

REVIEW/ART

Abstract art featuring nature at Montserrat

NATURE TRANSFORMED

At the Gallery of Montserrat College of Art, Dunham Road, Beverly. Open most evenings in conjunction with the Music Theatre, as well as 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

By Elisabeth Clark

Cape Ann is known for its physical beauty, a reason so many artists have located there, gathering inspiration from the shores, woods, wildlife, marshes and sea. We speak proudly of Winslow Homer and Fitz Hugh Lane, among others, and their artistic responses to living in this area.

The new show at Montserrat Gallery carries on this tradition of love of nature. But there is nary a sea gull or tree to be seen on these walls. Four artists present their abstract art with nature the theme that pulls the works together. There is a good balance of poignancy, wonder, and lightheartedness here, a range for the emotions. Bring to the show all of your knowledge and feelings about flowers, shells and fossils, birds and animals, air, light and beauty, and let these pictures:

tell you what they know.

The organic, pleated sculptures of Carol Seitchik are wall-hung, metallic-like, asking to be touched. Parts come out from the wall and wrap around space, making openings that glitter slightly. You want to put your hand inside the enclosed space to feel what's there. They suggest crustacean fossils, leftover pieces of sea creatures, but observed together along the wall, the curves and pleats and wrinkles seem to dance. Take time with these and see how they make you feel.

Nan Tull's oil/wax paintings come at you like a squared-off garden in the rain, at first. Strongly colored triangular shapes like flower-bells move across the canvas amid thin, grid-like threads of painted lines. The lines change shape and color, and vibrate, almost like strings of musical instruments, from their contact with the flower shapes. Are they imprisoned there? Or is it just an expression of the delicacy and strength of flowers?

Ruth Fields' work is dry pigment, wax and pastel; strong blacks scumble on stark white paper with much movement. There is some other bright color, but the tossing, flapping blacks predominate, turning back in on themselves, over and over. Each picture is self-contained, not touching the edge of the paper or reaching out to it, but keeping closed in, singular and

complete. They suggest the blackness of crows, pushing and fluttering, but could be any wildness contained.

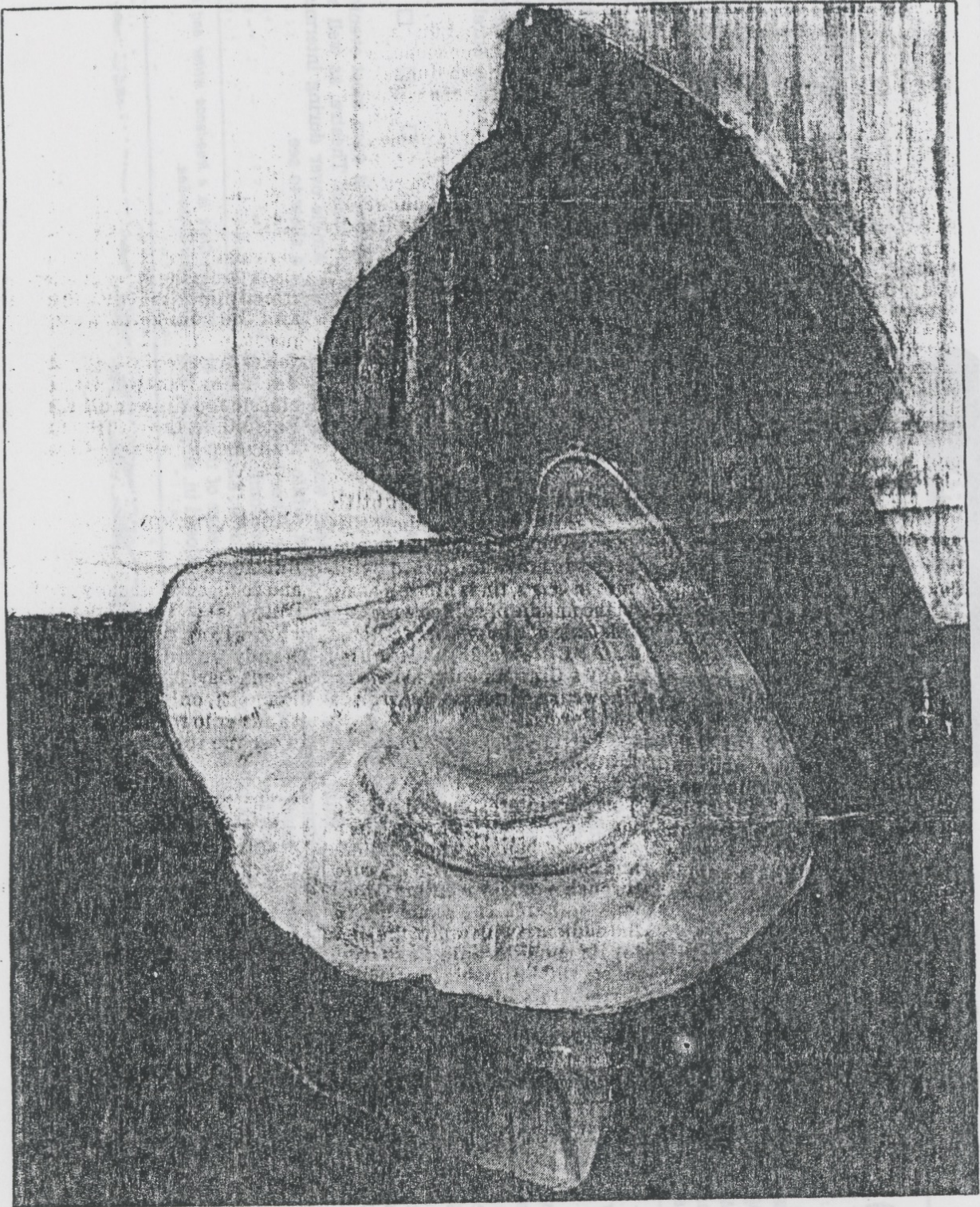
John Stockwell's pastel pieces are without form and need to be approached with an open heart. There is cloudlike softness with strength of color - we see skies like this all the time, but never notice them. The pictures suggest awakening, something as simple as a dawn, or as monumental as a Genesis. Order comes out of chaos; in the corner, a small but insistent white light steadily pushes back the darkness, slowly revealing a symphony of colors. Surely the Creation was like this.

The gallery is open most evenings in conjunction with the Music Theatre, as well as 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Amble over during intermission. This is certainly a show to see.

Elisabeth Clark is a free-lance writer and illustrator who lives in Manchester-by-the-Sea.

Arts & Entertainment

CALENDAR



Nature transformed — Boston artist Nan Tull's "American Garden #6," is one of the paintings on exhibit at the Montserrat College of Art in Beverly. The exhibit, "Nature Transformed," will feature the work of a number of area artists, including Beverly's Carol

Seitchik. An opening reception will be held Wednesday, July 18 from 6 to 8 p.m. The gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information, call 922-8222.