



Jessica Park U.S. Capitol with Moon and Venus Print 17"x 23" 2006



WELCOME TO PURE VISION ARTS AT MARLBOROUGH GALLERY

Welcome to *Pure Vision Arts at Marlborough Gallery*, The Shield Institute's second benefit art exhibition and auction of work by artists with autism and other developmental disabilities. Our thanks go to Marlborough for opening up its galleries to us, first last spring in Chelsea and here tonight in mid-town. We are grateful to everyone at this landmark of contemporary art, especially to Pierre Levai for generously hosting our event in this beautiful space.

This evening means different things to different people; for me it reaffirms my belief that creativity is inherent in everyone and that art-making need not exclude anyone. The Pure Vision Arts studio is a thriving, exciting place where people are enriching their lives through the fine arts. I welcome you to visit the studio in Chelsea. Until you do, tonight will afford you an interesting introduction to the work of the studio's gifted and tenacious artists.

We are proud to feature the outstanding work of two artists on the spectrum, Susan Brown and Jessica Park, who have been with the studio since its opening in 2002. Both have been developing their considerable artistic gifts from childhood with the love and support of caring, committed families. While challenged in many ways, each is doing what matters most to them. In addition to pursuing artistic lives and livelihoods, which bring them income and recognition for their highly original work, they are also contributing valuably to the culture. I am happy to say that their lives, which are undoubtedly complex, do not conform to stereotypical mass media portrayals of people with autism, who are often shown as victims or survivors of an epidemic disease. While not a disease of any kind, autism's unmistakable impact sadly points up vast societal deficiencies, including our public institutions' failure to include or fairly accommodate people living with neuro-developmental differences of all kinds.

As someone who spent time early in my career helping prepare men and women at Willowbrook resume non-institutional lives in their communities, I know the dangers of stereotyping, labeling, undervaluing and segregating people. A growing number of studios like Pure Vision Arts and California's Creative Growth Art Center — whose Donald Mitchell is represented in this exhibition — give me hope. That's because they support artists who open up our eyes to what society stands to gain when everyone has opportunities to participate in our social, economic and cultural lives.

DR. SUSAN PROVENZANO

Executive Director
The Shield Institute

PURE VISION AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Pure Vision Arts (PVA) is a place where creativity, joy, laughter and music abound, where people express themselves freely without inhibition and where the emphasis is on ability rather than disability. At the studio, where we celebrate neurodiversity, so called obsessions or fixations are channeled into profoundly personal art that can chronicle a person's life.

Since its opening in 2002, thousands of people have benefited from PVA's opportunities to make art, exhibit it and attend its spirited exhibitions. All of the artists at the PVA studio are self-taught and have developed their own personal and pure visions over time. And as Cheryl Rivers' catalogue essay makes clear, their extraordinary and compelling art depicts a rich variety of fascinating imagery and content which can inspire wonder. Some of the works are cryptic and esoteric while others are meticulously created, highly sophisticated labors of love. Before the studio opened, many of these artists worked alone or in isolation with little or no ongoing support. At PVA, they have found a supportive community where they can flourish and become serious artists who are unbound by convention.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and your participation here tonight, the studio is able to fortify artists who have created remarkable bodies of work. We are also providing a secure base for the experimentations of new and emerging artists. Some of the best examples of their work are being shown tonight for the first time. All of these artists offer a fresh and distinctive vision. Their particularly idiosyncratic and unique points of view make for very compelling and powerful art. Whether we call their work contemporary, outsider, urban folk or visionary art, what they ultimately offer us has everything to do with transcendence and the triumph of the human spirit.

PAMALA ROGERS, ED.D.

