became the director of the gallery in 1960, and he kept the Sun open through its most controversial moment when the chief of Police and his deputy came into the gallery one evening and asked him to shut the gallery down at once, claiming that an exhibition of nude monotypes by Tony Vevers was pornography. Barrell refused and kept the gallery open after the officers left. Upon returning later in the evening the chief threatened to arrest both Barrell and Vevers if the show was still open the next day. In defiance, Barrell opened the gallery the next evening and the arts community poured in to show solidarity against the threats of censorship. Hoffmann came into the Gallery and wrote out a declaration of innocence, which a number of renowned artists signed. The exhibition stayed open.70

During the early 1960s Barrell traveled extensively, visiting Mexico City, London, Paris, Florence, and Madrid. He settled in Ibiza, Spain, where he connected with Bob Thompson, who was also living there at the time. Barrell later returned to New York and, in 1965, opened the Pitt Street Salon on the Lower East Side, where he showed his work and the artwork of his contemporaries including Jay Milder, Bob Thompson, Mimi Gross (b. 1940), and Red Grooms as an alternative to the Tenth Street galleries. The Pitt

Street Salon was a 2,500 square foot loft located on Pitt Street between Delancey and Irvington Streets near the Williamsburg Bridge, a space for which Barrell paid $90 a month at the time.  

**Peter Passuntino**

A third member of Rhino Horn, Peter Passuntino, was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1936. At the age of 18, Passuntino was selected to be in a group show at the Carnegie Institute, and at 19 he was selected for a one-man show at the Artist Guild in Chicago. From 1954 to 1958 he attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Then, after receiving a Fulbright Fellowship in Painting, Passuntino spent time in Paris, from 1963 to 1965. While in Paris he studied art at the Istitut de Arts et Archeologie and exhibited in a solo exhibition entitled “Bad Manners, A Happening at the American Arts Center” (1963).

During his time at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Passuntino was an organizer of the artist run Exhibition Momentum Group, and he served as the group’s chairman in 1958. The Exhibition Momentum Group’s goal was to expand the scope of the Chicago-Midwest art community by providing ample opportunities for young local artists to exhibit their work while also bringing in emerging and established artists from the East Coast to Chicago as panelists and jurors of its exhibitions.  

In 1958, Passuntino worked with the group to organize an exhibition entitled “New Talent from the Mid-

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71 Interview with Bill Barrell by the author, March 21, 2011.
72 In 1947 the Art Institute of Chicago chose to no longer include student work in its long-standing Chicago Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, also known as the “Chicago Show.” Young contemporary artists rebelled against this decision, and the Exhibition Momentum Group was created to show student work and work by young artists. The inaugural Exhibition Momentum show took place in 1948, and the group lasted until 1964. Students and alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago generally made up the group’s membership. See: Exhibition Momentum Records 1948-1964, *Archives of American Art*, available from http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/exhibition-momentum-records-10804.
West” which was installed at the John Marshall Law School. The exhibition included young Chicago based artists as well as young artists from all over the Midwest, and Passuntino helped to put together a panel of distinguished American artists that included Franz Kline (1910-1962) and Phillip Guston, as well as Sam Hunter (b. 1923), then the curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. For Passuntino, these experiences organizing exhibitions and acting as chairman of the Exhibition Momentum Group led directly to his role in founding and organizing Rhino Horn.

Christopher Lane

Christopher Lane and Red Grooms were never members of Rhino Horn; however, they maintained an ongoing friendship with the group, with whom they often collaborated, even showing on occasion as “friends of Rhino Horn.” Lane was born in 1937 and raised in New York City. He graduated from the high school of Music and Art in New York and studied painting at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont from 1955 to 1957. After college Lane traveled to the West Coast, where he studied the art of brush calligraphy, and in the same year he traveled to Mexico City to study at the Escuela Esmeralda de Pintura et Sculptura. In the summer of 1958, Lane went to Provincetown, where he met and befriended fellow artists Jay Milder, Bob Thompson, Emilio Cruz, Mimi Gross, Mary Frank (b. 1933), and Irving Marantz (1912-1972). In the fall of 1958, Lane shared a studio with Jay Milder on Munroe Street on New York’s Lower East Side.

Lane worked in Paris from 1959 to 1962, during which time he met many of the European avant-garde artists there. Among others, he invited Alberto Giacometti to his
studio, and Giacometti was impressed by the young artist’s work. In 1961, Lane traveled from Paris to London, and there he met Helen Lessore (1907-1994), a distinguished art critic and Director of the Beaux Arts Gallery. Lessore offered Lane his first one-man exhibition in 1962 at her gallery in London. Then, in 1964, while living in New York, Lane walked into the office of Frank O’Hara (1926-1966), the Curator of Painting at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), with a little red satchel filled with 13 small paintings. O’Hara was impressed enough to include Lane’s work in a show called Landscapes by Eight Americans, which traveled throughout the United States as well as to the Spoleto Festival in Spoleto, Italy.

Red Grooms

Red Grooms was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1937 and given the name Charles Rogers Grooms. He studied painting for one year, in 1955, at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1956 he briefly attended Nashville’s Peabody College and the New School for Social Research in New York City. Then, in 1957, Grooms traveled to Provincetown to study at the Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts. During this time, Grooms worked as a dishwasher at a restaurant called Moors, where he became close friends with another employee, Dominic Falcone (1928-2009), who happened to be one of the founders of the Sun Gallery. When Falcone found out that Grooms was an artist, he introduced Grooms to his partner, Yvonne Anderson, who then invited Grooms to show at the Sun. It was during his first exhibition at the Sun Gallery, when Grooms was signing his name on the front window of the gallery’s storefront, that Falcone gave him the nickname “Red.”

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73 Interview with Christopher Lane by the author, February 4, 2010.
74 Ibid.
75 Interview with Yvonne Anderson by the author, September 21, 2009.
Grooms showed his work consistently at the Sun Gallery while he was in Provincetown. Although he is more often noted for his pop-art paintings and vibrant mixed media installations, Grooms’ early canvases combined lively figurative imagery with gestural painting technique. However, Hofmann discouraged this figurative style, criticizing the subjects as representing “little dolls.” Grooms’ intent was to isolate his figures in deep space, a trait clearly seen in one of his first Figurative Expressionist paintings, *Walking Man* (1957) (Fig.3).

Grooms also became interested in incorporating painting and sculpture into performance. His first “happening,” called *Walking Man*, was staged at the Sun Gallery in 1959 using live actors, who included Anderson, Falcone, Mimi Gross, and Bill Barrell. Grooms’ friendships with Milder, Passuntino, Barrell, Lane, Thompson, and Benny Andrews, and his collaborations with other seminal members of Rhino Horn, provided the catalyst in forging a “alternative space” movement in which the young artists could show their work as they wished, independent of gallery influence.

When the original Sun Gallery closed its doors in 1959, it left the Figurative Expressionists with the experience to create other successful and innovative environments to suit their work. Indeed, the Sun Gallery was also a vital connection between the emerging figurative artists and a group of influential collectors, including Walter P. Chrysler, Nat Halper, Joseph H. Hirshhorn, and Horace Richter, as well as the influential American Modernist critic Irving Sandler and the poet, curator, and critic Frank O’Hara.

The Downtown Scene, 1958-1969

At the start of their careers, the Rhino Horn artists were not invited to show in the commercial galleries or museums that were already flourishing as a result of the successes of the older generation of New York School artists. However, the younger artists were successful in creating some of their own venues, most commonly in small storefronts or inside empty and abandoned loft-spaces. Unlike the older galleries, these spaces were run by the artists themselves, inspired by Provincetown’s Sun Gallery and the Hansa Gallery of New York City’s “Tenth Street” scene.

One of these pop-up galleries, the City Gallery, was an important step to the formation of Rhino Horn. The City Gallery was formed in 1958, inside a Flat Iron loft at 24th Street and 6th Avenue that Grooms and Milder shared. The artists who exhibited at the City Gallery included Bob Thompson, Christopher Lane, Passuntino, Andrews, Gandy Brodie, Wolf Kahn, Emilio Cruz, Bob Beauchamp, Norman Bluhm (1921-1999), Mimi Gross, Lester Johnson, Stephen Durkee (b. 1938), Robert Whitman (b. 1935), and Alex Katz (b. 1927). 78 Claes Oldenberg (b. 1929) and Jim Dine (1935), who would both become influential in the Pop Art movement, were given their first New York solo exhibitions at the City Gallery. After Oldenberg was rejected by his peers to show at the Phoenix Gallery, Grooms and Milder dropped out of the Tenth Street collective gallery scene in protest and decided to invite Oldenberg to exhibit in their space. Grooms recalled, “We were reacting to Tenth Street. In ’58 and ’59, Tenth Street was sort of like SoHo is now, and it was getting all the lively attention of everyone downtown….We

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78 Interview with Peter Passuntino by the author, October 16, 2009.
were just kids in our twenties, [but we] had a flair for attracting people to our openings.”

The City Gallery was a twenty by forty foot, third-floor loft space on top of a men’s clothing store in the historic Flat Iron District. Here, Milder, Grooms, and sometimes some of their friends lived and worked throughout the year. They used the space as a studio to create their artwork by day and at night they entertained friends through parties and exhibitions that started in the evening and went on well into the early morning hours. As such, the space represented an alternative concept of the artist’s studio as a place for artwork to be accessible to public view. Rather than seeking to compete with the prestigious uptown Madison Avenue galleries or with those in SoHo, the City Gallery became one of the many downtown lofts that was a part of New York’s growing art scene. In 1959, the City Gallery’s operations expanded downtown, to a third floor studio loft run by Grooms, Milder, and Bob Thompson at 148 Delancey Street (at the corner of Suffolk Street) on the Lower East Side. The new gallery would become known as the Delancey Street Museum, an early site for Grooms’ “happenings” like The Burning Building (December 4 to 11, 1959), which featured a cast of Grooms, Milder, Barrell, Thompson, Joan Herbst, and Sylvia Small.

