

Sculpted canvases explode with lavish color

By Bonita Bornstein
special writer

The Ron Gorchov exhibition of recent paintings at the Susanne Hilberry Gallery is a lavish explosion of color. Gorchov, who, since 1968, has applied his abstract color to shaped canvases, creates a spatial tension between painting and sculpture.

The canvases are constructed, stapled and mounted on specially made thick, wood curved stretchers, eliminating all corners in a shield-like shape.

Convex and concave, the canvases

move away from the wall openly displaying its structure, with no attempt to conceal the nails that bend the wood frame.

Likewise, the linen, particularly around the edges, remains exposed, like skin, revealing the painting's inner structure.

Thus, shape and space influence the bold patterning of color as it floats on the saddle-shaped canvas.

Blocks of color sometimes recede and sometimes are thrust forward, but always there is the illusion of space as colors interlock and intersect. The im-

ages, too, are illusionary as well as elusive.

GORCHOV'S TITLES convey this sense of ambiguity, an evocation of imagery, the paintings suggestions of landscape, places, or ideas.

"Laguna," for example, communicates an illusion of space. By the layering of color, the rounded shapes of the blues, greens and turquoise suggest a waterfall, rising and flowing and punctuated with a startling spray of a peachy orange.

And yet the title would have the viewer seek the structural arcade or

platform, or perhaps the open space of the courtyard.

"Scraggle" is quieter in color; blues and grays moving to aqua and pink with the darkened form of a mysterious figure on the right.

Here again, Gorchov's title refers to a Turkish estate, including the mosque and harem, but the painting only suggests, leaving illusion to the viewer.

These paintings show a change from the 1982 "Estate" whereby the canvas is covered in brick red with two well-defined structural shapes of deep gold. These elongated shapes face the same direction and likewise define the shape

of the canvas.

According to Paul Webster, of the gallery staff, Gorchov is now going back to a more painterly and complex composition associated with his work on a flat canvas.

Ron Gorchov in the '60s and '80s continues to be at the cutting-edge of colored space. His shaped canvases demonstrate how painting can be both painting and dimensional at the same time.

Gorchov's work hangs in the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The exhibition continues through June 22. Susanne Hilberry Gallery is at 555 South Woodward, Birmingham. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Kites inspire artist's paintings

By Corinne Abelt
staff writer

The sight of a kite propelled by a gentle wind current conveys a sense of freedom. The fact that it is tethered is forgotten in the enjoyment of its seemingly carefree movement in space.

As a child, artist Richard Smith, like many others, built kites — even a "very ambitious" dragon kite.

But, Smith, born in Letchworth, Hertfordshire, England in 1931, never really gave up his fascination with the form. As a much lauded, professional artist, he has been improvising on the kite theme since 1972.

out to make up a single work.

"The shape is the first decision," said Smith.

The painting is compatible with the geometric configurations of the work. And while there is a dimensional quality to these works in the forms being overlaid, to Smith they are paintings, related to banners which he also does and likes, but not particularly to sculpture.

Colors which vary from brilliant to somber, are always striking and sometimes jarring in their unusual combinations as well as the relationships and the mood which they create.

Smith has done many architectural installations, one of the largest of which is 33 pieces in a vaulted space for Mobil Corp. of Dallas.

His strictly two-dimensional paintings in this exhibit are done on paper mounted on canvases. They are a build-up of many layers of very thin washes with some suggestion of the figure against a grid, all with a sense of mystery about them.

tion of etchings by Smith and his appreciation for that form is immediately obvious.

He said, "I enjoy the printing process very much. I relate to it."

The particular beauty in these in Smith's ability with the minimal, along with the placement of line and use of color that is testament to his comment, "I am very sympathetic to a lot of aspects of Japanese art." He, like the Japanese, can say and do so much with out any evidence of clutter, a single extra mark of line or color.

They are so clearly conceived and thought through that the form and image stay serene. The kite idea seems part of all of his work, elements suspended in space, juxtaposed against a horizon line or floating in time.

Smith is a modest man who doesn't find it necessary to loudly proclaim his success and accomplishments which are internationally recognized. He now lives and works in New York City.

The gallery in West Bloomfield is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., until 8 p.m. Thursday.

SEVERAL OF his kite constructions, essentially two dimensional, a group of paintings and etchings are on display at I. Irving Feldman Galleries, 6917 Orchard Lake, West Bloomfield, through June. The pieces of canvas of the kite theme paintings are held by metal struts which frame and secure the shape. Strings are left at the corners as a kind of historical reference. Several of these arranged so the rectangular shapes overlap and project

IN ANOTHER gallery are a selection of etchings by Smith and his appreciation for that form is immediately obvious.

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Applications now are available for artists interested in the fifth annual Art on the River fine arts fair.

The fair will be held Aug. 10-11, 1985 at Flint Riverbank Park.

For an application, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Art on

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