

art review / *The faces of portraits*

By Jeanne Paris

We read faces as we would read clocks, to orient ourselves, to determine changes of mood and fancy. When we read descriptions of others, we find many complex traits to contend with, all of which make up the face.

Faces tell us, through every change and signal, how to receive the person behind the face; how to cope with the inner problems that barely surface. In an exhibit at Great Neck Library, Bayview Avenue and Grist Mill Lane, Shirley Gorelock proves her capabilities in reading and understanding faces. The exhibit, "Portraits: 1966-1979," on view through Jan. 24, features large oils, silverpoint drawings, sculpture and etchings.

Countless exhibits have proven this artist's technical prowess, but little has been said of the understanding of her subjects which, combined with her superb technique, make for compelling portraits.

A portraitist must be able to depict the complex harmony of a person, and a lengthy reading is required to make the whole person discernable. Gorlick can do this; she is able to expose the fragile architecture of a human character with great delicacy and tact.

The exhibit consists of portraits of friends, self-portraits and the very large portrait of painter Frida Kahlo, wife of Diego Rivera, created for the "Sisters Chapel." Gorelock fused her own style with that of Kahlo's, including the varied personal symbolic forms that have always been identified with Kahlo's work. She dressed her in native costume, with a background of large leaves of a Mexican shrub. Superimposed on this large figure is a small one of Kahlo in simple dress. It makes an imposing and regal entrance to the exhibit.

"The Barnetts" is a large, horizontal picture of a husband and wife seated on a corner sectional couch, each at a different angle. We sense an ease, a relaxation devoid of any ceremony, yet there is an intensity about both figures. The painting is filled with texture and color through the herringbone weave of the couch covering, the multi-colored and patterned pillows.

Gorelock did a series on her friends, since they have been seen several times. The new paintings of Lee and Ginny Benson are shown for the first time and their continued devotion to each other is touching and beautiful.

The bronze self-portrait and the four etchings of herself, done several years ago, are extraordinarily good. We see Gorelock in a variety of moods, but they are always identifiable.

Her silverpoint drawings of friends, particularly the one of two women's heads, one above the other, gives us the opportunity to judge the different expressions. This is a difficult medium, and the work is superb.

Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Inc. P.S. 1, 46-01 21st Street, Long Island City, on the second floor, known as the Center for the Experimental Arts, is showing through Jan. 27, "Cloister 11: Shelter!" a sculpture installation by Raquel Rabinovich, made of bronze tinted glass. The size of the work is 8-feet by 11-feet 13-feet.



'Ginny and Lee II' by Shirley Gorelock

Just completed, it is concerned with privacy and its contradictions. These issues are explored in the context of personal and private space in the environment. The boundaries are tentative, violated, transgressed. In this space, time is denied and visibility can be concealed.

Her work employs only straight linear forms, resembling corridors divided into sections. Using bronze tinted glass softens the severity of the hard straight lines. This is a most handsome piece. Rabinovich's work has been seen in many places. During the past few months, she had a major installation in the Sculpture Court of the Jewish Museum, besides a one-woman show at the Profile Gallery in Manhattan.

Glen Cove Public Library, Glen Cove Road, has a small but choice exhibit of photographs by Bert Freiwirth on show through Sunday. There are scenes of various countries he has visited, but those which seek our attention are nature's vignettes, such as "Skunk Cabbage" where form, color and subject make a delightful picture. "Shu Swamp" is one which, through content and balance, is unusual. "Après Monet" is a pool surrounded by flowers and plants, which looks as though it were painted rather than photographed.

"Untitled" shows a water scene full of reflections of what look like structural iron beams caught in the water.

"Night Show" is a brackish pool with much undergrowth and shrubs around it. The work shows much promise. Freiwirth is a romanticist with a vivid imagination.

Hofstra University Club, Hempstead Turnpike and California Avenue, Hempstead, has a small but eclectic exhibit of paintings by Lois diCosola through Jan. 6. These are freely painted action paintings with romantic overtones, all in abstract terms. The action controls the movement of the paintings, with a central form which moves up and out for the most part, yet acts as a device for restraint. In one, a gray and white motif creates the pivot from which many forms move. The controlling motif itself moves through blues, yellows and ochres.

Another painting is horizontal with a black free-form as the central pivot whose action controls the many flashes of colors, mainly whites, greens, blues. There is an organic relationship in this painting through a central division, which resembles a horizon, leaving the lower part in deep dark greys, reddish rusts and glimpses of true rich reds. Glimpses of blues may be seen through the colors. The upper part is an open sweep of many colors.

The gallery is open from 11:30 AM to

9 PM, weekdays, 11