The final collaborative stage before Rhino Horn itself came into existence took place in a third gallery space in a shared loft called the St. Marks Place Gallery (Fig.4), a Lower East Side establishment located at 12 St. Mark’s Place. The gallery operated as a multi-disciplinary art space run through the combined efforts of Passuntino, Milder,

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80 Interview with Peter Passuntino by the author, October 16, 2009.
Barrell, and Lane. It was used for poetry readings and film screenings as well as exhibitions and “happenings” (Fig.5). Most notably, on March 26th, 1967, the St. Marks Place Gallery hosted a tribute to the late Figurative Expressionist Bob Thompson, who had died in 1966 at the age of 29.\textsuperscript{82} The exhibition featured the paintings of Thompson and the work of many of Thompson’s friends, including Andrews, Milder, Passuntino, Lane, Grooms, Peter Dean, Barrell, Nicholas Sperakis, Lester Johnson, Robert Beauchamp, Wolf Kahn, Robert (Bob) Di Niro, Sr., Mimi Gross (b. 1940), Gandy Brodie, Emilio Cruz, George Segal (1924-2000), Mary Frank (1933), Alex Katz (b.1927), Larry Rivers, Emily Mason (b.1932), and many others (See Fig. 5).

In the late 1960s, New York’s Lower East Side was a rough neighborhood, occupied by squatters, drunks, and gangsters. Here, the St. Marks Place Gallery and others like it provided artists with affordable space in which to create their art. Despite the dangerous conditions of the neighborhood, these loft-space galleries attracted large crowds. Passuntino, Lane, Barrell, and Milder all recalled that the openings were popular and well received among the Downtown scene, but that running the gallery was time consuming and that this commitment interfered somewhat with their ability to spend time creating art. The gallery did not last long, but its closing led to the creation of Rhino Horn.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{82} Bob Thompson Papers, \textit{Archives of American Art}, available from http://www.aaa.si.edu/exhibits/recentacquisitions-spring2006/index.cfm/fuseaction/items.detailItem/ItemID/7481/from/Browse
\textsuperscript{83} Interview with Peter Passuntino by the author, October 16, 2009.
Rhino Horn Is Formed

Along with Milder and Passuntino, Benny Andrews, Peter Dean, Nicholas Sperakis, Ken Bowman, and Michael Fauerbach made up Rhino Horn’s inaugural seven-member line up in 1969. The group was created by Andrews, Dean, Passuntino, Milder, and Sperakis as an outgrowth of their informal discussions regarding the state of the art world, and it expanded by bringing in new members at the invitation of existing ones. Fauerbach was invited to become a member by Sperakis, who was working in the same building on the corner of Houston and Bowery Streets in New York City, and Bowman was asked by Fauerbach to join Rhino Horn.

Benny Andrews

At the age of 40, Benny Andrews was the oldest founding member of the Rhino Horn group. He was born in Plainview, Georgia in 1930, the second of ten children born to African American sharecroppers George and Viola Andrews. His father was a self-taught folk artist, and his mother was a writer. His parents’ passion for the arts encouraged Benny, who showed an early aptitude for drawing and painting.

Andrews was the first member of his family to graduate from high school, and after college he moved to Atlanta to look for jobs and for the means to advance his interests in the arts. He earned a $400 scholarship from the 4-H agricultural program, and the stipend enabled him to attend Fort Valley State College, a local institution for African American students, starting in 1948. The Art Department at Fort Valley State was so small that Andrews took the survey course in art history, one of its few offerings, six times.84

Andrews could not afford to complete college, and he enlisted in the United States Air Force in the early 1950s. He served during the Korean War, earning the rank of staff sergeant. Upon his honorable discharge in 1954, Andrews moved to Chicago and enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. It was during his time at the Art Institute that Andrews defined his signature style of figurative art making. He was attracted to, the work of the social realists such as Raphael Soyer (1899-1987), Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), and Grant Wood (1891-1942), as it reflected his rural upbringing more than the urban lifestyles of the Abstract Expressionists. While his early paintings were indicative of the Figurative Expressionist mode, it was the art of collage that came to appeal to Andrews the most.

In 1958 Andrews moved to Suffolk Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where he met and became friends with Grooms and Milder, as well as with Lester Johnson and Bob Thompson. Andrews also spent summers in Provincetown, where he associated with the group of artists who had been showing at the Sun Gallery. Andrews had his first solo show at the Paul Kessler Gallery in Provincetown in 1960 and he would continue to show there until 1969. His first New York solo show was in 1962 at the Forum Gallery.

Andrews was a chairman and founder of the Black Emergency Culture Coalition (BECC), an organization of artists who were also activists for social change in the institutionalized art world. They formed on January 12, 1969 in protest over the controversial “Harlem on My Mind” (January 18th through April 6th, 1969) exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which had been almost devoid of actual paintings and

objects made by African American artists. Instead, the director had chosen to use projected photographs of artwork, an approach that many felt detached viewers from the subject. As the critic Grace Glueck wrote at the time, “[The exhibition] panders to our penchant for instant photojournalistic experience that puts us at a distance from the experience itself.”

Andrews and other members of a small group of artists organized a protest outside the Museum on January 12th, 1969 to raise public awareness regarding the exhibition’s faults—such as the lack of African American curators and scholars involved in the show’s direction as well as a gross misrepresentation of the artwork created by African American artists. Over time, the BECC would become a strong advocate for African American artists and would act as their liaison with many established art institutions.

Peter Dean

Peter Dean, another core member of Rhino Horn, came of age as a seminal East Coast Figurative Expressionist of the Second Generation. Dean was born in 1934 to Jewish parents in Berlin, Germany, when the growing Nazi movement was victimizing German Jews. Dean and his family immigrated to the United States in 1938, and he grew up in the Bronx. Dean later attended the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1956 with a degree in Geology. He worked at the Anaconda Copper Company in Brazil, Montana while pursuing his passion for painting during his free time. Dean would continue to balance these two interests until he could afford to devote himself full-time to his art. He returned to New York City in 1962 and had his first solo show the following

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year at Aspects Gallery on East 10th Street. In 1965, Dean became a co-founder of the short-lived “Torque” group, which included sculptor Joseph Kurhajec and painters Peter Saul (b. 1934) and Leon Golub. The group attracted the attention of certain critics, including Lawrence Alloway, and they tried to put together shows in various venues around the country, but it soon disbanded. As Dean stated, “We were maniacs in the midst of Minimalism.”

**Michael Fauerbach**

Michael Fauerbach was born in Yonkers, New York in 1942 and was also brought up in the Bronx. He attended the School of Visual Arts in New York City from 1960 to 1964, concentrating in illustration and fine art. Upon graduation, he painted during the day and loaded tractor-trailers for United Parcel Service at night until he was drafted into the United States Army. He served from 1964 through 1966 as a radio operator in Bamburg, Germany and, unofficially, as his unit’s sign painter. Upon discharge, he moved to a loft on the Bowery on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, resumed painting, and became proficient as a sculptor. In 1967, Fauerbach was included in an Anti-War group show at the Terrain Gallery at 39 Grove Street in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village. In 1968 he was part of a two man show with Sperakis at Mari Gallery in Woodstock, New York. Fauerbach had his first solo exhibition at the Mari Gallery in Woodstock, New York in the same year.

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89 Interview with Michael Fauerbach by the author, January 30, 2011
Ken Bowman

Ken Bowman was born in Denver, Colorado in 1937, and he began painting in 1957. His early work includes oils that he painted in Greece, where he spent three months as a guest of the Greek government. From 1958 to 1959, Bowman traveled throughout Europe and in parts of Africa, after which he attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Arts in 1963. After graduation, he returned to Denver, where he briefly taught history of art in a commercial school before settling in New York City in 1964.  

Bowman had his first one-man show at the prominent Tibor de Nagy gallery on Manhattan’s East 57th Street in 1970, the same year that Rhino Horn was formed. He continued to show his work with that gallery for the remainder of the 1970s.

Nicholas Sperakis

Nicholas Sperakis, the youngest of the original Rhino Horn artists, was born in New York City in 1943. He decided to become an artist when he was nine, upon his first visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he saw a portrait of a soldier holding his helmet by Rembrandt. Sperakis studied on scholarships at the Art Students League from 1961 to 1963, at the Pratt Graphics Art Center from 1960 to 1963, and at the National Academy of Design from 1960 to 1961. In 1963, Sperakis exhibited in the Annual Print Exhibition of Mercy Hurst College in Pennsylvania and won the First Prize Purchase Award. He also had his first one-man exhibition at the Paul Kessler Gallery in Provincetown. In 1964 he was elected into the Society of American Graphic Artists and

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90 Interview with Ken Bowman by the author, February 4, 2011
his work was exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum Print Biennial as well as among the New Acquisitions at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum in Provincetown.

In 1969, Sperakis traveled extensively throughout Mexico. In the Zona Rosa district of Mexico City he met Columbian born artist Leonel Góngora, who would later join the Rhino Horn group, as well as other artists who were participating members of the urban movement known as the Salon Independencia, or the Interioristas.\textsuperscript{91} In Mexico, Sperakis also met Passuntino, who also was traveling through the country. In 1970, Sperakis traveled throughout Europe on a Guggenheim Fellowship; upon returning to New York City, he reunited with Passuntino, whereupon he and the rest of the original seven members founded the Rhino Horn group.\textsuperscript{92}

**New Humanism at the New School**

The original seven Rhino Horn artists (Andrews, Bowman, Dean, Fauerbach, Milder, Passuntino, and Sperakis) planned their inaugural show with a budget of $300 per person. Their first task was to find a venue or rent a space in which to hang the exhibition. Andrews was teaching art at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan and he secured the school’s Wollman Gallery at 66 West 12\textsuperscript{th} Street for the inaugural show that opened on March 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1970. Passuntino created the artwork for the posters, and a friend of Milder’s, Norman Shaefer, printed the exhibition catalogue. The

\textsuperscript{91} The participating members of this group included Jose Luis Cuevas, Arnold Belkin, Leonel Góngora, Francisco Corsas, Icaza, Sepúlveda, Arnoldo Cohen, and Rafael Buñuel. Part of this movement’s objective was to counter and oppose the overtly expressive, institutionalized legacy of the Mexican Muralists. These artists produced expressive, symbolic, and figurative images that conveyed views and feelings associated with contemporary Mexico City and that were strongly influenced by the writings of Franz Kafka. See Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001).