Director
Pure Vision Arts

THE SHIELD INSTITUTE PRESENTS
Pure Vision Arts
at Marlborough Gallery

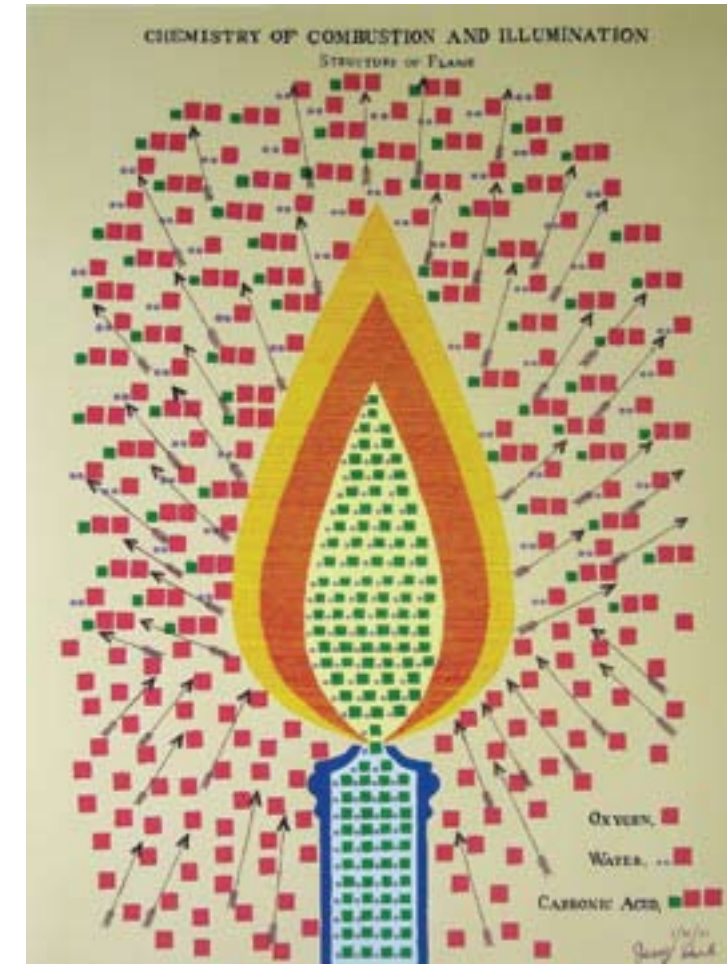
A benefit art auction and exhibition featuring artists with autism and other developmental disabilities.



Stephen Mulhauser *Detroit Shuttle* Mixed Media on Poster Board 21½" x 27½" 2007



Susan Brown *Mixed Grid* Mixed Media on Paper 31"x 43½" 2007



Jessica Park *Chemistry of Combustion and Illumination: Structure of Flame* 15"x 20½" 2001

Wonder and Resonance: The Artists of Pure Vision

CHERYL RIVERS

Resonance and wonder, wonder and resonance. According to scholar Stephen Greenblatt, these are the two ways exhibits reach out to viewers. Tonight's exhibition engages us through both. For fans of artists with autism and other neuro-developmental challenges, this resonant exhibition confirms that these artists can realize their talents and soar.

Without doubt, this exhibit resonates with the happy partnership between these soaring artists and their supporters. The Pure Vision Arts studio, under Pamala Rogers' able direction, has taken a leading role in fostering the creativity of people with disabilities. Artists like Susan Brown and Walter Mika travel weekly to the PVA studio while others like Jessica Park and William Britt work exclusively from their home studios. Pure Vision Arts moreover enjoys collaborations with artists on the autism spectrum, including the renowned animal scientist Temple Grandin, who has donated prints of her remarkable drawings.

But resonance alone does not make art. All around us we see works of art that wow us, that take us out of ourselves into a realm of pure delight. Walter Mika's figures, drawn with a heavy and passionate hand, reveal essential signs of character and emotion. His figures command us and tickle us. Who are these people? What would the artist see in us? Temple Grandin's schematic drawings likewise ask us to reconsider essences. Precise and graceful, Grandin's drawings embody both her celebrated career as a humane designer of slaughterhouses and the acute sensitivity to animals that inspired that career. Created as engineering renderings, the drawings become art.

Jessica Park's analytical but lyrical architectural works also confound commonplace perception. Bands and blocks of unexpected color — turquoise, hot pink and pea green — abstract and magnify architectural detail. Imaginative perspectives — as in *U.S. Capitol with Moon and Venus* — amaze. Parks' passion for astronomy,

light and color appears in her gorgeous views of skies and in the detailed explanations of light phenomena as seen here in *Chemistry of Combustion and Illumination: Structure of Flame*. Park's buildings, stars and scientific phenomena are real, and the artist teaches us to know them. After seeing these works who could look at a brownstone, a decorative roof, the Chrysler Building or a burning candle without seeing them anew? Jessica Park returns us to familiar things and places, and we see them for the first time.

