ARTISTS AT BENNINGTON
VISUAL ARTS FACULTY 1932 - 1976
Since its inception, Bennington College has maintained an invaluable art exhibition program. With the recent completion of The Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery, the possibilities for broadening the range of significant art shown at Bennington become even greater.

Bringing vital, challenging, and historic exhibitions to the College instructs and exposes students, faculty, and the community at large to the continuum of artistic traditions and ferment usually centered in the larger cities. Seeing art of high quality is the first stimulus to its creation.

Many who have already visited Usdan Gallery have remarked on its excellent exhibition facilities as being unparalleled outside a major museum setting. To those who have yet to experience the gallery's luminous spaciousness, this dedication exhibition offers a grand opportunity. And to all those most involved in the planning, funding, and completion of Usdan Gallery, thanks and congratulations are due.
A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

In the fall of 1957 Alexander Doerner died while he was on sabbatical in Naples. I was invited to more or less take his place. At my insistence and with the help of Paul Feeley I convinced Bill Fels that part of my job would be to organize and direct art exhibitions for the College and that the New Gallery, as we called it, was to be in the Carriage Barn. Painting the interior pure white was part of the hard-won agreement and Fels had to do some maneuvering with the older benefactors of the college to let me do it. He also gave me the grand sum of $600 to put on exhibitions (later increased to another grand sum, about $1,000 a year to pay for six shows plus the senior exhibition). I found Kenneth Lester, who went to New York and brought back the Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, and Morris Louis shows, as well as the Herbert Ferber sculpture show and the Surrealism show.

The catalogues were all done by another local and loyal friend, Carl Farnham of South Shaftsbury with whom I worked out a kind of consistent style based on the simplest and cheapest.

The number of "firsts" we were able to bring off in the New Gallery during those years gave us an international reputation. But all of this could not have been either accomplished or meaningful without the extraordinary coherence of the art faculty of the period. I came to Bennington in the spring of 1958, at the same time Tony Smith did. That spring we started out with Feeley, Smith, Herta and Simon Maselio, George Holt and Vinnie Longo (who had come the previous fall). Later Lyman Kipp and Stanley Rosen joined the art faculty. In all my experience I have never known a faculty which worked together more amiably and more intensely. This is not to say that our discussions and our manners were always based in benignity. But what motivated us, I think, was the struggle to recognize and to implement each other's basic passion for the subject we were teaching. Both Feeley and Tony Smith were experienced teachers and both were great humanists...men of broad self-acquired knowledge. And both were artists through and through. Our art faculty meetings, formal and informal, were really seminars, not about methodology, but about the meaning of what we were doing. It was Smith, I recall, who made the important distinction between training and education, thus confirming the rightness of our position on art within the liberal arts context. It eliminated the art-school approach and made Hymans' and Wohous' courses as relevant to our work as to their own disciplines. Indeed the whole college was as much a part of art as art was a part of it.

I know one thing: it was an extraordinary moment in Bennington's history, as members of the other faculties recognized then, and have said since. But like all good things it was so literally organic that when some of us drifted away, it changed. Feeley stayed. He went on as before trying to build and to continue the great tradition he had carried as his personal banner for the College since the early 1940's and until his death in 1966. It was this kind of tradition that I became particularly aware of during a meeting of the art faculty at another college when, after three hours of wandering discussion on how to educate students, Tony Smith leaned over to me and said, "but first you have to educate the faculty."

E. C. GOSSEN
ART AT BENNINGTON

While my knowledge of Bennington's early years is limited to a few written accounts and hearsay, it would seem that the art division has had three fairly clearly marked periods of development. The first period was distinguished by the eclecticism that marked so much of American taste in art in the '30s and '40s. This was manifested, however, in what the records indicate was an extraordinary series of diverse but unusually discriminating exhibitions where one finds names such as Albers and Juan Gris but also Delacroix and Benozzo Gozzoli. The impression is one of great urbanity that probably reflected both the social constitution of the College and its progressive humanism. Not incidentally, the divisional structure of the school was not as developed as it is now and art simply received another kind of stress, that of implementing an educational ideal. But it is also fortunate that such good taste in general seemed to prevail because it was not easy in the '30s and '40s to determine where the force of history and taste in the visual arts was.