\textsuperscript{92} The Rhino Horn artist biographies have been culminated from my personal research. I have found the above information through correspondence and interviews with the artists as well as their archives.
Rhino Horn artists succeeded in preparing and sponsoring the exhibition themselves at almost no financial cost.

Rhino Horn did, however, take a certain risk by entering into the art scene with works whose bold, emotive, figural imagery gave a clear indication that they wanted to be noticed and taken seriously despite the critical disenchantment with figural art. Although their work was not aligned with the mainstream, commercial avant-garde of the day, the artists’ DIY approach and willingness to express non-majority viewpoints was very much in keeping with the spirit that prevailed in the United States at the end of the 1960s. So tumultuous, in fact, were these times that just a few days before the inaugural Rhino Horn exhibition a radical leftist organization called the Weathermen (later renamed the Weather Underground) carried out a terrorist attack at the New School, at a location across the street from the gallery. The work of the Rhino Horn artists expressed the discontent, turmoil, and emotion of their contemporary condition. The members had formed the group with the intention of being as outrageous as possible with regard to creating and showing their art, and they hoped that the shocking and raucous imagery in their work would prompt dialogue on a range of issues about which the artists cared deeply.

The show at the New School was indeed “raucous” in a socially conscious manner according to art critic Peter Schjeldahl, who reviewed it in the *New York Times*. Schjeldahl, who noted the marginalization that Figurative Expressionism had experienced over the previous 30 years, states that the exhibition was successful in “making a case

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94 Interview with Peter Passuntino by the author on October 16th, 2009.
that simple justice should have made long ago” for renewed explorations of the possibilities of figuration. \(^{95}\) Schjeldahl calls the Rhino Horn exhibition an optimistic beginning for a contemporary revival of Figurative Expressionism and suggests that the group consider including in future activities Christopher Lane and Bill Barrell, who had already made names for themselves in this regard (i.e., as part of what the Introduction to this thesis referred to as the Second Generation of American Figurative Expressionism). Regarding the distaste for Figurative Expressionism that was widespread in the American art scene of the time, Schjeldahl wrote that “It would be too bad if the uptown art world, attuned to parochial (though legitimate) standards of beauty and formal rigor, continues to ignore the real merit of painters whose swirling pigment and raucous images are among the most challenging pleasures of art in New York today.”\(^{96}\)

**Leonel Góngora**

In keeping with Schjeldahl’s suggestion, Rhino Horn did eventually include Barrell as a principal member of the group. Another painter who was soon asked to join and who became an important core member was Leonel Góngora. Góngora was born in Cartago, Velle del Cauca, Colombia in 1932 and studied art at the Escuela de Bellas Artes (National School of Fine Arts) in Bogota, Colombia, graduating in 1951. He also studied with renowned Columbian muralist Santiago Martinez Delgado (1906-1954) and with Max Beckmann (1884-1950) at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Góngora lived in Mexico City from 1960 to 1963, where he was a member of the important Mexican political art group known as Nueva Presencia (literally, “new

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presence”) and of the Salon Independiente. He moved to New York City in 1963, after which he divided time between working on his art and teaching at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. A member of two important Latin American countercultural movements, both Góngora’s expressive and emotive imagery and his artist-as-activist attitude were well suited to membership in Rhino Horn.

In addition to its core members, Rhino Horn invited a revolving coterie of artists to show with the group. These participants included seminal Figurative Expressionist Lester Johnson and Red Grooms, both of whom exhibited as “friends of Rhino Horn” at the Ankrum Gallery in Los Angeles, California in 1974. In addition, there were several changes in Rhino Horn’s core membership over the course of the group’s nine-year existence (1969-1978). Andrews, Fauerbach, and Bowman would leave the group to pursue solo careers after the first few exhibitions. Christopher Lane was included in the roster for a 1970 exhibition at the North Shore Community Art Center in Great Neck, New York. Joseph Kurhajec, who was a close friend of the group, showed with Rhino Horn in 1970 at the Sonraed Gallery at 542 La Guardia Place in Manhattan and in 1971 at the Joseloff Gallery at the University of Hartford. June Leaf was included in an exhibition at Rabinovitch and Guerra Gallery at 63 Crosby Street in New York City in 1973, as well as at the Ankrum Gallery in Los Angeles in 1974.

Isser Aronovici, who had previously founded a Tenth Street Gallery called the Phoenix Gallery and who was an original member of the No! Art movement, showed

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97 Nueva Presencia was an artists’ group founded by Arnold Belkin and Francisco Icaza in the early 1960s. Other artists included Góngora, Francisco Corzas, and Ignacio “Nacho” López. The artists in the group shared an anti-aesthetic rejection of contemporary trends in art and a belief that the artist had a social responsibility. Their beliefs were outlined in the Nueva Presencia manifesto that was published in the first issue of the poster review of the same name. This document includes the group’s statement that “No one, especially the artist, has the right to be indifferent to the social order.” See Jacqueline Barnitz, Twentieth Century Art of Latin America (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001).
with Rhino Horn at the Odyssey House at 115 East 57th street in 1971 and in 1973 at the Herbert Benevy Gallery at 542 La Guardia Place in New York City. Several of his paintings appeared at numerous other New York galleries, such as the Bowery Gallery, as well as on the walls of Peter Dean’s studio and apartment.

Rhino Horn shows were a frequent and indeed virtually continuous phenomenon from the inaugural event in 1970 until 1978 (Fig. 7). In addition to numerous shows in New York, the Rhino Horn members’ work would travel across the country as the group organized shows at the Living Art Center in Dayton, Ohio (1970); East Central State College in Ada, Oklahoma (1970); Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma (1970); Oklahoma Fine Arts Center in Oklahoma City (1970); Joseloff Gallery at the University of Hartford in Harford, Connecticut (1971); Bienville Gallery in New Orleans (1971 and 1974); Ankrum Gallery in Los Angeles, California (1974); the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia (1974); The University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Massachusetts (1974); Santa Barbara Museum in Santa Barbara, California (1974); the San Francisco Art Institute in San Francisco, California (1974); and the Cranford Tomassula Gallery at Union College in Cranford, New Jersey (1978).

**Critical Responses to Rhino Horn Exhibitions**

One day before Schjeldahl’s enthusiastic article appeared, Grace Glueck published a lukewarm review of the inaugural Rhino Horn exhibition in the *New York Times*. Glueck reported, in a somewhat exasperated tone, that the member artists’ “...imagery is entirely concerned with the figure, and their manifesto, which knocks ‘spraygun’ art and other uptown breeds, proclaims that a ‘new art, a humanistic art, will
characterize the seventies. On the whole though, I find this art more nostalgic than nouvelle vague. By contrast, Leslie Powell of The Villager, a Greenwich Village newspaper, acknowledged that, “these exponents of Humanism all have much to say and are technically well equipped, and all of them, with the exception of Bowman, feel the need to create disturbing and shocking images to express their reaction to our environment and culture.”

Rhino Horn received encouraging reviews in response to many of its subsequent shows. Some, like that of Albert Collier in the New Orleans Times-Picayune reviewing the group’s first show at the Bienville Gallery in New Orleans in 1971, dealt primarily on the novelty of the return to figuration. Stating that their work shared a concern for a “community of commitment,” Collier noted that all of the participating artists “depart from the contemporary norm and find expression, not in the abstract symbolism, but in compositions centered around the human figure.” Others, however, like Walt McCaslin’s article entitled “No Op, Pop, Color Field for Rebel N.Y. Artists,” a review of the group’s show at the Living Arts Gallery in 1971 for the Dayton, Ohio Journal Herald, expressed more enthusiasm and acknowledge that the group’s work does not begin and end with the figure: “...here is a show full of grotesquerie, brilliant color and a certain amount of grim fun, although a stretch of the imagination will be needed to bring several works into the figure genre.” Similarly, Luba Glade in the New Orleans’ Vieux Carre Courier wrote in response to a 1971 exhibition at the Bienville Gallery that

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“...people who like their scotch, revel in the catharsis of pity and fear offered by Greek drama, and like the art they see to grab them and twist will have a field day at the Bienville Gallery for the next couple of weeks.”102 The Bienville Gallery exhibition opened on November 1, 1971 and continued through the 27\textsuperscript{th} of the month, and Rhino Horn showed at the New Orleans based gallery again in February of 1974. While Rhino Horn did not have an exclusive gallery showing their work, the Bienville Gallery’s owner, Ed Wiegand, was a strong patron and promoter of their art, and New Orleans offered a largely positive reception for the group’s work. The gallery had previously shown the work of Peter Dean in 1970 (and would show Dean again in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983, and 1985), and Wiegand was an outspoken member of the arts community with an eye for the grotesque and banality in contemporary art, which earned him the nickname Godfather of the Ugly.103

Rhino Horn’s 1974 show at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, which acquired several works by Rhino Horn artists in its permanent collection, received differing reviews from John Levin of the \textit{Ledger Star} and by Dick Cossitt of the \textit{Virginia Pilot}. In an article entitled “Reward Lies beneath Rhino Horn,” Levin told readers that they “...will need an open mind to view successfully the exhibit by New York’s Rhino Horn artists. The Show, which opens a month long visit Friday at the Chrysler Museum, is composed of art which makes little pretense of seeking universal understanding of its message.” That Levin himself had little idea what to make of the exhibition is clear when he goes on to state that “...there is certainly very little within the art to suggest that the

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viewer should have an easy time of grasping what the artist wants him to know.”

Cossitt, although similarly unwilling to attempt to assign as a meaning or message to the artists’ work, is certainly more enthusiastic when he states that “…the exhibit itself is far more interesting and communicative than all the words that will be associated with it. One’s first impression is that four or five mad men have been turned on the loose, and that they are all bent on either a celebration or a rending of garments about life today, perhaps both, using the most unfettered sort of color and imagination.”

