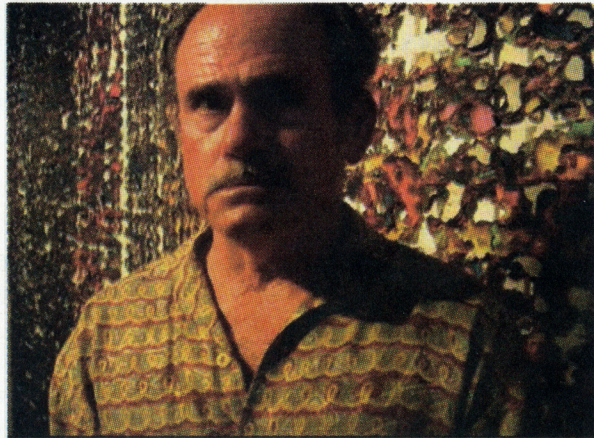


Ampersand: A Conversation with Coy Howard

by: Darrin Little

Jay McCafferty at Warschaw Gallery
July 18-September 19, 2009

Jay McCafferty has grid-themed paper works up at Warschaw Gallery in San Pedro right now. The gallery, for the uninitiated, turns out to be the foyer of a commercial building owned by Morris Warschaw, and is situated at the western edge of the Arts District at the corner of Pacific and 6th.



Artist, Jay McCafferty standing next to his exhibit, Ampersand at the Warschaw Gallery.

This foyer-turned-gallery buzzes with the frequent crisscrossing of visitors, like passengers in an airport terminal, and, as such, calibrates all the artworks hung in its space along lines of social movement and arrival/departure directives. It makes a kind of conceptual sense to stop here and contemplate a grid on a wall; sort of in the nuts-and-bolts sense it makes to measure a Thomas Guide page against the actual terrain.

McCafferty's work orientates viewers with the familiar language of fine art: manipulated graph paper colored, burnt, collaged and either thumbtacked directly to the wall or else sandwiched between small sheets of glass framed in wood and gold-leaf covering. There's no confusing the two bodies of work here, *Ampersand* and *Flow Series*, with ubiquitous commercial signage or city recycling mantras. This is Art. *Ampersand* consists of two quite large wall pieces, vertically segmented in varying widths, that are tacked directly to both the east and west walls of the foyer. These delicate, labor-intensive collaged forms bracket viewers traveling along the foyer's north/south axis in a kind of spontaneous textural interruption, a sudden invitation to stop walking and look.

Flow Series compliments the larger murals with smaller pieces that are all individually framed, but mostly hung in pairs, triptychs, and foursomes throughout those areas of the space not occupied by *Ampersand*. To help clarify the look and feel of

Flow Series, imagine cutting a fishing net into a 16" square piece and sandwiching it between two sheets of glass; now mentally turn the net into thin paper that's been meticulously cut out to mimic netting, and you approach the basic aesthetic. There's a kind of topographical metaphor in the dozen or so framed examples, an emotional tracing of imagined surface streets on a map that suddenly refract off the grid, or else snake into a cerebral wrinkle (W. 5th Street becoming Canon, then Arcadia, then Bellmarin Drive). With *Flow Series*, it's almost like McCafferty is trying to artistically remember (and poetically embellish) a street map of San Pedro.

Jay McCafferty, a long-standing professor of Art Appreciation and Ceramics at Harbor College, was born here in San Pedro, and has lived for over 30 years in a house designed by Coy Howard, architect and SCI-Arc faculty member in Los Angeles. This is the significance of the show's title: *Ampersand: A*

Conversation With Coy Howard. This house, like McCafferty's work, is somewhat similar and yet fundamentally unlike anything in its vicinity. A four-story box sheathed in galvanized metal with modest complications, McCafferty's house is surrounded on three sides by a prominent gray brick wall of alternating proportions and rough-cut surfacing. This perimeter wall, like all brick walls, points to grid construction. But the material character of Coy Howard's wall also points to Medieval stone posturing, a residential message of fortified safety and resolve. Recently, Coy and Jay collaborated on renovations for the house, each miming the other's language. In this creative exchange, two nouns found a conjunction: Coy's wall AND Jay's drawings. McCafferty, through his show's titling, seems to be saying, "Art always credits two people."

Postscript: Art, for better or worse, must also feel the shadow of current events. The day I saw McCafferty's show (August 19), a deadly series of terrorist bombings in Baghdad occurred at the foreign and finance ministries near the Green Zone. An *L.A. Times* inside page photograph showed the 11-story Foreign Ministry building still standing, but badly shaken and scarred. In this building's traumatized front façade, I traced out the grid form I'd experienced at McCafferty's show. I finished the article and turned to look at the photographs I'd taken of the *Ampersand* murals; I noticed the way the burnt collage patterns mimicked the pockmarked scarring of mortar shells and high-caliber bullets. **RL**

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Funk in LB

thought. Let others know that you are here to be heard and notice that I too stomp the terra with you, my brothers and sisters. "That song has been my saving grace; it is God's way of looking after me, I guess."