The options were clearer and a choice became necessary during the next phase which is largely dominated by the personality of Paul Feeley, for whom the new art center is named. Feeley, in concert with faculty members such as Tony Smith and Gene Goossen (I am referring to the late '50s), committed the art division to a more ideologically specific orientation, as a result of which Bennington's art division became synonymous with what has since come to be known as "advanced" art. It was during the Feeley era that Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman were given their first retrospectives, that Clement Greenberg's association with the college commenced, that artists such as Jules Olitski, Tony Caro, Tony Smith and historian-critic Gene Goossen came here to teach. It was the era when, in fact, "The Green Mountain Boys," as Alan Solomon called them, referred to the prominent artists who either taught at the College or came to be linked to it by association. These include David Smith and Ken Noland; Noland later taught here also.

The thing is that after World War II art departments everywhere felt the same historical pressures, but at Bennington, the conviction of Paul Feeley ultimately prevailing, the departmental reaction was probably more compact and discriminating — not to say exclusive — than at any other school in the country that I am aware of. I know a number of second generation abstract expressionists came out of the University of Iowa around 1950, but perhaps the most singular artist of that generation, Helen Frankenthaler, emerged from Bennington in 1949.

The art division is no longer dominated by a single personality nor is it any longer as certain of its ideological options. To make the kind of decision in the '70s that art schools made in the '50s would be to commit the art division to isolation on the one hand, novelty on the other. There are many art schools that may seem more "advanced" than Bennington's art division is right now, but then the art division has chosen to remain a school, not to become an aesthetic cafeteria.

Thus, while the sentiment is customary, it is actually accurate on this occasion to say that the new art center marks a new era in art at Bennington, an era that reflects both the increasing interest in the arts and the profound cultural changes that that proliferating awareness signifies. Implicit in this concatenation of physical and social enterprises is the obligation to maintain the standards with which Bennington has come to be identified while recognizing the altered conditions of taste.

Art divisions are, as even this capsule "history" indicates, not the most peaceful of places any more than higher education is a "retreat." Ideals are partisan affairs and Bennington has not been spared the ironies their implementation generates. If there have been times in recent years when it seemed that everyone despised, there have also been times when everyone has been inspired. In any event, the possibility of inspiration exists here as in few other places. I think the record — and the new art center is part of the record — backs us up on that.

SIDNEY TILLIM
PAT ADAMS
"Close Talk", 1976
80" x 40"
oil, isobutyl methacrylate,
wax/linen
lent by Zabriskie Gallery, N.Y.

FRANCES BARTH
"Or Of", 1975
6'6" x 12'11"
acrylic/canvas
(Diptych – 2 panels)
lent by Susan Caldwell Gallery, N.Y.
ANTHONY CARO
"Ordnance", 1971
51" x 76" x 143"
steel rusted & varnished
lent by Andre Emmerich Gallery, N.Y.

ROBERT CRONIN
"Tarrative I", 1971
18½" h x 36" l x 11" d
reed and string
lent by Zabriskie Gallery, N.Y.
PAUL FEELEY
"Deneb el Bola", 1965
36" x 36" x 36"
enamel on wood
lent by Andre Emmerich Gallery, N.Y.

JANE FORD
"Pentimento"
10" x 6"
stoneware with lustres
lent by the artist
RICHARD HAAS
"Flatiron Building", 1973
41" x 18"
etching; edition of 60
lent by Brooke Alexander Gallery, N.Y.

CAROL HAEGER
"Mac Duff", 1976
92" x 63"
oil on canvas
lent by the artist
L. BROWER HATCHER
"Wide Limit", 1974
6'3" x 5'7" x 17'10"
steel
lent by Andre Emmerich, N.Y.