Following the group’s breakup in 1978, many of the artists lost contact with each other. However, some of the former members—Andrews, Barrell, Dean, Góngora, Milder, and Sperakis—reunited once more under the name “Rhino Horn” for an exhibition in New York City on March 17th 1994 at the White Hall Gallery. Much had changed since the 1970s. However, the sense of a social consciousness on the part of the participating artists remained as potent as ever. Working once again individually, the former Rhino Horn artists continued to express concern over political and social themes in their work.

The socio-political standpoint taken by artists like those of the Rhino Horn group is an element that has become part of a new contemporary *zeitgeist*. Today, more than forty years after Rhino Horn’s formation, the re-emergence of countercultural populist movements and politically charged protest art seen in manifestations such as the anti-Iraq War Protests, and Occupy Wall Street and its grassroots successors and affiliates suggests that Rhino Horn’s brand of activist art cannot simply be consigned to history. The subjects in Rhino Horn’s art such as oppression, poverty, gentrification, and economic

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inequality, which will be examined in the following chapter, takes on a new contemporary relevance.
Chapter 2: The Potent Imagery of the Rhino Horn

On forming the Rhino Horn group, the founding members drafted a manifesto that described the collective intention underlying the group’s work. This document established Rhino Horn as an artistic movement that rejected the emphasis on mass production found in much of the Pop Art of the time:

Our work is strong and demanding—of all of your faculties. It has integrity in all senses of the word. We don't hand graph paper designs over to engineers and contractors to be executed; we don't give you fluorescent lights, red, yellow, blue, white on white, or the straightest lines in the world. We have enormous visual appetites and are as interested in the baroque and classical forms of fine art as in the novelties of 42nd Street; moreover, we are able to assimilate such opposites into a whole. The mediums we use also are culled from all sources. We don't totally ignore the new materials discovered by the artists we reject as technicians—the difference is that we incorporate these materials into a total vision of today's society instead of saying these materials themselves represent society. The struggle, the art, is to unite material with image.

Both in their individual works and as a collective, the Rhino Horn members felt that it was their calling to create artwork that would be shocking and poignant—artwork that would reflect the issues of their times and that would thus contrast with the consumer based imagery of Pop Art. This sentiment disregarding Pop Art and other contemporary stylistic trends was captured explicitly in a statement Sperakis gave in an interview with Dan Georgakas in 1975:

I don't know what the future will consider our mainstream or sidestream or whatever to have been, and I am not concerned with that. I don’t think the kind of art you refer to is art at all. When poetry is about how to write a poem and when painting is about how to paint, etc, it becomes pseudo. It doesn’t breathe. It doesn’t derive from life and doesn’t move to life. It is anti-human because it is about an alienated process. Most of that trend is something [that] is about and for the sake of nothing. It doesn’t even reach

\(^{106}\) See Appendix A
the level of the obvious. There is the idea that people will bring their own experiences to the work and use it as terms of reference for their own creativity. That all sounds fine but it is not very interesting most of the time. Why bother with it? People who do that kind of work avoid the responsibility of being a creator with a viewpoint. My work [takes] an entirely different direction. I think the kind of work I do reaches back to our sources and also reaches forward. I don’t like to talk about it too much however, because such talk always sounds pretentious.\textsuperscript{108}

With the exception of the works of Bowman and Fauerbach, Rhino Horn represented a continuation of the stylistic movement begun by the post-war Figurative Expressionists. In addition, several of Rhino Horn’s members were inspired by contemporary artists who had fallen out of vogue with contemporary art critics, including such populist artists as Thomas Hart Benton, Chaim Gross (1904-1991), Raphael Soyer, Philip Evergood (1901-1973), and Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949). Even more than a stylistic or aesthetic movement, however, the Rhino Horn members regarded themselves as a humanist art collective. This aspect of their work was even more central to their identity than was their use of expressionism, although it was the combination of these elements that was most responsible for the artistic cohesiveness of the group.\textsuperscript{109} The members wanted to expose the absurdities of such social phenomena as racism, war, organized religion, and mass consumerism, and their cohesive strength lay in their collective humanist ideology.

A number of recurring themes can be traced across many of the works of the Rhino Horn artists. One example is the theme of poverty and social class. Andrews encountered so many homeless individuals on the street outside his studio on Manhattan’s Lower East Side that local poverty made an even deeper impression on him


\textsuperscript{109} Email communication to the author from Ken Bowman, February 2, 2011.
here than it had in the rural South or in Chicago. His early collages, such as *Beggar Man* (1959), reflect the gritty appearance of life on the streets of lower Manhattan. The downtown streets also inspired Barrell, and in a Rhino Horn exhibition at the Cranford Tomassula Gallery at Union College in Cranford, New Jersey, he exhibited a series of collages and paintings that featured the textures and objects of city streets (Fig. 16).

Similarly, Bowman’s collages used materials from the streets, such as tattered rags, and presented imagery that reflected the struggle and the helplessness of the typical working-class American family. Milder, for his part, used the subway and modern urban life as settings for mythological subjects. Living and working on the Bowery, also on the Lower East Side, influenced Sperakis to paint a series of works centered on the despair of the homeless. The impersonal and overbearing nature of the urban environment, moreover, can be seen reflected repeatedly in the sculptures and paintings of Fauerbach.

Another common theme in the work of the Rhino Horn artists was their collective rejection of war and violence. Passuntino created grotesque graphic images of the spoils of war, while Andrews created allegories illustrating the physical and psychological effects of modern warfare on the populace. Dean’s burlesque paintings satirized American military exploits—in particular those associated with the Vietnam conflict—and Passuntino, Dean, Andrews, Milder, Sperakis, Isser Aronovici, and Leonel Góngora all variously depicted the violence and oppression imposed out by corrupt individuals, religious orders, and governments.

Collectively, these artists had grown up with the “American Dream” and had watched it turn into a nightmare either for themselves or for those whom they saw struggling around them. They believed in the United State’s post World War II identity as
a “melting pot” in which the races and classes mixed together, but they experienced a world in which many groups were systematically and maliciously held back from enjoying the same freedoms as the wealthy and powerful. As Peter Selz expressed:

The search for an adequate expression which may come to grips with the experiences of the post World War II generation has brought forth a new imagery which like De Kooning’s painting retains the agitated surface of the Abstract Expressionists and which has also evolved forms which lead the spectator toward more specific responses.110

In the late 1950s New York City was also a “melting pot” of artistic styles, including the established first and second generations of abstract expressionists and color field painters, the nascent figurative painters, and the emerging minimalists and pop-artists. These were only a few of the many creative movements that were appearing in the downtown galleries. However, as in society at large, not every movement had equal access to the public’s attention.

Each of the artists in Rhino Horn had a unique, individual style, which they contributed to the unabashed imagery of the Rhino Horn as a collective. Andrews and Bowman used collage and imagery from their own lives and experiences to narrate their stories of the human condition. Andrews’s work reflected his perspective as an African American on such themes as war, racial segregation in the South, and the experiences of common people in their work and leisure activities. Bowman, drew his inspiration from his family roots in a Pennsylvania mining town.

As one of the few African American artists at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago, Andrews consciously chose to produce work that was familiar to him rather than to experiment with the unfamiliar influences of the dominant formalist movement.

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Thus, his depictions of Post-World War II America frequently reflect his personal experiences. For example, in the late 1960s Andrews created a series of collages depicting the soldiers who returned from war—demoralized, mentally broken, and physically bloodied. The painting *War Baby* (1968) (Fig.7) illustrates the psychological impact of modern warfare in the distorted face of a soldier weathered by battle. In his hands is the limp body of a lifeless baby. This chilling painting depicts the casualties of war in an uncompromising manner and points clearly at the effect that wars have on future generations.

Andrews depicts the dehumanizing effects of war again in his collage *American Gothic* (1971) (Fig.8)—a reference to the 1930 painting of the same title by Grant Wood, which is one of the most iconic American Social Realist paintings. When Wood’s painting first appeared, many art critics—such as Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) and Christopher Morley (1890-1957)—assumed that it was meant to be a satire of rural life. However, with the onset of the Great Depression, the painting came to be seen as a depiction of the steadfast American pioneer spirit. To many during the Depression Era and thereafter, it endured as a popular image honoring the value of provincial living.\(^{111}\) Andrews improvised on Wood’s painting by depicting a faceless, naked, and defeated high ranking officer hunched down on all fours while a black woman sits dispassionately on his back, holding a cocktail sized American flag. In Andrew’s composition there is no glory in the defeated soldier or in the grave expression on the face of the woman. Nationalist identity appears depleted, exhausted, and discomfited.

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\(^{111}\) Wood’s statement in the 1930s that “All the good ideas I’ve ever had came to me while I was milking a cow” may not explain the meaning of the work, but it appears to support its authentic rural character. See Mia Fineman, “The Most Famous Farm Couple in the World: Why American Gothic Still Fascinates,” *Slate* (June 8, 2005).
Another familiar subject in Andrews’s socially themed works from the late 1960s is the identity African America society under segregation. For example, in his mixed media collage *A Man and His History* (1968) (Fig.9) Andrews juxtaposes images of culture, domesticity, and folklore from African American history with others from the contemporary problems afflicting African Americans such as segregation, violence, and intolerance, to stress that his ancestors’ experiences and those of his contemporaries are roughly analogous. In this collage, Andrews uses oil paint, wood, and chains to depict a figure chained to a podium, suggesting that modern society is still not ideologically free from its history of slavery. Similarly, his painting *The Unmentionables* (c.1970) (Fig.10) depicts an interracial couple in the foreground looming over a landscape filled with allusions to war and peace, echoing the unresolved racial tension and subjective justice of the Reconstruction era (1863-1877).