In the late sixties and seventies music became a very accessible and mainstream way to carry your ideas across political/racial lines. The time had come for the beginning of a new American dream to take hold; it expressed itself in the music of individuals like Charles Wright.

He said about the upcoming Funk Festival, "We are going to get out and get funky." Out of the members of the 103rd Street Band that recorded back in the sixties, "only myself and the bass player are from the original group." The band does not go out and play as often they as used to, Saturday's show is going to be a special performance. Mr. Wright and the 103rd Street Band will be hitting the stage approximately at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Wright has a new doo-wop inspired record, *My Love Affair With Doo-Wop*. He told *Random Lengths News*, "I started my musical career doing doo-wop, we had been using a lot of electric piano and I wasn't singing as much. I wanted to get back to where I started." Upon listening to *My Affair with Doo-Wop*, one will find one's mind drifting into music that was made by human beings rather than machines. Evoking cruising on Saturdays and spooning in the back seat at the drive-in, a simpler time. His other recent work is an excellent CD, *Charles, Finally got it Wright*, you can find his music at www.expressyourself.net

The Meters' Experience, featuring Leo Nocentelli, represents the crescent city funk connection in this all-day affair. Nocentelli is known for his scratchy soulful solos as much as his hard rocking fret shedding. He brings to the funk fest the spirit of a group who were never popularly

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Meet the Browns

change with the seasons, so be sure to ask for the specials.

Cooking classes are another family tradition in the Brown tribe, and Chef Christine does not disappoint. Autumn Harvest in Italy will be held on Sunday, September 13, with Southeast Asia in October and Holiday *Hors d'Oeuvre* just in time for the holiday party season in November. Christine is leading a London Theatre and Country Manor Tour through England, September 17-25 which promises to hit leading London restaurants as well.

James Brown is the baby of the family, with five elder female siblings, which could be a blessing or a curse. Patricia Brown believed in true equality in the group, so James learned to cook and sew along with the girls. This preparation for life has given James an open attitude, ready for anything. "He went from altar boy at St. John Fisher to brewery owner in downtown San Pedro" said Patricia. James attended UCLA and is still a stalwart Bruins supporter. He planned to attend law school, but a job buying

recognized for what a truly great band that they were. The music of the Meters is heard in groups like the Neville Brothers; Art Neville took "People Say" and "Hey Pocky Way" to the Neville Brothers. Expect to hear other classics like "Cissy Strut" and "Look Ka Py-Py".

Funk is feeling, as much as it is musical idiom, with very edgy polyrhythms that were a stark contrast to the softer pop-ish R&B of the late sixties. Jumping off from James Brown to Jimi Hendrix then to George Clinton, it was the attack of the phrasing. It was the soundtrack of the street, where music has a strutting cadence. Funk is the most sampled idiom in music, finding its way into today's R&B. The practice goes back to Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five, who took those beats and made a new musical background for the break dancing hip hoppers and more importantly, socially relevant rap. Like the much later style of smooth jazz, that has embraced mixed genres and made a whole, the Funk is just plain fun!

Other performers who will be playing from 12:00pm on are Breakestra, Delta Nove, Danny Bedrosian and the Secret Army, featuring members of Funkadelic, Babystone, and OO Soul.

There will be a pre-festival kick off with Trulio Disgracias 8/28/2009, 9:00 PM at Blue Cafe, 210 Promenade, Long Beach, CA, 90802. Cost: \$10 advance, \$12 at door.

On Saturday 8/29/2009 12:00 p.m. the Long Beach Funk Festival kicks off in downtown Long Beach. It is free, all day long and into the night, come and get your free funk!

When the music ends at midnight outdoors, come on by the Blue Cafe for the official Long Beach Funk Fest after party and jam session, hosted by Delta Nove to close out this amazing event! 210 Promenade, Long Beach, CA 90802. Cost is \$8.00.

This event is part of SAM (Summer and Music) www.summerandmusic.com, an exciting series of free concerts in and around downtown Long Beach all summer long, and is sponsored by the DLBA (Downtown Long Beach Associates) RDA (Long Beach Redevelopment Agency) and the Arts Council for Long Beach. **RL**

brewery equipment from the Czech Republic turned him on to brewing top quality beer.

"He is really an entrepreneur at heart" said Patricia." I don't see him in an office wearing a suit." Brown lives an enviable life, living almost over the store with a "75 yard commute" he says referring to his cozy loft at the Centre Street Lofts. San Pedro Brewing Company is a regular gold medal winner for its artisan beer, brewed on site on 6th Street. The Brewing Company is an integral part of the downtown San Pedro scene.

James and Christine go about the restaurant business with vastly different menus, locations, atmosphere and clientele, but with similar attitudes on giving back to the community. Brother and sister are both involved in fundraising efforts to benefit non-profit organizations around the area. Their mother takes great pride in their accomplishments. "They have taken what they learned in the kitchen far beyond what I ever expected" said Patricia, still slightly amazed at the power of making pan-cakes.

Restaurant Christine 24530 Hawthorne Blvd. Torrance (310) 373-1952.

San Pedro Brewing Company 331 W.6th Street San Pedro (310) 831-5663. **RL**

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For more information and discount admission coupons log onto www.lobsterfest.com

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