



defining lens of sexuality, the person on the other side possesses a comfortingly quotidian identity. Unidealized, the object of desire is just another guy. Though referring to the phallus, the cock ring is a normalizing circle.

Shawn Hill

The tiny circles recall keyholes, those focusing lenses through which we peek and eavesdrop on privacy.

Allison Newsome: 1985 - 2005
Wallace L. Anderson Gallery
Bridgewater State College,
Bridgewater, MA
October 31 - November 25

Allison Newsome's Amini-retrospective exhibition at Bridgewater State College appears exactly one year after her solo show at the nearby Fuller Craft Museum. However, this exhibition in the Wallace L. Anderson Gallery is much larger and contains nearly twenty clay and bronze sculptures completed since 1985. Like the Fuller exhibition, the work at first sight appears autumnal and festive in nature. The figurative works stand poised on a pedestal or the floor as if ready for a seasonal festival dance.

Yet, as one moves around each piece contradiction and juxtaposition give way to new meaning. All but two of the figures are missing heads and lower limbs which symbolically would not only render them incapable of thought but also mobility. The exterior frameworks of several pieces are defined by an interwoven exoskeleton of clay laths as in "Apple Shorts." In this nearly full-size ceramic figure, the headless and armless torso is releasing its ripe inner fruit from under its wicker-like torso. The "hips" of the metaphoric figure are a clay tree trunk that is poised precariously on a sawed-off stump-leg. The sculptures appear to dance and move but are static due to their lack of a means for mobility.

In one of Newsome's landscape works, "Water, Rocks, Clay," a cross-sectional view of the exposed earth supporting rows of corn can



Hope Ginsburg's "Felt-making" at Tufts University.

Steve Locke: Circumference
Mills Gallery Project Space
539 Tremont Street, Boston
Through October 23

Steve Locke's "Circumference," begins as a grid of 99 circles. Inside each is a small cartoon of a man's face. Are these self-portraits the ways he sees himself, or the ways he is viewed by others? The circumference that holds these playful images is the diameter of a cock ring. So here is a male face, sometimes bearded, sometimes bald, sometimes laughing, defined symbolically by his manhood.

Sexual flirtation is a part of this display. Are these calling cards, seeking attention and positive response? Certainly in the changing expressions there is the feeling of interaction, of self-examination and self-presentation.

The tiny circles recall keyholes, those focusing lenses through which we peek and eavesdrop on privacy. And a few of the images reward that sense of the illicit: in one the artist wears a ball gag in his mouth, in another he sticks out his tongue in defiance. We can't ignore the oral nature of this arrangement; his expressions are dependent on whether his mouth is smiling, laughing, grimacing, shouting. Our gaze is through a mouth-sized hole, viewing a man by his sexuality.

The images are not highly realistic, but loose and sketchy. In many, the face stares back, smiles, does ordinary things like wear a tux or t-shirt or a baseball cap. Overall, the message seems to be that, even when viewed through a



Two portraits by Steve Locke at the Boston Center for the Arts' Mills Gallery.

be seen as fertile and altruistic. But running right through the middle is an enormous fracture that makes one question the future of our agrarian culture. It's as if a huge question mark was placed in the work. These contradictions run throughout Newsome's work as she juxtaposes the interaction of our agrarian and industrial societies. Outward appearances can be deceiving and that is certainly the case for her work. Metaphors and allegories abound which is what always keeps us coming back for another look.

Michael Cochran

Tom Driscoll:
Personal Myths
McGowan Fine Art
10 Hills Avenue,
Concord, NH
Through November 25

Seven years ago Tom Driscoll relinquished his habit of planning his paintings. The results, which include adventurous, free-wheeling shapes and a generous, vigorous application of paint, are on display at the McGowan Fine Art gallery through November 25.

"I'm always open to possibilities and surprises and accidents," Driscoll said during an interview at McGowan. "I just allow the piece to evolve."

That evolution becomes a journey also for the viewer, as we follow the spontaneous intricacy of Driscoll's shapes. They invite close examination: shapes beget shapes, and shifts in color