Andrews’ paintings reflect a connection with his subject that transcends personal experience to speak broadly about the human condition. As Andrews has explained concerning his legacy as a painter,

> As far as my work goes…., I think the reason it might last is because I am doing the lives, and the feelings, and the expressions of the people…and that lasts because when you look at art history and you look at a lot of the work we continue to look at, the representational work, the innovative pieces…that lasts. And so I think that if I do it well enough, then it will last. It’s more than me, it’s about something bigger than I am.112

Andrews depicts the fundamental nature of his subject. He hones in on individuals and their unique qualities—what makes them stand out and how they fit (or do not fit) into the larger societal structure. He combines the individuality and character of his subjects

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with his own personal experiences to depict the lives of African Americans in the South and of affluent white Americans from the perspective of an outsider looking in.\textsuperscript{113}

Bowman also drew on his family heritage and his personal experiences to depict his perception of American culture and industrious roots. In his case family roots are bound up with the mining town of West Leisenring, Pennsylvania, which is represented as if it were stuck in time around the turn of the twentieth century. Bowman’s collages are visual relics from a past life that he had seen only through vintage photographs taken by his wife’s grandfather. These photographs were passed down to Bowman by his father-in-law, who was familiar with the people and places depicted.\textsuperscript{114}

Bowman’s description of his artistic process in a self-published Rhino Horn catalogue appears contradictory, yet it reflects his work succinctly: “I think of Russian icons, Japanese motels—work and leisure. Not always in that order.”\textsuperscript{115} Bowman’s collages are more closely aligned with the paintings of the Social Realists of the Depression Era than with the work of most of his contemporaries. His collages and mixed media works—such as the seven by eight foot \textit{West Leisenring} (c. 1970) (Fig.11) and \textit{Clinging Vines} (c. 1970) (Fig.12) —typically depict a predominantly working class, provincial lifestyle from the past. In stark contrast to the constantly changing contemporary world, Bowman depicts the foundations of working class life. The figures in these collages are ghosts from the past. In \textit{West Leisenring}, the figures of the men and boys who work in the mine are blended into the background, yet Bowman’s use of collage brings dimensionality to their rough and weathered faces. \textit{Clinging Vines} resembles an old family portrait in which the sitters are wearing clothes from an earlier

\textsuperscript{113} See ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Email communication to the author from Ken Bowman, February 2, 2011.
\textsuperscript{115} Rhino Horn “Personal Interiors” (1974)
era, presented on canvas as a collage that incorporates photographs and strips of weatherworn cloth.

Bowman’s collage works are typically dark in tone, capturing harsher moments of life and often portraying such subjects as blue-collar laborers, drunks, hunters, medical operations, poor families, and overflowing tenements. His frequent, although not exclusive, focus upon poverty and the daily realities of urban and rural post-industrialized experience show a rough and familiar life expressed through the blank emotions and helplessness on the faces of his subjects.

In contrast to Bowman’s dark and often gritty realism, Jay Milder created brightly colored, expressionist, allegorical scenes that juxtapose the metaphysical world with contemporary life and, in so doing, explored elements of the unconscious. Milder applied enlightenment philosophy, Jungian dream theory, and the esoteric teachings of Kaballah to Old Testament tales combining contemporary life with pre-history.

Milder was endowed with a personal spirituality that came from his observation and application of the Jewish Kabbalah, Eastern spiritual practices, and the liberal ideals of ancient and enlightenment era philosophers like Plato and Spinoza. Milder considered the way he created the colors and textures on his canvases to be like that of an alchemist. Volcanic ash is combined with acrylic paint and other pigment to create rough organic surfaces onto which he scrawls symbols, figures, and numbers. These psychic manifestations of the unconscious resemble and juxtapose modern graffiti, cave paintings, and ancient relief carvings.

Milder showed his first major series of large-scale works, called *Subway Runners*, at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York City in 1960. Painted in layers of color and
form, his subway runners seem to be in a state of motion, protruding out of the canvas plane. Milder had a long-standing interest in depicting time and space in his work in order to reflect the reality of individuals in a constant state of flux.

In the 1960s, Milder also began to paint a series of large works inspired by the Old Testament, which he called *The Messiah Series*. By 1966 he had created over 200 medium sized works on canvas that depict biblical vignettes in a style similar to the Figurative Expressionism of the mid-1950s. In works like *Expulsion IRT* (1966) (Fig.13), and *Inside the Ark I* (1970) (Fig.14) he incorporates Old Testament tales into contemporary urban life. In these paintings, the allegory of original sin is reflected as a new myth, one in which the streets are paved with gold; as in the Garden of Eden, however, temptation has come—this time in the form of contemporary materialism. In such works Milder reveals an absurdist leaning, merging the sacred with the profane in mythical works that feature animals and humans reveling in sinful activities and portraying the corrupt visions of a man-oriented universe rather than a pantheistic universe. His figurations use recurring symbols, intended as basic archetypes of humankind’s pursuit to make something that is at the same time elemental and informed by conscious intellect.

By working in a non-linear fashion, often revisiting previous ideas and methods—though always viewed through new empirical lenses—Milder created a body of work that built naturally upon itself, evolving throughout the years based on the artist’s emotional and spiritual explorations. However, the constant and dominant element in Milder’s painting is his moral narrative. His work implies both optimism and caution, as seen in the expressions of his half-human, half-bestial figures and other fantastical characters.
For Milder, his method is Kabbalistic in that he takes a passage from the Bible and studies it in many lights through ancient spiritual texts: its Hammurabic legal meaning, its Talmudic and Midrashic meanings and related commentary, and even its Freudian elements. According to Milder, this method allows him to “distill all this information; and working in a trancelike revelation I am able to make new commentary on it.”

Since the 1970s Milder’s oeuvre has expanded to include a series of abstract figurative paintings depicting Noah’s Ark (Fig. 15). In these paintings, Milder relies on the Kabbalah and its numerically based interpretations of biblical events. He takes the biblical story of Noah’s ark to signify a boundless balance between the human spirit and the cosmos. While the blotting of the rainbow symbolizes the physical pollution that exists in the world, Milder’s vibrant colors, organic textures, and metaphysical numerology are indicative of the “unblotting of the rainbow,” or removing the spiritual blockage and renewing the covenant between humankind and God. These paintings are intended as a celebration of collective spirituality and are vessels for enlightened spiritual expression, much like the teachings of ancient Jewish mysticism and Theosophy.

In a similarly ambitious engagement with a variety of antecedents, Bill Barrell drew inspiration from sources ranging from older European modernists such as Picasso and Matisse to American contemporaries such as Thompson and Grooms. He also developed a strong affinity for color and perspective through sitting in on Hans Hoffman’s critiques in Provincetown. He paints precisely what he feels, making his style evocative of an autobiography in which he engages in a dialogue with his own history as well as with the history of art. He draws upon specific events and memories in his life as the starting point for a stream of consciousness and artistic enthusiasm.

However, Barrell’s work also reflects careful observations of his surroundings. For example, at a Rhino Horn exhibition at Union College in 1978, Barrell displayed a series of mixed media works that resembled parts of a city street, commenting on the lack of cleanliness typical of the cityscape through a representation of the relics and ruins of contemporary culture. One collage, *Small Pothole and Drain* (1977) (Fig. 17), consists of asphalt-black paint, crushed bottles and cans, cigarettes, an Afro-pick, and a shredded newspaper wedged into a street grating.

While Passuntino, Dean, Góngora, and Sperakis each employed his own distinct artistic style, their works can be treated as facets of a single movement. Characteristic of this movement, or sub-group, is the use of fantastic imagery juxtaposed with elements from American history to create potent and grotesque expressionistic images that lament over the struggles of the human body, spirit, and psyche in the modern world. Each of these artists, created a personal mythology and burlesque fantasy through which to narrate a scathing commentary on war, poverty, and organized religion.

Passuntino’s paintings reference the Old Masters, Mexican Modernists, and European Surrealist painters to create a statement for social and political reform, knowing that through art these concerns can be uplifting. He incorporates a lively palette, not unlike that of the Fauvists or of the early European Expressionists and uses archetypal images such as signs and symbols from ancient and modern civilization, combining fantasy with history and dreams with reality. Passuntino’s work explores the full range of human experience—from the beauty of dream worlds, to the nightmare realities of war. In one set of paintings his subjects are at play in their surrealist environment, while in another malevolent monsters ride war machines among dreary human figures set in
fantastical landscapes. *War Birth* (1969) (Fig.18) presents an existential look at the effects of war on future generations, similar to that of Andrews’ *War Baby*, while *Mother of War* (c. 1970) (Fig. 19) shows a monstrous figure composed of various vignettes depicting human nature in its darkest and most raw form. The “Mother” of the title is a crouching nude who is shown in a desolate environment and who carries a small skeleton in her womb. The anti-war theme of this painting recurs in such later works as *Perpetual War Machine* (2010) (Fig.20), in which a surreal machine functions as a conveyor belt, churning out the spoils of war.

In addition to solemn imagery, Passuntino also employs humor and irony. A large diptych called *Christ Entering New York* (c.1970) (Fig. 21) parodies religion, politics, and art in a burlesque parade that echoes James Ensor’s *Christ’s Entry into Brussels in 1889* (1889). In Ensor’s work, the haloed Christ at the center of the turbulence is in part a self-portrait, portraying the artist as an ignored, precarious, isolated visionary amidst the herd-like masses of modern society. In Passuntino includes himself as a character in his painting, as a trapeze artist swinging above a chaotic, dehumanized hoard of masked characters, clowns, and caricatures of public, historical, and allegorical figures. The haloed Christ is depicted riding a taxicab and waving to the crowd in a scene resembling a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. A militia of armed soldiers wearing masks that resemble skulls precedes Christ, while a hoard follows closely behind him. The scene also includes figures from other religions, such as the Hindu god Ganesha, Buddha, Lucifer, the Pope, and several animal gods from ancient beliefs—as well as various politicians, who are depicted with beastly features.

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117 See “James Ensor, *Christ’s Entry into Brussels in 1889.*” Available at http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=932
While Passuntino was prolific as a painter, his mixed media kinetic sculpture *The Medici Family of Flatbush Avenue*, (Fig.22) which he presented in the inaugural Rhino Horn Exhibition, stands out prominently among the works that he displayed at the New School. This sophisticated satire of art history features caricatures of three famous members of the Medici family translated into a contemporary setting that satirizes the contemporary art world of the late 1960s and its economic dependency.

