



Raymond Duchamp-Villon, *Torso of a Young Man*, 1910/68, bronze, 21½" high. Francis M. Naumann Fine Art.

printmaker whose engravings of Rouen filled their home. The eldest son, Gaston (1875–1963), abandoned law studies to take up art, renaming himself Jacques Villon after the medieval poet. The exhibition revealed his development from an illustrator, with a preparatory drawing for a print of a mulatto model, *Renée de Trois Quart* (1911), to a Cubist painter, with *Monsieur D. Lisant* (1913). Artists of the Cubist and Futurist generations hung out in his studio, and those currents are evident in Villon's oil painting *Le jardin de l'Évêché à Castre* (1954), a cubistic rendering in gold, blue, and green of a formal garden seen from above.

The second brother, Raymond (1876–1918), who first studied medicine, assumed the name Raymond Duchamp-Villon. His sculptures are highly individualistic. *Portrait of Yvonne* (1909) is a classic bust, whereas *Les Amants* (1913) is a powerful wall relief, first sculpted in plaster and in 1966 cast in bronze. Another formidable bronze, *Torso of a Young*

*Man* (1910–1968), according to dealer Francis Naumann, was modeled on Marcel Duchamp. Raymond Duchamp-Villon died in World War I.

Marcel (1887–1968) was represented here through a diverse array of work, from drawings to ready-mades, including a torn-paper self-portrait in profile (1953). His output is summed up in his famous *Boîte-en-Valise* (1961), with its tiny reproductions of his work.

Suzanne (1889–1963) married painter Jean Crotti, and with him she made work that took Dada further into a movement called Tabu Dada. Her paintings here ranged stylistically from a Betty Boop-like self-portrait to a caricature of Marcel as a fox to lyrical watercolor landscapes and an intense abstract painting.

This exhibition, inspired by ones Marcel organized at the Rose Fried Gallery in New York, underscored the artistic interaction among the siblings, showing the many portraits they made of one another.

—Charles Ruas

## Brett Bigbee and Neil Welliver

### Alexandre

Here were two very different exhibitions, Brett Bigbee's focusing on portraiture and interiors and Neil Welliver's immersed in nature and landscapes.



Neil Welliver, *Islands Allagash*, 1990, woodcut on Kizuki Nishinouchi, 31" x 32". Alexandre.

Bigbee paints with gentleness and an infinite attention to detail. In the two portraits here, *Joe (Self-Portrait)*, 1994–99, of the artist holding his infant son, and *Ann with Plant* (1990–91), of his wife depicted nude on a chair with a white cloth, the subjects gaze directly out from the canvas, their vulnerability palpable. Sitting on the edge of a table, shirtless, the artist holds his baby in one arm while his other arm rests on the table with an open hand. This reveals a great deal about the artist as a young father: his pride and perhaps concern. A window behind him with a view to the sea is reminiscent of 15th-century Italian portraits. A similarly quiet mood pervades his wife's portrait. Her pale skin is enhanced by the colors of the sofa. Bigbee's perspective allows his subjects to stand outside of time and remain fixed in memory.

In the front room, nature came alive in Neil Welliver's powerful works on paper and watercolors of the Maine landscape. Known for his enormous paintings of northern New England woods, the artist, who died in 2005, revealed himself equally accomplished in other mediums. *Islands Allagash* (1990), a woodcut on Kizuki Nishinouchi, is a marvelous depiction in shades of blue of lonely islands under a full moon and a sky filled with stars. The islands float in a white sea with pine trees sprouting from their rocky banks. With an almost childlike simplicity, the artist draws the waves as a series of continuous curves, broken only by the path of the moon on the water and the squiggly reflections of the pines.

Although all of Welliver's works here conveyed nature's rough beauty, the one that was most compelling was his modest graphite-on-paper sketch *Untitled (Night Sky)*, 1981. In this work, puffy clouds hang over rolling hills, and there is little foliage except for some pines. With few lines, he celebrates the rhythm of the clouds dancing above the quiet land.

