

Berkshire's cheerfully eclectic summer show

By Christine Temin
Globe Staff

PITTSFIELD — There is something liberating about those big summertime group shows that have one of everything by everybody. You don't have to follow any arcane curatorial train of thought or trace an artist's development from one period to the next. The granddaddy of such shows is the annual summer exhibition at the Royal Academy in London, which is devoted to the highest of high art the rest of the year. In summer, though, one sun-splotched landscape is hung atop another, salon style, and watercolors of violets share space with the odd "difficult" piece that suddenly looks churlish. People love this show: The galleries are as packed with viewers as the walls are with paintings.

While you won't find this level of giddiness in the American equivalents of the RA, we do indeed have cheerfully eclectic summer shows. A good example has just opened at The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, where it will remain up through September 29, long enough to compete with the fall foliage. It's the Berkshire Art Association's 1989 Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture, with 42 artists from New England and New York selected by Lisa Phillips of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Phillips writes in the catalog that she aimed for diversity, although "I am partial to art that tests limits — whether it is a reconsideration of a traditional theme or a breakthrough into entirely unfamiliar terrain."

In the "reconsideration of a traditional theme" category comes Jeffrey G. Jones' hysterical painting, "Artist and Collector," as lewd as the naughtiest examples of Edwardian art. In the plush and claustrophobic background are an antique column, Chinese porcelain, needlepoint rug. On the rug is the collector, wearing only black lace panties, holding a sheet of slides up to the light. The artist, wearing nothing at all, fondles her hair with one hand and, with the other, holds her nipple as if turning a knob on a radio.

A deceptively traditional looking work is Lisa Samalin's "West End Ave.," a brushy oil of two little boys sitting on the floor and seen from the back, tilting their heads up to view a small television atop a tall chest of drawers. The blank screen is sky blue, but everything else is in black and white: tv and reality have switched positions.

Some of the better works in this uneven show use materials not associated with artmaking, although with Anselm Kiefer incor-

row, pendulous and factual. Lillian Hsu-Flanders' "Sac Woman: Lila" is a big square envelope of wrinkled gauze, the square composed of smaller pieces sewn together like a quilt. At the bottom, enclosed in the envelope, are orbs of burlap or bandage material; the female figure is bottom-heavy, pulled toward the earth. There is something comforting in the capacious square, like a mother's lap.

Sally Fine's "Anticipation/Memory" is a wooden tower topped by a rough piece of slate. On top of the slate is a delicate, doll-like construction of a rowboat weighted with smooth stones, like those in a Japanese garden. The boat's anchor is on a wire that threads through the slate as easily as if it were water. Above the slate, a tiny ladder reaches to a tree house. This fragile, teetering work bravely asserts a basic human need for shelter and stability.

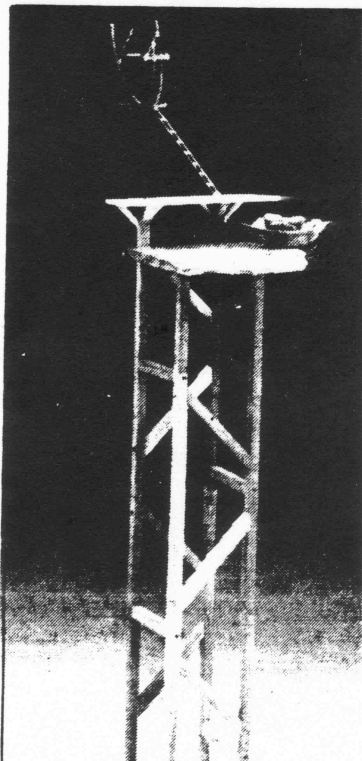
Instead of a press release about its first fall show, the Liz Harris Gallery has sent a card announc-

who happen to be black, John Scott, Howardena Pindell and Oliver Jackson among them. She opened first in the South End, in 1984, then in 1987 moved to Atlantic Avenue. She was part of a cluster of dealers — Thomas Segal, Howard Yezerski, Portia Marcus — who had transferred to that area, which was touted as Boston's new gallery center and which will suffer from her absence.

"Satellite Intelligence" is an ambitious 1990 collaboration between the MIT List Visual Arts Center and the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, an exhibition that will include work by about 10 artists from each area. The idea is to examine the differences between new work in Boston and San Diego, each of which is within 200 miles of one of the country's two most important art centers: New York in Boston's case, Los Angeles in San Diego's. The museums are seeking applicants, preferably emerging artists without significant national expo-



Valters Lindbergs paints on old bricks.



the Whitney Museum of American Art. Phillips writes in the catalog that she aimed for diversity, although "I am partial to art that tests limits - whether it is a reconsideration of a traditional theme or a breakthrough into entirely unfamiliar terrain."