Dean’s paintings are also rife with political parody and satire. He used political and social satire, irony, and fantasy in allegorical and surreal compositions. His narratives often reference popular culture, past history, and current events. As Dean described his work in the inaugural Rhino Horn manifesto,

> I am of the future but [I] worship an ancient god. I am a magician who transforms the images of our times into painting. I interpret reality into fantasy and back again. I’m a juggler of color and textures. I’m a seer of the past and a prophet of the future. I ride the hurricane. I walk on the tightrope of sanity. I live on the edge of the world.118

Using thick application of oil paint on canvas, Dean conveyed bold expressive emotion using a colorful, heavy impasto technique to construct flamboyantly burlesque depictions of the horrors of contemporary life. His socio-political paintings lampooned Western history and contemporary societal issues such as war, Americana, racism, capitalism, genocide of indigenous peoples, and political greed and corruption. In what Robert P. Eustace, a contemporary artist who was influenced by Dean, has described as wildly magical panoramic scenes from the bizarre carnival pageant and fantastic drama of life,119 Dean presented deliberately shocking and grotesque images that offered

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alternative scenarios to the distortions and myths of the mainstream news and popular culture.

One painting from a series of works inspired by the Vietnam War, *Bar Room* (c. 1970) (Fig.23), depicts several burly, patriotic-looking men arm wrestling in a bar—a piece of archetypical Americana that is undermined by a background of monstrous war machines and winged beasts. Many figurative artists explored themes such as the shallowness of nationalism and the foundation of material culture in violence at the time. However, in describing this series, Dean explicitly distinguished his work with reference to the fantastical imagery that he used: “My Vietnam paintings are not anything like Leon Golub’s…. His are more specific; mine are more fantastical. There is a dragon lady in the painting (*Saigon Holiday*, 1972), and a winged man with guns on his wings. I wanted to deal with the war, but not in a literal sense.”\(^{120}\) Through such shocking imagery, Dean’s paintings call upon the viewer to question the way in which American mythology has been constructed out of black and white heroes and villains that mainstream culture has first oversimplified and then fetishized. A case in point is the painting *Evil Eye Drive In* (1970) (Fig.24), which shows the vulgarity and dismal reality of the Battle of Little Bighorn, an event that has been fictionalized to portray General George Armstrong Custer and the American cavalry as heroic. Similarly, *Christmas Card from the Midwest* (c. 1970) (Fig.25) visually echoes the archetypical Western nativity scene, but with the familiar biblical characters replaced by a dysfunctional and satirical looking modern American family joined by three old men, perhaps caricatures of the Three Wise Men, depicted as Harlequins.

The sort of vulgar burlesque element found in the works of Dean and Passuntino is also present in Leonel Góngora’s paintings. However, while Dean and Passuntino—and, indeed, most of the Rhino Horn members—used predominately a rough, gestural technique, Góngora’s style is smoother and more lyrical. In terms of content, Góngora oeuvre is comprised of highly personalized iconography that comments on human struggle, primarily through the interpretation of Latin American culture. For example, his series entitled *The Marquis de Sade in Columbia* (1963) (Fig.26) depicts oppressive forces consuming their victims through violence, *Lovers* (1973) (Fig.27), from his *Prisoners of Their Passions* series shows the victims consuming each other through sexual fantasy and pleasure. In this respect, the prisoners depicted in this later series could be interpreted as unsuccessfully attempting to overcome the repression and victimization represented in the earlier one. In any case, both series are emblematic both of Góngora’s artistic themes and of the violence that remains all too pervasive in his native Colombia. In addition to this violent undercurrent, his works abound with an overt and poignant sexuality that is represented as struggling to express itself against restrictions.

Like the artwork by other members of Rhino Horn, Nicholas Sperakis’s work also depicted powerfully shocking, graphic imagery dealing with such themes as violence, sexual repression, religious extremism, and poverty. Like Milder, moreover, Sperakis mixed oil paint with other material such as beeswax, hot linseed oil, and vermiculite, to which he added acrylic and modeling paste and built layers up to an inch thick with carved grooves. In addition to collage and large-scale mixed media paintings, Sperakis established himself as a prominent maker of woodblock prints, and his woodcuts varied

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in size from a few inches across to mural-size. Across these various media, Sperakis explored similar themes and narratives, commenting on the human condition, mortality, the alienation of man in contemporary society, corruption and hypocrisy in organized religion, sexual repression, superstition, and the atrocities of war. Sperakis typically depicts victims of misfortune and their sadistic, masked tormentors as lonely, alienated, decaying figures with rotting flesh, distorted limbs, and tattered clothes. An excellent example is the twisted and mangled figure at the focal point of the painting *The Pink Striped Rape* (c.1971) (Fig.28). The implicit social protest of his commentaries ranges widely, moreover, from the Vietnam War and the torture resorted to by authoritarian states to the psychical degradation of those who have been disregarded and deserted in the urban environment.

Sperakis’s resentment of religious fanaticism, too, served as the inspiration for the themes and imagery in many of his works. Sperakis grew up surrounded by the dogma of the Greek Orthodox Church, and as an artist he rebelled against the church’s rigid taboos through a potent and shocking visual language. His work in this vein deals largely with the cruelty that is propagated in the name of religion, a phenomenon that he represented through images such as ghoulish figures of priests and religious icons shown victimizing the bodies and minds of the common people. In works like *The Metamorphosis* (1965), Sperakis shows such religious figures as parasitic monstrosities feeding off the spirit and brainwashing the minds of their followers. In this particular print an Orthodox cleric, with four arms is spewing venom, in the act of converting a kneeling supplicant. This scene is reflected in a large and vibrant painting titled *Absolution* (c.1968) (Fig.29) in which a four-armed Orthodox cleric is performing “soul cleansing” acts on a tormented
individual. The thought process behind these and similar works is well captured in Sperakis’s comments from a 1975 interview:

Isn’t a religious situation of the Greek Orthodox variety one of great cruelty? In fact it’s one of sadism. They try to control the bodies and minds of people in a restrictive and repressive manner. My woodcuts [therefore] show people caught up in circumstances [that] deform them.122

Sperakis’s Marat/Sade series (started in 1968) (Fig.30) inspired by two radical figures from France—Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793) and the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814)—deals with struggle, opposition, and personal conflict. Through imagery and symbolism, Sperakis explores the contradictions inherent in these two historical characters, and he shows the effects of the self-inflicted psychical torture that occurs when people try to conceal their true identities. According to the artist, the figures in this series wear masks and play the roles that they once dreamed or dreaded their real lives would take on, yet they are oblivious to how they appear to others.123

Similarly, in his Bowery Series (started in 1968), Sperakis depicts the dehumanizing effects of urban life through the homeless men and women he witnessed daily outside his studio. On this theme, Sperakis later reflected:

There is nothing to idealize in the total degradation I could view daily from my window. The debased state of these people is not something they bring on themselves in the manner of the legendary hobo, if such a person ever existed. You see them with rags in their hands wiping the windows of cars stopped at traffic lights. You see them crash to the sidewalk in a stupor. You see the dirty rags on their wounds, their broken mouths, and their disconnected eyes. In the summer, they are covered with vermin and in the winter, they often freeze to death. The only reason I had that studio [in the Bowery] for as long as I did was that it was one of the few I could afford at that time.124


123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.
Sperakis was moved by the daily struggles that the homeless men and women faced and angered by the apathy that society had with respect to their plight. Unlike his other heavily symbolic works, the images from his Bowery Series offer a realistic depiction of the impact of society’s disregard.

The final founding member of Rhino Horn, Michael Fauerbach, also had a studio on the Bowery. His artwork differed notably from the largely expressionistic and colorful painterly styles of the other Rhino Horn members. Although he also produced paintings for some of the Rhino Horn exhibitions,¹²⁵ Fauerbach was the only original member who worked primarily as a sculptor. On the whole, his sculptures are dark and existential constructions in which he portrays society as overwhelmed by technology in the medium sized bronze sculptures that he displayed in the inaugural exhibition at the New School, such as *Suicide* (c. 1970) (Fig.31) and *Co-Op I* (c. 1970) (Fig.32). In *Suicide*, a lifeless human body lies sprawled across a bleak landscape with harsh geometrical buildings towering above. *Co-Op I*, portrays a sterile architectural environment that resembles a modern public housing complex, in which a faceless couple sits idly in front of a TV set. Such works depict, in the artist’s own words, a lifestyle that “gets worse as it gets better; an environment that becomes inhumane at the same time that it becomes increasingly man-made.”¹²⁶

While Fauerbach’s early work with Rhino Horn was largely surrealistic, and minimal in composition, his later works became increasingly more realistic in rendering the environment. He also chose to focus on the landscape and used the human figure less

¹²⁵ Kurhujec was the only other member of Rhino Horn to show specifically as a sculptor. He exhibited in place of Benny Andrews at Rhino Horn’s second exhibition at the Sonraed Gallery in New York City in 1970.
¹²⁶ Email communication to the author from Ken Bowman, February 2, 2011.
frequently. He produced fewer sculptures and bas-reliefs and more two-dimensional paintings; much of his later work is made up of acrylic paintings on paper. The images of decaying tenement houses in Jersey City and decrepit barns in the Catskills that appear in Fauerbach’s late paintings convey a bleak outlook for human kind, in which the industrial working-class environment has been abandoned and the urban landscape deteriorated. These traits are seen in his paintings *Closed its Doors* (Fig.33) and *Grove Street Brooklyn* (Fig.34).

Several additional artists were chosen to appear in Rhino Horn’s exhibits because they also presented powerful socio-political imagery and aligned themselves with humanist ideologies. Two such artists, June Leaf (Fig.35) and Isser Aronovici, fit in particularly well with Rhino Horn’s style because they employed an energetic Figurative Expressionism. Another guest exhibitor, Joseph Kurhajec, produced metal and mixed media sculptures and wall hangings that depicted mythical and burlesque monsters and that thus had particular thematic and imagistic affinities to the work of Milder, Passuntino, Dean, Góngora, and Sperakis.