SOPHIA HEALY
"Fowles in the Frith", 1976
103" x 77" acrylic/canvas
lent by the artist
STEFAN HIRSCH
"Excavation", 1932
44" x 38"
oil/canvas
lent by Mrs. Stephan Hirsch

GEORGE HOLT
30" x 24"
collage, lent by the artist
RALPH HUMPHREY
"Victory", 1959
80" x 70"
Oil/canvas
Lent by Bennington College

LYMAN KIPP
"Red Wing", 1974
108" x 115" x 78"
Painted aluminum
Lent by the artist
KARL KNATHS
"Beethoven Book", 1959
20" x 48"
oil/ canvas
lent by Paul Rosenberg Gallery, N.Y.

ROGER LOFT
"Nearing Merv"
75" x 67"
oil, acrylic/ canvas
lent by the artist
VINCENT LONGO
"E19", 1973
8' x 8'
acrylic/canvas
lent by the artist

HERTA MOELSIO
"Shire Horse"
18" h
Red clay
lent by the artist
SIMON MOSELSIO
"Bird"
36" h
polished bronze
lent by Mrs. Simon Moselsio

KENNETH NOLAND
"Repand", 1960
6' x 6'
magna/canvas
lent by the artist
JULES OLITSKI
“Yarmuk Wall – 4”, 1975
75” x 44”
acrylic/canvas
lent by Knoedler Contemporary Art, N.Y.

EDWIN AVERY PARK
“Boats on the Sand”
14” x 18”
oil/canvas
lent by the artist
JOEL PERLMAN
"Thunder", 1975
7' x 3' x 5'
painted steel
lent by Andre Emmerich Gallery, N.Y.

LARRY POONS
"Getting Straight", 1975
108 1/2" x 69"
acrylic/canvas
lent by Knoedler Contemporary Art, N.Y.
AUSTIN PURVES JR.
"Head of St. Joseph" sketch for mosaics of East Apse in Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception lent by the artist

NEIL RAPPAPORT
"Lonnie and Etta Loveland, 51st Anniversary, January 31, 1975, Pawlet, Vermont" 9" x 12" lent by the artist
ELSA ROGO
"Tortilla Maker", 1937
30" x 38 1/2"
Oil/canvas
lent by the artist

STANLEY ROSEN
Untitled
12" x 10 3/4"
ceramic
lent by the artist
DANIEL SHAPIRO
"Sacramento Valley Seascape XVIII", 1975
24" x 24"
Oil, acrylic / canvas
Lent by the artist

CHARLES W. SMITH
"Moving Shapes"
12" x 17"
Acrylic / paper
Lent by the artist
TONY SMITH
"Duck", ca. 1962
painted aluminum
lent by Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Longo

PETER STROUD
"Two Across the Center", 1971
72" x 72"
acrylic/canvas
lent by the artist
SIDNEY TILLIM
"The Circumcision of Abraham", 1975
19" x 25"
charcoal on brick colored charcoal paper
lent by Noah Goldowsky Gallery, N.Y.

MICHAEL TODD
"Screen II", 1973
7' H
painted steel
lent by Zabriskie Gallery, N.Y.
JANE WASEY
"Sea Form I"
36" L
black granite
lent by Kraushaar Galleries, N.Y.

ROGER WILLIAMS
Untitled
6'8" x 4'2" x 5'
steel lent by Andre Emmerich Gallery, N.Y.
ISAAC WITKIN
"Chickasaw", 1972
11' L x 3'6" H x 7'6" D
steel
lent by Marlborough Galleries, N.Y.

PHILIP WOFFORD
"Ozark", 1975
8' x 11"
acrylic/canvas
lent by the artist
**ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES**


GEORGE A. C. HOLT: BSc in architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1930; Royal Military College of Canada, 1921-25; Taught at Boston Center for Adult Education, 1937-1938, instructor, Harvard Summer School, 1940, 1941; assistant in Department of Fine Arts to Edward W. Forbes, Harvard University, 1938-1941; Byzantine Institute of America, Istanbul, summers 1938 and 1939; Bennington College, 1941-68. Co-founder with other artists of “The Atelier,” Montreal; co-founder and member of the staff of the Painters’ Workshop, Boston.


