

*Genievie* (2003), in which three distant fires leave trails of blue smoke slanting off into the sky, we think more about the weak November sunlight falling into a field than we do about human intervention in controlled brushfires set by farmers.

Some may find these paintings dull or depressing, but for others, Bogosian's darkness is as comforting as sleep.

—Margaret Hawkins

## Charles Thomas O'Neil

LINDA DURHAM  
CONTEMPORARY ART  
*Galisteo, New Mexico*

A few years ago, Charles Thomas O'Neil made orderly and restrained abstract paintings on metal that were filled with floating biomorphic forms and subtle references to landscape. His art-making process consisted of layering random marks that were sometimes completely obscured.

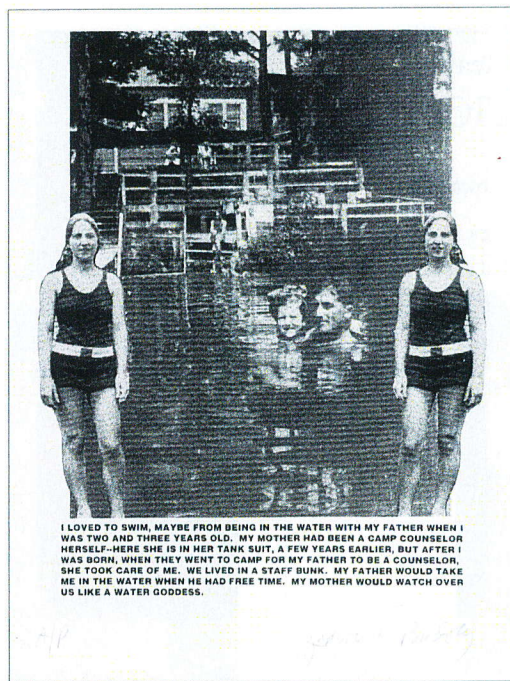
This exhibition focused on O'Neil's work from last year, a body of dynamic paintings that show the artist's progress. Spontaneous mark making, organic shapes, and an earth-tone palette remain O'Neil's stock in trade, but his imagery has evolved. This recent work had a wildness and clarity previously absent—or that had perhaps been hidden beneath veils of paint. O'Neil also showed a willingness here to be more expressive and to reveal many of the darker aspects of his unconscious, and this seems to be a step in the right direction; while his earlier, prettier paintings kept viewers at bay, these aimed for the marrow.

In a series of 35 oil-on-copper works, each measuring 10 by 10 inches, O'Neil paints everything from basic blocks of color to floral motifs to primitive shapes rendered in a childlike fashion, running the gamut from complete abstraction to a semblance of figuration. He plays with automatic writing, using thick, rough, angry swaths of color and powerful scratches that expose the underlying metal.

In this body of work, his shapes and his treatment of paint have become chaotic, and his vibrant and intuitively drawn forms interact closely with one another and seem to move beyond the borders of their square containers—a reflection perhaps of his recent move from expansive New Mexico to the dense, compact, forested landscape of New England.



Charles Thomas O'Neil,  
*Untitled*  
(*A Closer Look*),  
2003,  
oil on copper,  
34" x 34".  
Linda Durham  
Contemporary Art.



I LOVED TO SWIM, MAYBE FROM BEING IN THE WATER WITH MY FATHER WHEN I WAS TWO AND THREE YEARS OLD. MY MOTHER HAD BEEN A CAMP COUNSELOR HERSELF. HERE SHE IS IN HER TANK SUIT, A FEW YEARS EARLIER, BUT AFTER I WAS BORN, WHEN THEY WENT TO CAMP FOR MY FATHER TO BE A COUNSELOR, SHE TOOK CARE OF ME. WE LIVED IN A STAFF BUNK. MY FATHER WOULD TAKE ME IN THE WATER WHEN HE HAD FREE TIME. MY MOTHER WOULD WATCH OVER US LIKE A WATER GODDESS.

Judith K. Brodsky,  
*I loved to swim . . .*  
ca. 1999–2003,  
photoetching,  
13" x 10".  
Aljira: A Center for  
Contemporary Art.

—Dottie Indyke

## Judith K. Brodsky

ALJIRA: A CENTER FOR  
CONTEMPORARY ART  
*Newark, New Jersey*

In this exhibition of over 100 black-and-white photoetchings (all 1999–2003), Judith K. Brodsky recounted her Russian Jewish immigrant family's assimilation into American society. Brodsky created an engrossing minidrama that was moving, yet rendered refreshingly devoid of sentimentality through the inclusion of brusque yet revealing captions.

Leading the exhibition was a group of nearly life-size portraits of athlete-brothers, shirts off and laughing, suggestive of the Kennedys on the lawn at Hyannisport. But Brodsky situates these football players in their Jewish context, noting how they defeated Holy Cross while they were students at Brandeis University. She notes that a Brandeis teammate yelled, "My God is greater than your God," and mentions that "Ed gave his kidney to Sid," tantalizing us with the brothers' unfinished story.

Some images resembled typical family-album photos, while others looked like carefully crafted, almost seamless collages. (She makes the etchings from photos that she has digitally manipulated.) Either way, Brodsky's narrative transformed them into highly personal episodes rife with love and loss, success and tragedy. Beneath two photographs of her father-in-law from the 1920s—in one he sits smartly dressed in a wicker carriage, and in another he stands before an impressive house—we learn of his financial loss during the Depression, his wife's death, and his own later life, which was "sadder than it needed to be." The interweaving of historical events with trauma and achievement fascinated and was resonant, bringing viewers into Brodsky's family and simultaneously triggering personal reflection.

*I loved to swim . . .* shows a photo of the artist as an infant swimming in a lake with her father. Superimposed on the photo are duplicate images of her mother, who appears to stand on either side of the lake like a sentry. The caption explains that the family spent the summer at a camp where Brodsky's father worked as a counselor. In collagelike works like this, Brodsky, who is a professor of art at Rutgers University and founder of the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper, showed her creativity and strength as a printmaker.

—Jennifer Ball