

March 2005



Confrontation by Norman Lewis (1909-79), 1971. Oil on canvas, 223.5 x 182.9 cm. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery

'The Mexico Years', an intimate and eloquent exhibition of photographs by Tina Modotti and Edward Weston taken during their time in Mexico in the 1920s, at **Throckmorton Fine Art** (145 East 57th Street, New York) until 12 March. Modotti's images are predominantly preoccupied with socio-political commentary whereas Weston was more concerned with the primacy of form and rejected documentary realism in favour of a purer, formalist vocabulary. In spite of the constant stream of photographic imagery that permeates everyday life in the twenty-first century both Weston and Modotti's photographs still retain a fresh lyricism and immediacy today.

Unusual examples of Chinese Buddhist sculpture spanning almost a thousand years will be on display at the gallery from 17 March until 16 April. 'The Way of the Buddha', being held to coincide with New York's **Asia Week**, explores the changing sculptural modes of representation that gradually developed over the centuries following the arrival of Buddhism in

China. Chinese attitudes and ideologies began to incorporate foreign elements in response to the appeal of this peaceful religion as it became widespread throughout Chinese society.

The **Ubu Gallery**, impressively situated opposite the Queensborough Bridge at 416, East 59 Street, New York, is currently the home of an intriguing and thought-provoking exhibition of works on paper by German-born Unica Zürn. Zürn, best known for her relationship with Hans Bellmer, produced a body of ethereal, delicate and haunting drawings during the most prolific decade of her life, the 1960s. It is a selection of these works that form the basis of this exhibition. Already an established journalist and author of fiction in the early 50s, it was through Bellmer, whom she met in 1953, that she began fully to explore her artistic potential. Living together in Paris during the 1950s, they provided artistic inspiration and encouragement for one another. Bellmer urged Zürn to develop her interest in the subconscious and

Around the Galleries

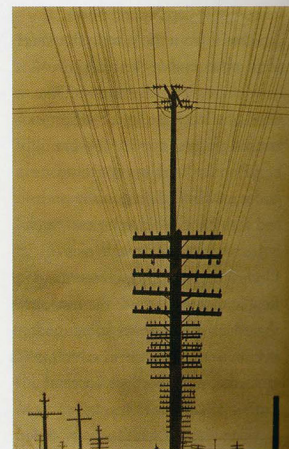
Enjoy African-American abstraction, Dan Flavin, Bonnard, Vuillard and Winston Churchill in an eclectic variety of exhibitions in New York and London, writes **Susannah Woolmer**.

experiment with automatic drawings. During their relationship Bellmer introduced Zürn to his surrealist contemporaries and it was a fateful meeting with Henri Michaux – who was attempting to understand the mechanics of human consciousness through prolonged experimentation with drugs – that, according to Zürn, set into motion the mental illness that was to torment her for the rest of her life. It is far from easy to separate one's responses to these strange and beautiful works from the knowledge that they were produced during a keenly productive but ultimately desperate time that ended tragically in Zürn's suicide in 1970. This compelling show will stay with you long after you leave the gallery; it continues until 16 April.

Rather more uplifting is a show of African-American painters Beauford Delaney, Norman Lewis and Alma Thomas, currently being exhibited together for the first time at **Michael Rosenfeld Gallery**, 24 West 57th Street, New York (+1 212 247 0082). Saturated in colour and completely non-representational, the large canvases that confront the viewer are dazzling and exhilarating in size and scope. All three artists eschewed the representational in favour of abstraction, drawn to the possibilities of an inclusive and universal visual language, entirely free from the constraints of politics and race. Delaney's canvases exude vitality and light with their thick swathes of colourful impasto, Alma Thomas produced gentle, pleasing shapes and rhythms of colour that evoke sunshine, warmth and the

natural rhythms of the earth; Norman Lewis depicts amorphous little figures – reminiscent of cave paintings – in hazy, indefinable surroundings, of which the richly-hued *Confrontation* of 1971 is a notable example. 'Stroke!' continues until 12 March.

This month **Mitchell-Innes and Nash** (1018 Madison Avenue, New York, +1 212 744 7400) presents the first US solo exhibition of photographer Brian McKee. Striking for their reliance on natural light, the twelve large-format colour photographs on show here, collectively entitled 'Urbanus', depict the deserted interiors of ancient and abandoned buildings in India. There is a palpable sense of isolation to these images exacerbated by the intricacy of the architecture and the lack of human presence; the play of natural



Telegraph wires (Fili Electrici) by Tina Modotti (1896-42), c. 1925-28. Vintage platinum print, 23.81 x 18.1 cm. Throckmorton Fine Art