Celebrating 30 years
FEATURES

18  Looking Back: Three Decades of New England Arts
    By Christine Temin
    The art world has held on through dips and curves—from museum expansions to historic loss.

22  Profile Revisted
    By Lois Tarlow
    Nine artists reveal how thirty years has changed their art and vision.

26  The Little Magazine That Could
    By Debbie Hagan
    Art New England’s founders tell how the magazine grew into an award-winning publication.

30  Maine’s Veterans of Painting
    By Carl Little
    Over the age of eighty, Brenda Bettinson, Beverly Hallam, and Dhalov Lapcar maintain their youth through painting.

34  Digging Through the MFA’s Basement
    By Christine Temin
    Stored for nearly a century, Egyptian relics surface and reveal their secrets.

COLUMNS

3  Letters
4  Of Note
   Compiled by Joanna Michalowski
5  Field of Vision
   Gerry Bergstein
   by Susan Boulanger

6  Museums
   Warhol and His Legacy
   by Paul Bloomfield

8  Report from New York
   Marlene Tseng Yu: Abstraction’s Return to Nature
   by Donald Kupit

10  Public Art
    Providence Art Windows
    by Doug Norris

12  Photography
    Elsa Dorfman: In the Moment
    by Alicia Anstead

14  Architecture
    pinkcomma gallery:
    Design Gallery in the Pink
    by James McCown

16  Sculpture
    Joseph Wheelwright: Branching Out
    by David Raymond
Lino Mannocci: Sea, Sky, Smoke
Mead Art Museum • Amherst, MA • www.amherst.edu/museums/mead • Through January 3, 2010

Lino Mannocci’s paintings give volume and weight to air and memory, transcending the stillness that so often characterizes landscape paintings. Each brushstroke and image is carefully placed, but the results aren’t staid. What gives these paintings breath and movement is the subject matter itself, often the sky. However, these works are not just exterior, but interior as well, living in Mannocci’s consciousness.

Take Viareggio. Like much of Mannocci’s work, there is a depiction of sky (specifically, clouds), sea, sand, and smoke. This seaside image of a promenade comes from childhood. However, this walkway does not stop at ocean’s edge, but melts into the water, nearly seamlessly, as if to suggest that memory melds into our interior fabric, rendering "truth" less concrete than a photographic or even a realistic representation. A small swirl of smoke rises up from the beach. Mannocci puts images like these together and lets the viewer absorb them. The palette is relatively pale: a light blue sea tinged with gray; sands of pink, white, and beige; the sky and clouds imbued with gray and blue. While shore, sea, and sky are distinct from one another, the entire piece—including the smoke swirl and a tiny red dot, possibly a figure, by the shoreline—is created of one image, one memory.

Seeing Mannocci’s paintings, especially in person, is astonishing, in part because he is able to make so much out of seemingly so little. For Sweet to be a cloud, the artist employs a very limited palette—chiefly white, off-white, blue-hued gray, and tinges of pink—and one sole subject: a big cloud in the sky. This might sound like an exercise rather than a mesmerizing painting—but the work is completely engaging. The deliberate and nuanced texturing makes something that could seem sterile appear much more enticing. Mannocci’s paintings vault memory and wide expanses in ways that surprise and delight.

—Sarah Buttenwieser

Lisette Model and Her Successors
Mt. Holyoke Art Museum • South Hadley, MA • www.mtholyoke.edu/artmuseum • Through December 13, 2009

The work of photographer Lisette Model—and that of her successors, most famously Diane Arbus—demonstrates one of Model’s famous quotes in action: “The camera is an instrument of detection. We photograph not only what we know but also what we don’t know.” Model, who came to New York in 1937, found the city offered what she didn’t yet know. Her images feature portraits of overlooked people, pictures taken through big storefront windows, in motion, and at tilted angles, as well as images that are conspicuously cut off.

Fifth Avenue is an example of Model observing the world from her own perspective. At sidewalk level, a woman’s blurred leg, mid-step, commands the foreground. The fuzziness comes from the fact that the woman is in motion. One high-heeled shoe is prominent, its sole slightly obscured by the shadow she casts. From this perspective, Model reveals all sorts of details often overlooked in more traditional photographs: the fluttering flag cut off at the top, the circular patterns on the building behind the flag, and the straight lines of sidewalk cracks. There are the etched details on the building, the flagpole, shadows in the car’s rear passenger window, and swish of the woman’s skirt. With so much action, this image captures both New York’s unstoppable energy and its sense of stories that will never be fully told while they are—literally—passing by.

San Francisco provides an unforgettable example of Model’s interest in overlooked people. An older woman on a park bench, with set curls, a long face, an angular nose, and thinly painted eyebrows wears a lace collar and a veiled hat adorned by large, faux flower at the forehead. She seems dignified without being dignified. This is not a formal portrait. Instead, she’s looking away from the camera. Both the building and the grass behind her seem skewed. While the image is riveting, she is clearly a character one might walk by without acknowledging—this is what makes the image so arresting.

—Sarah Buttenwieser