

52 creates a system both corporeal and logical that mirrors back our human condition. The necessity of circulation also courses through three other works, *Table Lands (Mesa)*, *Mixing Memory and Desire*, and *Statuesque*, water sculptures that explore the processes of geological erosion, mnemonic apprehension, and erotic regeneration respectively.

These branching systems are further charted through computer-generated drawings. Suggestive of cellular mitosis, a single line keeps dividing and forking until the whole 40-inch square of the paper is filled in with a sprawling dendritic web. At this technosomatic juncture, we witness the human imagination being hard-wired into a neurological diagram in which science and art intersect. In *Scroll Version*, the lines presumably proliferate into the rolled-up ends of an eight-foot sheet, ironically contextualizing the insidious nature of Western expansion within a traditionally Eastern form.

Stone's drawings suggest maze-like structures that harken back to Greek myths that lure us Minotaur-like into the artist's sculptural clutches. In *Hanging Mazes (Ariadne's Way)*, a gold cord is threaded through nine dictionary-sized boxed mazes covered with glass, which in turn are suspended from Shaker-styled wood pegs that run along opposite walls, inviting not only our eyes but our bodies to traverse the gallery space. At times austere, even ascetic, Stone's mazes hint at a kind of Minimalist dead-end game that culminates in *Head Maze*, the exhibition's show stopper. This "walk-in maze" is hung upside down from the ceiling at head-level so that only one's head is actually inside the wood maze, thus making literal the mind/body split even as one navigates through this masterful work of art back into the real world.

*Timothy Liu is a poet who lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.*

**Bruce Pearson**

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts  
 31 Mercer St., 10013  
 212/226-3232

Bruce Pearson's exhibition of jewel-bright, acrylic-on-carved-Styrofoam paintings offer a virtuoso display of visionary craftsmanship. Pearson has achieved the kind of celebratory quantum mass possible when process fuses seamlessly to sensibility.

The paintings lit up the two gallery rooms with the deeply structured disorder of hallucinatory bonfires. There was a giddy air to the space, an exhalation of pleasure; pleasure for the viewer to be sure, but more interestingly, a palpable sense of delight emanating from the other side of the paintings, from the artist's side.

The pieces seemed to radiate the fine scent of sweat in their edgy sensuality. The plywood foundations of the paintings lay beneath abstract Styrofoam carvings, which

are painted over in rich, thick agglutinations of color. Faceted sections of the paintings extrude like concave mesas from a surface comprised of a complex series of canals and valleys. Pearson left the bottom sides of a few works unfinished; a stoop and a peek provides a backstage glimpse at his quotidian materials and emphasizes the magic of his alchemy.

Pearson's method was somewhat explicated by the four gouache studies in the exhibition, which correspond by title and design with several of the paintings. The color fields in the gouaches are separated by swooping, cross-cutting boundary lines, with pigment dropped neatly but somewhat arbitrarily into place. The paintings follow a similar organization; the added complication of the raised and carved surfaces simply elaborates a process similar to the doodles one might have idly pursued during junior-high-school math class.

**Bruce Pearson**

*No No No . . .*, 1998. Oil and acrylic on Styrofoam, 48" x 48".  
 Photo by Zindman/Fremont. courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.



Much has been made of Pearson's aesthetic debt to Op art and of the conceptual origin of his imagery in Pop culture-inspired words and phrases. Certainly his veiling system, chopping and reorganizing subject and ground, is informed by such particulars. But beyond providing a docent-level insight—"Look, you can see . . . No. No. No, right there!"—the knowledge of Pearson's point of departure reveals little of his deeper interest in the preverbal tensions between wild urge and deeply considered resolution. It seems he is seeking to resolve the paradoxical symbiosis of organization and freedom by revealing the release gained when perfect control is attained.

The longer one stares into Pearson's mandalas the more likely one is to fall into them. The master who produced them fell in long ago. The rigorous lifetime of a seemingly self-imposed apprenticeship has yielded the artist a transporting, exhilarating freedom of movement.

*Matt Freedman is a sculptor and writer living in Brooklyn, New York.*