In the "reconsideration of a traditional theme" category comes Jeffrey G. Jones' hysterical painting, "Artist and Collector," as lewd as the naughtiest examples of Edwardian art. In the plush and claustrophobic background are an antique column, Chinese porcelain, needlepoint rug. On the rug is the collector, wearing only black lace panties, holding a sheet of slides up to the light. The artist, wearing nothing at all, fondles her hair with one hand and, with the other, holds her nipple as if turning a knob on a radio.

A deceptively traditional looking work is Lisa Samalin's "West End Ave.," a brushy oil of two little boys sitting on the floor and seen from the back, tilting their heads up to view a small television atop a tall chest of drawers. The blank screen is sky blue, but everything else is in black and white; tv and reality have switched positions.

Some of the better works in this uneven show use materials not associated with artmaking, although with Anselm Kiefer incorporating intestines in his art and Andres Serrano using urine, any substance seems fair game nowadays. Valters Lindbergs paints on old bricks. In one piece, a white, two-handled cup floats over the surface of eight gritty old bricks, a ghostly Holy Grail. Marilu Swett's "Buoy" is made of steel, cement, enamel, wood, hydrostone and shellac, the buoys lined up in a

Valters Lindbergs paints on old bricks.

row, pendulous and factual. Lillian Hsu-Flanders' "Sac Woman: Lila" is a big square envelope of wrinkled gauze, the square composed of smaller pieces sewn together like a quilt. At the bottom, enclosed in the envelope, are orbs of burlap or bandage material; the female figure is bottom-heavy, pulled toward the earth. There is something comforting in the capacious square, like a mother's lap.

Sally Fine's "Anticipation/Memory" is a wooden tower topped by a rough piece of slate. On top of the slate is a delicate, doll-like construction of a rowboat weighted with smooth stones, like those in a Japanese garden. The boat's anchor is on a wire that threads through the slate as easily as if it were water. Above the slate, a tiny ladder reaches to a tree house. This fragile, teetering work bravely asserts a basic human need for shelter and stability.

Instead of a press release about its first fall show, the Liz Harris Gallery has sent a card announcing that the gallery, which was on Atlantic Avenue, "will relocate and will be open by appointment only," with no scheduled exhibitions. Harris's rent rose dramatically, and she has decided to take a year off to look for another space.

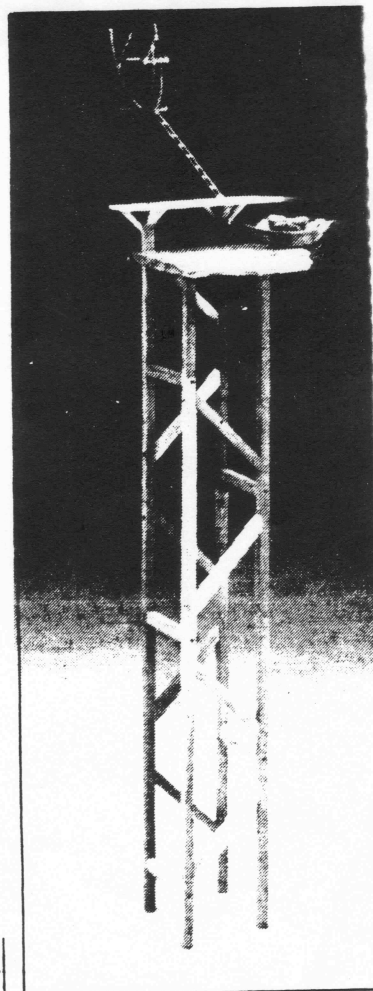
Harris ran one of Boston's finest contemporary galleries, one that happened to specialize in artists

who happen to be black, John Scott, Howardena Pindell and Oliver Jackson among them. She opened first in the South End, in 1984, then in 1987 moved to Atlantic Avenue. She was part of a cluster of dealers - Thomas Segal, Howard Yezerski, Portia H Marcus - who had transferred to that area, which was touted as Boston's new gallery center and which will suffer from her absence.

"Satellite Intelligence" is an ambitious 1990 collaboration between the MIT List Visual Arts Center and the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, an exhibition that will include work by about 10 artists from each area. The idea is to examine the differences between new work in Boston and San Diego, each of which is within 200 miles of one of the country's two most important art centers: New York in Boston's case, Los Angeles in San Diego's. The museums are seeking applicants, preferably emerging artists without significant national exposure. Entries are due October 2. For information, call 253-4400, or write to Ron Platt, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Building E15-109, Cambridge, MA 02139.

78 THE BOSTON GLOBE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1989



Sally Fine's "Anticipation/Memory."