—Valerie Gladstone

## Robert Arneson

### Allan Stone

Aptly titled "Playing Dirty," this bawdy exhibition of the late Robert Arneson's small early works provided ample evidence of the



Robert Arneson, *Spiked Tea*, 1969, glazed ceramic with luster, 13" x 4" x 10½". Allan Stone.

earthy, sardonic humor that this pioneering Bay Area Funk artist injected into his stoneware vessels. Infusing the raw irregularity of traditional Japanese tea-ceremony utensils with the zany smut of *MAD* magazine, Arneson reveled in jokes rhyming bodily openings with spigots designed for transferring liquids from one container to another, often using the unexpected surfaces of glazing and firing to mirror the physical functions evoked. The blatantly sexual *Untitled Ceramic (with Red Orifice)*, 1964, for example, resembles a squatting frog and is topped with a vaginal slit adorned with a splotchy, turquoise-flecked maroon glaze.

Refined crudity also characterizes four luster-glazed riffs on pewter teapots, all made in 1969. In *Golden Rod*, a fully erect penis emerges from a thatch of serpent-like pubic hair, forming a spout from which liquids can emerge. Resting on eight little glazed legs beautifully dappled in turquoise and pale green, the subtler *Spiked Tea* has a shape like a deflating swollen sneaker. *Tea Is a Beverage Made from the Dried Leaves of the Thea Sinensis Plant* sprouts multiple nozzles that bring to mind a cartoon version of a space creature bristling with tentacles. Later in his career, Arneson lost interest in the chemical transformations of firing and glaze and began to sculpt illustrative, caricatured

self-portraits and depictions of friends and famous artists. The beginning of his transition from classical pottery vessels to the uproariously nasty works that made his name—most notably a series of life-size ceramic toilets not on view—was captured by this show. These interesting hybrids of studio pottery and sexual representation were an unusual pleasure to behold.

—Elisabeth Kley

## 'The Memory of White'

Leonard Hutton

The initial inspiration for this illuminating show of white art derived from the dealer's first impressions of the stark emptiness of the new gallery that this exhibition inaugurated. The strange middle ground between the high art of the past and the banality of a painted plaster wall is pre-



Pier Paolo Calzolari, *Untitled (Senza Titolo)*, 1979, salt, lead, iron plate, and oil lamp, 82" x 34¼" x 3". Leonard Hutton.

cisely the realm in which many of these artists have worked.

The approaches to this territory varied greatly. The efforts of the best-known artists, including Lucio Fontana, represented by *Concetto Spaziale* (1968), a tasteful disk of white Rosenthal ceramic through which a thumb appears to have been poked, and Piero Manzoni, whose *Achrome* (1958) suggests nothing so much as wet laundry, looked somewhat too modest. By contrast, the *arte povera* artists made a strong impression, with Pier Paolo Calzolari in particular emerging as a fascinating and still somewhat underrated artist.

Unlike Fontana and Manzoni, Calzolari was able to charge his white with substance and meaning, rather than having it remain simply a concept. This was most obvious in a standout work, the artist's seven-foot-tall wall sculpture *Untitled (Senza Titolo)*, 1979. Here the white is a striated rectangular panel of crystallized salt, which contrasts with a similarly striated lead panel of not quite the same size or shape. The surface of the salt is gradually discolored by smoke from an oil lamp attached to its frame. It is a work of only three elements, but despite its simplicity, the sculpture yields much to think about. The ephemeral whiteness is rendered material; it is then equated with the weight of lead by means of the flame's heat as well as with the fugitive nature of smoke floating in the air.

Art that sits so close to the edge of visual perception, as did much of this work, requires a good deal of sensitivity and intelligence if it is not to come off as trite. Calzolari demonstrated this in the best possible way. —Robert Ayers

## UP NOW

### John Outterbridge

MoMA PS1  
Through March 11  
Tilton Gallery

John Outterbridge—artist, civil rights activist, and director of the Watts Towers Arts Center from 1975 to 1992—was a central figure during the formative years of the Los Angeles black art community. His work is featured prominently in the exhibition "Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980," a standout among last fall's Pacific Standard Time and now at PS1, where it looks terrific.