

L, I

Lasley, Allison

'är-"klv



Sponsored by

Mike Viner



and



Checklist of Catalogue:

- Cover and page 3: "Summer Series", 9"x9", 2001, mixed media on wood panels.

Credits:

- This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition **är"klv** May 4th - August 25th, 2006.
- The exhibition and catalogue have been made possible through the generous support of Mike Viner.
- The National Gallery would like gratefully to acknowledge the following: Stuart Goode, Solange Carnauba, Cecilia Urdaneta, Philip Paschalides, Periwinkle and QuickImages.
- The National Gallery Volunteers: Bev Banks, Nisha Bismillah, Lesley Blaine, Paul Cherayath, Jenny Downing, Deb van Koughnett, Charles Long, Aare Toomist and Victoria Western.



P.O. Box 10197 APO
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands

Curator's Statement

■ 'är"klv

- "archive" ('är"klv) connotes, on a primary level, a collection of records or, alternatively, the place in which records may be maintained. Initially, at least, it connotes an activity whose object is preservation;
- the Greek etymological root, ἀρχέ, reveals the word's secondary and perhaps truer association: to "govern" or "order";
- archives are, at once, a preservation of primary material and an attempt to classify, order or make sense of that primary material;
- the artistic process is, many have said, archival in nature: it preserves life, yet also orders, tries to make sense of life.

■ Lasley as archivist

- Allison Lasley painstakingly created her own artistic archive of the world about her, her impressions and personal experiences; This artistic archive takes the form of a series of square panels of standard size or small six by six inch watercolours, almost like cards in a rolodex;
- Whether visiting Europe, Grand Cayman or staying in New York, she produced an artistic record of her experiences which constitutes an archive of the objective world around her and how it has interacted with her:
 - stamps from mail she received map out her social world;
 - till receipts from restaurants and shops and fragments of maps set out her itinerary;
 - labels from bottles of rum, cigars, fruits or pills are an inventory of her consumption;
- artists' works have frequently been archived, catalogued and ordered by later 'editors' or 'archivists': Koechel gave K numbers to Mozart's works, Wolfgang Schmieder assigned BWV numbers to each opus in Bach's oeuvre;
- Lasley's oeuvre is, however, self-consciously archival. Not only does it preserve experiences and events and, one assumes, try to classify and make sense of these, but the artist has created her own archival system for the purposes of ordering her work;
- this referencing system sets out the place of creation, followed by a Roman numeral denoting a week, and then an Arabic number which indicates the order in which the painting was created in relation to others of the same series. Thus, the inscription "Cayman, II, 14" indicates that the painting was produced during a stay in Cayman, during the second week of that stay and that it is the 14th painting in a series created during that week.
- the concept of order is, therefore, prominent in Lasley's work, but what precisely is the order that Lasley gives to the world in which she lived and what is the correct order that should be followed when hanging her paintings?

■ Lasley and (dis)order

- the works on display clearly reveal Lasley as an artist who disrupts conventional order, whether verbal or physical, as part of her archiving process:
 - she splits words into sounds: "Man go go", "Papa Ya Ya Ya", "Cay Man", "or kid", "Hi Biscus"; she delights in inventing words (e.g. "Angel" becomes "Legna") and plays on semantic order with near palindromes (e.g. "Roma" and "Amore");
 - architectural features are removed from their original context and become abstract shapes: a spiral from a wrought iron gate, an arch from a roof, a grid from a window.
 - an object is embedded in order to represent something else: the round sticker from a fruit replaces the letter "O", the letter "M" becomes a mountain, the fold of an envelope symbolizes a house, the foil wrapper of a chocolate is applied like gold leaf;
- once fragmented, a new transient order emerges almost accidentally from the juxtaposition of individual works, from the inherent correspondences and relationships between colours, forms and signs;
- curiously, for an artist who was consciously setting out to order her material and almost self-consciously assigning an order to what she created, it does not seem that Lasley hung her paintings from any series in any particular order, or left instructions as to the order in which they should be hung;
- Lasley's work is, therefore, one whose character and suggestiveness must change depending on how the paintings are hung; therefore, that order is different on each occasion a series is presented for view;

■ An ephemeral record, a random order

- perhaps the only way truly to capture the transient nature of human experience is to make the record itself temporary. And perhaps, the only way honestly to make order out of human experience is to incorporate into that order the disorder and randomness that ultimately underpins everything we do and everything that happens to us;
- perhaps Lasley shows that any order, however beautiful, is only ever arbitrary and only ever temporary;
- this makes Allison Lasley's work an archive which classifies a unique view of the world as well as an unique archive, an order which itself incorporates into its very fabric the element of change and randomness that it supposedly seeks to control.

L, I

Lasley, Allison



Past Exhibitions

2003 Northern Michigan University Museum
Marquette, Michigan

2003-2 Kathryn Markel Gallery
New York City, New York

2002-3 Kay Kimpton Contemporary Art
San Francisco, California

2001-0 Nightingale Gallery
Water Mill, New York

2001 Galerie Rudolf V
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1998 Wynn Kramarsky Gallery
One Person Show – "Rome Journals"
New York City, New York

1996 Bridgewater Lustberg Blumenfeld Gallery
New York City, New York

1996-5 Tiffany & Co. Solo Window Display
New York City, New York

1989 The Research Foundation: City University of NY
One Person Show – CUNY New York City

1986 Albany Institute of History & Art
Albany, New York

1983 – 87 Yancey Richardson Gallery
San Francisco and New York City