Over and above such elements of stylistic and even thematic continuity, however, Rhino Horn can, as Stephen D. Pepper has suggested, be identified as a “community of commitment.”\(^\text{127}\) Their collective concern for the problems of contemporary society, as well as their use of grotesque and burlesque imagery, made Rhino Horn stand out among the artists and artistic movements of the late 1960s and 1970s. Whether or not this made them popular with the leading critics or institutions of the time was a matter of less concern to Rhino Horn’s members than the fulfillment of the commitment by which they were driven and the expression of the imagery that seemed to them to best suit the pursuit

\(^{127}\) *Rhino Horn* (New York: Norman Shaefer, Custombook, Inc., 1970), 22
of this social, humanistic, and artistic goal. In fact, the disinterest that much of the critical and commercial art establishment displayed toward Rhino Horn’s humanistic brand of art only fueled their pursuit of potent, non-mainstream imagery. They had chosen the name “Rhino Horn” as homage to the toughness of the Rhinoceros and the reputation of its horn for conferring virility.

While Rhino Horn may not have received the attention and critical acclaim enjoyed by other artistic movements of the time—in particular Minimalism and Pop Art—the group undoubtedly had an impact on the artistic world, and the emotive imagery and political subject matter of Rhino Horn’s artwork served to inspire later developments in American figurative painting. Chapter Three thus examines Rhino Horn’s commitment to promoting socio-cultural and expressionistic figurative painting even after such ideas had fallen out of fashion, as well as the influence that the group’s work had on later figural movements.
Chapter Three: The Missing Link

In 1974, when Rhino Horn’s short yet prolific run had reached its halfway point, five of the group’s members (Andrews, Dean, Milder, Góngora, and Sperakis) exhibited their work at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. To date this has been the only museum scale exhibition of the group. The show was described by Dick Cossitt, the art editor for the Virginian-Pilot, as “Surreal Expressionism, a mode of painting more allied with European sources like Soutine and Ensor and Dubuffet than anything in New York.” Cossit, who noted affinities between the group and Chicago’s the Hairy Who, described the works in the exhibition as “extremely noisy things, aggressive statements absolutely bleeding with concern for the human condition”.

John Levin in a review in the Ledger Star titled “Reward Lies Beneath Rhino Horn” stated “you will need an open mind to view successfully the exhibit by New York’s Rhino Horn artists. The Show, which opens a month long visit Friday at the Chrysler Museum, is composed of art which makes little pretense of seeking universal understanding of its message.” Upon recognizing Rhino Horn’s vulgar distinctiveness, Levin and Cossit were both clearly challenged and impressed. Levin goes on to interoperate himself that “there is certainly very little within the art to suggest that the viewer should have an easy time of grasping what the artist wants him to know.”

By the late 1970s, art criticism had begun to question the formalist ideals that dominated the era of the New York School, which defined painting as an absolute and

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129 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
universal form of art, and some critics—such as Douglas Crimp (b. 1944), Yves-Alain Bois (b. 1952), Carter Ratcliff (b. 1941), and Barbara Rose (b. 1938)—even went so far as to raise the question of whether painting was dead as an important art form. Indeed, in a 1981 article, Crimp argued that painting in the 1960s had been in a terminal state. To this view, he cited such factors as the style of hard-edged Minimalism and color field painting and the use of new media, such as images appropriated from photography in painting, as evidence of a “definitive rupture with painting’s unavoidable ties to a centuries-old idealism.”

However, the majority of the critics, for their part, tended to accept Greenberg’s proposition that an ideal work of art could only exist in a utopian world in which there were no social problems. Thus, as the Italian critic and curator Germano Celant explained in his contribution to the catalogue for the 1982 exhibition Documenta 7:

Over the past decade art and architecture have been transformed from producer of illusions into receptacles for illusions. They have ceased contemplating and representing the experience and visible world, preferring to become themselves objects of admiration and portrayal.

In the late 1970s, Modernism began to give way to Post-Modernism, which brought with it a return to expressive modes of figuration in the form of what was loosely termed “New Image Painting.” Much like Rhino Horn’s work, this new movement

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135 The term New Image Painting, which was also the title of a 1978 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, has been loosely applied since the late 1970s to the work of certain avant-garde artists who demonstrate a stridently figurative style, often with cartoon-like imagery and abrasive handling of subject matter that shows influence from Figurative Expressionism. Jennifer Barlett, Neil Jenney, Denise Greene, Pat Steir, and Susan Rothenberg are some of the artists who have been considered “New Image” painters.
relied on the use of non-traditional materials, media, and techniques, including collage, simplification, text, and appropriation. The artists working in this vein, moreover, borrowed heavily from “low art” and popular culture in an attempt to break the “cultural barrier” between “lighbrow” and “highbrow” circles, a goal and an approach that are reminiscent both of the Rhino Horn artists’ multi-media works and of the disregard that the group’s members demonstrated for the views of the critical establishment. Post-Modernism in general, however, was and remains far from a populist movement. It is, in its way, at least as esoteric as the movements once championed by Greenberg. As Hal Foster (b. 1955) put it, Post-Modernist art is “alternately elitist in its allusions and manipulative in its clichés.” In other words, Post-Modernist art separates the artist and art institutions from the general public in many of the same ways that the heavily academic treatment of Modernism had done previously, in that Post-Modernist works can only be understood (as Post-Modernism) by those with artistic and/or critical-theoretical knowledge and training. Contrary to the efforts and approach of the Rhino Horn artists, moreover, socially conscious or politically “liberal” themes are relatively rare in so-called Post-Modernist painting. In Foster’s analysis of Postmodernism there is a progressive and a neoconservative movement. Painting, a la Neo-Expressionism is included in the neoconservative. As Foster notes, Post-Modernist painting is more typically aligned with conservative trends in the art market than with any avant-garde socio-political movements.

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138 Ibid., 145
Despite the spread of such a politically disengaged, academically elitist movement and its offshoots, the artists of the Rhino Horn group continued, in the 1970s and in some cases thereafter, to create heavily expressionistic figurative artwork. For them, painting was the vessel for their subliminal and humanist expression and an extension of their individual and collective consciousness.\textsuperscript{139} The distinctiveness of this attitude and approach, in its contemporary context, begs the question of what, if any, place ought to be given to the work of the Rhino Horn members in art history. Was the work of the Rhino Horn members, for example, merely a sideline, a curious and perhaps somewhat interesting irrelevant movement? Exhibition history might appear to suggest that this was the case. For example, although Rhino Horn had not yet been founded, all seven of the original Rhino Horn artists were well known to so-called experts in contemporary art when Robert Doty (1933-1992) curated an exhibition entitled “Human Concern/Personal Torment” at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969, and yet none were included. The exhibition presented itself as a renewal of Peter Selz’s breakthrough 1959 show entitled “New Images of Man”, discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Its focus on works that used grotesque imagery to explore the theme of contemporary society’s callousness toward civilization would seem appropriate for the inclusion of any or all of the Rhino Horn artists.\textsuperscript{140} Their exclusion is all the more striking given that five years later Barry Schwartz discussed all seven of the founding members of Rhino Horn, as well as June Leaf and Leonel Góngora, alongside most of the artists included in Doty’s exhibition in his book, New Humanism: Art in a Time of Change. When Doty still did not include the Rhino Horn artists in his 1973 exhibition,

\textsuperscript{139} Interview with Jay Milder by the author, March 5, 2010.  
\textsuperscript{140} June Leaf was the only artist included in the exhibition who would later show with Rhino Horn.
“Extraordinary Realities”, Lawrence Campbell (1914-1998), editor of ARTNews, expressed shock at their exclusion. Instead, the exhibition included primarily works by members of the Chicago Imagist movement of the 1960s and by artists associated with the San Francisco Funk Art movement of the 1950s.

By 1978, when the Whitney Museum of American Art presented its survey exhibition of New Image Painting (see note 108 above), Rhino Horn had disbanded. However, the group’s founding and affiliated artists were all still actively producing art, and yet once again they were excluded from a major exhibition whose theme was relevant to their work. To this day, Rhino Horn has only had one major museum retrospective, and none in its native New York City. For a time, the Rhino Horn artists were remarkably successful in promoting and exhibiting their art across the country on their own terms. Moreover, in the aftermath of the breakup of the Rhino Horn group, all of the artists found consistent gallery representation and sustained solo art careers. It would seem, however, that in bypassing the gallery and institutional art scene as a collective, they alienated the institutional establishment in the art world and relegated themselves to the status of a mere footnote in the canon of modern art history.

Their status, however, may be overdue for a reappraisal. Just as the Figurative Expressionism practiced by the Rhino Horn artists was not without antecedents this movement did not fade out or “dead end” with Rhino Horn. The rise of Neo-Expressionism in the late 1970s and 1980s may not have been heralded as a return to the values and imagery espoused and practiced by the Rhino Horn group, but it was a significant enough development in the art world to warrant a three-volume survey in Art

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141 Lawrence Campbell, “Review”, Rhino Horn Black Catalog (New York: Custom Book INC., 1970)
in America in the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{142} Neo-Expressionism was, an international movement in painting and sculpture. Its antecedents in the United States included the Lyrical Abstractionists of the 1960s and 1970s and the Bay Area Figurative School of the 1950s and 1960s, in addition to Rhino Horn and the two generations of Figurative Expressionists discussed above. Prominent American painters among Neo-Expressionist artists include Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), David Salle (b. 1952), Eric Fischl (b. 1948), Julian Schnabel (b. 1951), Susan Rothenberg (b. 1945), and Chuck Connelly (b. 1955). Other notables include the Germans Georg Baselitz (b. 1938) and Anselm Kiefer (b. 1945), and the Italians (known as the Transavanguardia) Francesco Clemente (b. 1952), Sandro Chia (b. 1946), and Enzo Cucchi (b. 1949).

Like the artists of the Rhino Horn group, the Neo-Expressionists “returned” to portraying recognizable figurations, in contrast (and partly in reaction) to both Pop Art and Minimalism and to the bulk of Post-Modernist art, which was essentially a continuation of these esoteric schools. Whereas in Europe the Neo-Expressionist movement was broadly revered as a revival of European art after decades of American dominance, in the United States it was seen more as a return to traditional forms of art making after the extended hegemony of conceptualism. Similarly to the Expressionists who returned to figurative painting during the post-World War II era, the Neo-Expressionist movement of the 1980s was very broad, and the artists who were associated with this movement were diverse in both their ideologies and their methods. Nonetheless, a core group of key influences and predecessors is commonly cited. These include established artists such as Francis Bacon and Leon Golub, as well as the New Image Painters of the late 1970s. Philip Guston’s use of figuration beginning in the late 1960s,

\textsuperscript{142} See Art in America (December 1982 and January 1983) devoted to “The Expressionism Question.”
which was shaped by cartoon imagery, social realism, and action painting, also exerted an important influence on Neo-Expressionism.

Of all their influences and analogues, however, the Neo-Expressionist painters’ use of mythic subjects and of a variety of media and painterly styles aligns their work most closely with that of the Rhino Horn artists. This remarkable proximity has not gone unnoticed. In a *New York Times* review of a solo show of Jay Milder’s paintings in 1988, the critic Vivian Raynor wrote that

> Even when figuration began trickling back in the early 1970’s, Mr. Milder, who by that time was part of the ‘Rhino Horn’ group, was still on the wrong side of the fashion fence…. Mr. Milder is an Expressionist—one of several—who has remained visible despite his lack of careerism. It is time that someone looked into his case, if only to prevent the more-driven art scholars from re-launching him as a ‘father’ of Neo-Expressionism.  

Moreover, Robert C. Morgan, the well-known art historian, critic, and artist wrote in a 1986 review article that “Basquiat’s style and subject matter are not unrelated to the [work of the] Rhino Horn group from the sixties [sic.]. They are particularly close to the work of Bob Thompson and Jay Milder.”

**Conclusion**

The social, spiritual, and political Expressionism of the Rhino Horn group is still as relevant to the art of the underground as it was during its heyday. Although they never received the mainstream recognition of many of their peers, the Rhino Horn artists succeeded in having their art interpreted as a fine art form focused on Humanism and collective consciousness. The painting and sculpture of the Rhino Horn group presents a

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144 Basquiat, a friend of Jay Milder’s daughter Rifka was familiar with Milder’s work. See http://oneartworld.com/artists/J/Jay+Milder.html
poignant view of contemporary civilization and its self-destructive process. The images are often unsettling and confrontational. When Figurative Expressionism fell out of fashion in the 1960s, the members of Rhino Horn reinvigorated this style with elements of the grotesque and imagery derived from mystical and mythological traditions, as well as from deep explorations into the unconscious. Their work portrayed the absurd, banal, grotesque, and potentially hopeless aspects of many of these realities. They intended to communicate a humanistic, socially conscious vision of the horrors and triviality of contemporary existence. As the group’s inaugural manifesto states, “Our art interprets and respects the viewer—not his products, not his technology. If the mirror we hold is too revealing, the image too harsh, the fault, dear Brutus, lies in yourself.”

145 Introduction to Rhino Horn (New York: Norman Shaefer, Custombook, Inc., 1970), 1. The allusion is to Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, Act I, scene ii, in which Cassius reminds Brutus that one’s own fears and shortcomings, not one’s fate, are responsible for the limitations from which one suffers—in their case, domination by the tyrant Caesar.
Appendix A

The Original Manifesto of Rhino Horn (New York City, 1970):

"Our art is involved with life; it is concerned with humanity, with emotion. We will not listen to explanations from or about the technically minded artist of yesterday. Just as abstract expressionism - the art of the fifties - was superseded by pop, op, hard edge, minimal and color field the art of the sixties - so now a new art, a humanistic art, will characterize the seventies. Our art owes little to what many aestheticians refer to as the important technical revolution" in art. We are not concerned with making pure color or pure form the subject of the painting; we are concerned with, and express, a harsher reality - harsher, that is, than the cotton-candy world that advertising men would have all of us believe we live in. Nor does our work allow a pleasant, self-indulgent escape; for it is a product of our awareness of the state of the world we do live in. We have ignored the dictates of Madison Avenue businessmen, be they copywriters or gallery dealers, and our work has nothing to do with current aesthetics; it exists without the permission of the nail-polished artists who swish over reality. Madison Avenue has sold what is called "the art of the United States" with fantastic success, paralleled only by the success they've had in making Coca-Cola an international "buyword." Yet the current-day altarpieces won't communicate to people living beyond the fringe of stainless steel. Realize when you see our work that the so-called "thirty years of painting and sculpture" in this country has been built on a lie; it has been packaged, promoted and super-sold by ambitious critics,
dealers and curators trying to build their own reputation I as they fatten their bankrolls. You are masochists, Mr. and Mrs. America, masochists or fools. Don't you see that spray-gun art insults your intelligence? Don't you see that it's a product aimed in its inoffensive decorativeness at cardboard people who live non-thinking existences? And this doesn't INSULT you? Or perhaps we overestimate you. Perhaps you are very cozy in your consumer passivity, happy only when spoon-fed or dictated to.

Some say we are too coarse for the temperament of today. These same hypocrites sit smugly in front of the daily newscasts of Vietnam. Or say our art is "hard to take." We say to hell with you! Our art won't be accepted by those who prefer a dream-world kubla-khan to an encounter with people and emotion. And yes, our art is coarse - by current aesthetic standards, that is. But is it not odd that in this age of deep and growing concern with the horrors we perpetrate on ourselves and export to other countries, in this time of political activism, that the art you laud is completely divorced from humanity and concern? Has it ever occurred to you that this art is anti-life?

Our work is strong and demanding - of all of your faculties. It has integrity in all senses of the word. We don't hand graph paper designs over to engineers and contractors to be executed; we don't give you fluorescent lights, red yellow blue, white on white, or the straightest lines in the world. We have enormous visual appetites and are as interested in the baroque and classical forms of fine art as in the novelties of 42nd Street; moreover, we are able to assimilate such opposites into a whole. The mediums we use also are culled from all sources. We don't totally ignore the new materials discovered by the
artists we reject as technicians - the difference is that we incorporate these materials into a total vision of today's society instead of saying these materials themselves represent society. The struggle, the art, is to unite material with image. That technically oriented people are earnestly trying to communicate on a human level through technology is bizarre. Our exhibition is a step in a new direction. The show we have assembled is concerned with the human image. The message is not the medium. We are interested in man. The paintings and sculptures are involved with the world of knowing and feeling and questioning man; our art interprets and respects the viewer - not his products, not his technology. If the mirror we hold is too revealing, the image too harsh, the fault, dear Brutus, lies in yourself."
Images

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Jan Müller, *Search for the Unicorn*, 1957, oil on canvas, 31 x 32 in; Courtesy of Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY.

Fig. 3

Red Grooms, *Walking Man* 1959, Oil on canvas, 25 ¼ x 25 ¼”, Courtesy of Yvonne Anderson
Fig. 4

St. Marks Gallery Signage; Courtesy of Bill Barrell.
Fig. 5

Flyers for St. Marks Gallery exhibitions, 1967; Courtesy of Peter Passuntino.
Fig. 6 Rhino Horn exhibition flyers and graphics; Courtesy of Peter Passuntino.
RHINO HORN

AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE BY:
ANDREWS - DEAN - PASSINTINO
ARONOVICI - MILDEN - SPERAKIS

APRIL 29 - MAY 21
HERBERT BENEVY GALLERY
542 LA GUARDIA PL. N.Y.C. 10001
1:30-3:30 MONDAY SUN.

RHINO HORN

MUSEUM

39 BROADWAY
NEAR WARSAW PLACE

OPENING WEDNESDAY FROM 5-7 PM. THE EXHIBITION CONTINUES TO THURSDAY FROM NOON TO 7 PM.

SPONSORED IN PART BY THE NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
Fig. 7

Fig. 8
Benny Andrews, *American Gothic*, 1971, oil and collage on canvas, 60 x 50 in
Fig. 9


Fig. 10

Fig.11

Fig.12
Fig. 13


Fig. 14

Fig.15


Fig.16

Fig. 17


Fig. 18

Fig. 19

Peter Passuntino, *Mother of War*, 1969, oil on canvas.

Fig. 20

Peter Passuntino, *Perpetual War Machine*, 2010, oil on canvas, 55x50 in. Courtesy of Peter Passuntino
Fig. 21


Fig. 22

Peter Dean, *Evil Eye Drive-in Oil*, 1976, 117 x 93 in. Courtesy of The Estate of Peter Dean.
Fig. 25

Peter Dean, *Christmas Card From The Midwest*, 1969, oil on canvas, 86 x 65 in. Courtesy of The Estate of Peter Dean.

Fig. 26

Leonel Gongora, from the series *The Marquis de Sade in Columbia*, 1963, mixed media, 11 x 13 in.
Fig. 27


Fig. 28


Nicholas Sperakis, *Marat Writing His Message to the People*, 1969, oil on Lucite, and coffee grounds on canvas, 80 x 50 in.
Fig. 31
Michael Fuaerbach, *Suicide*, c.1969, sculpture, 69 x 48 x 30 in.

Fig. 32
Michael Fuaerbach, *Co-Op 1*, c.1969, sculpture, 61 x 42 x 27 in.
Michael Fuaerbach, *Closed its Doors*, 1986, acrylic on paper, 13 x 10 in.

Michael Fuaerbach, *Grove Street Brooklyn*, 1984, acrylic on paper, 21 x 15 in.
June Leaf, *Mad Woman*, ink on paper, 9 ¼ x 5 ¾ in.
Works Cited


Morgan, Robert C. “Review”, (October 1 1986).


Wilson, Leron D. “Colored Frames.” Video clip.