Susan Brown likewise guides us toward new ways of seeing. Like Park's, Brown's world is real. Her *Moms*, rendered in characteristic grids of splashing color, are genuine portraits. As in *Mixed Grid*, the *Moms'* dresses represent actual clothing. Brown can tell you when and where her mother wore each outfit. Her lush paintings of a day at the beach, lighthouses, ferries, train stations and city scenes are also faithful and affectionate depictions. While Brown's paintings are impressionistic, they give us the same sort of details that Park captures with geometric precision. Again, a wondrous, original re-creation of the world invites us to see it for the first time.

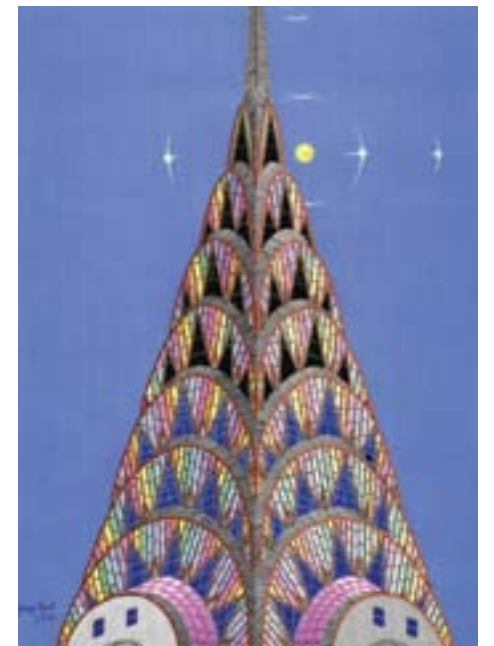
In the end, tonight's exhibition honors both the wondrous creativity of these visionary artists and the power of art to communicate what it means to be fully human. Resonant and wonderful, this exhibition sends us out into the world refreshed in spirit. It opens our eyes to possibilities and puts a spring into our steps.

Cheryl Rivers is a foremost authority on the work of self-taught artists who serves on the PVA studio's advisory board. She has a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a Certificate in Folk Art Studies from the American Folk Art Museum's Folk Art Institute where she offers several courses, including one on studios for artists with disabilities. She is currently co-editing the Folk Art volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* to be published by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and the University of North Carolina Press.



Susan Brown (clockwise from upper left)
Ocean Beach Mixed Media on Cardboard 12"x 15" 2006
Beach Scene Mixed Media on Cardboard 13¼"x 17½" 2007
7th Avenue Taxis Mixed Media on Cardboard 12"x 15" 2007
Mom Mixed Media on Cardboard 12"x 15" 2007

Susan Brown began drawing at age five encouraged by her artistic mother and aunt. Her first drawings were of spirals, women and cars. She began making her characteristic grid-like drawings on cardboard in the 1980s while working as a dishwasher at Friendly's, where cardboard packing was always readily available. Brown's work frequently reflects her eclectic interests and is drawn from her detailed memory of growing up on Long Island's South Shore. Her precisely and accurately detailed paintings and drawings of trains and subways, beaches and city streets and family members have a flowing, rhythmic spontaneity not unlike that of the improvised jazz that she loves. Brown's work is widely exhibited and included in numerous private collections.



Jessica Park (left to right)
Empire State Building with Lightning and "Light Cycle" Print 17"x 22¾" 2005
Brooklyn Bridge #2 with Twin Light Pillars and Egg Nebula Print 15¾"x 23" 2003
The Chrysler Building with Perihelion and Transit of Venus #2 Print 17"x 23" 2004

Jessica Park, an internationally recognized self-taught artist, grew up in the Berkshires of Massachusetts. Known for her colorful pop art architectural style, Park's highly detailed and distinctive acrylic paintings of bridges and buildings show her fascination with rare and naturally occurring light phenomena. The neurologist and author Oliver Sacks has described these as "exquisite paintings of houses and churches in which an uncanny accuracy of line is combined with colors of surreal brilliance." Her mother, the writer Clara Claiborne Park, has written two books in which she tells the story of her daughter's considerable artistic and personal development despite the obstacles posed by her autism. Her work is included in many private collections and has been widely exhibited, including several solo exhibitions.



William Britt *Untitled* Oil on Board 23½"x 39½" 1997



William Britt *Untitled* Oil on Canvas 15½"x 19½" 2007



Chris Martin *Baseball Stadium* Colored Pencil on Paper 85"x 11" 2007



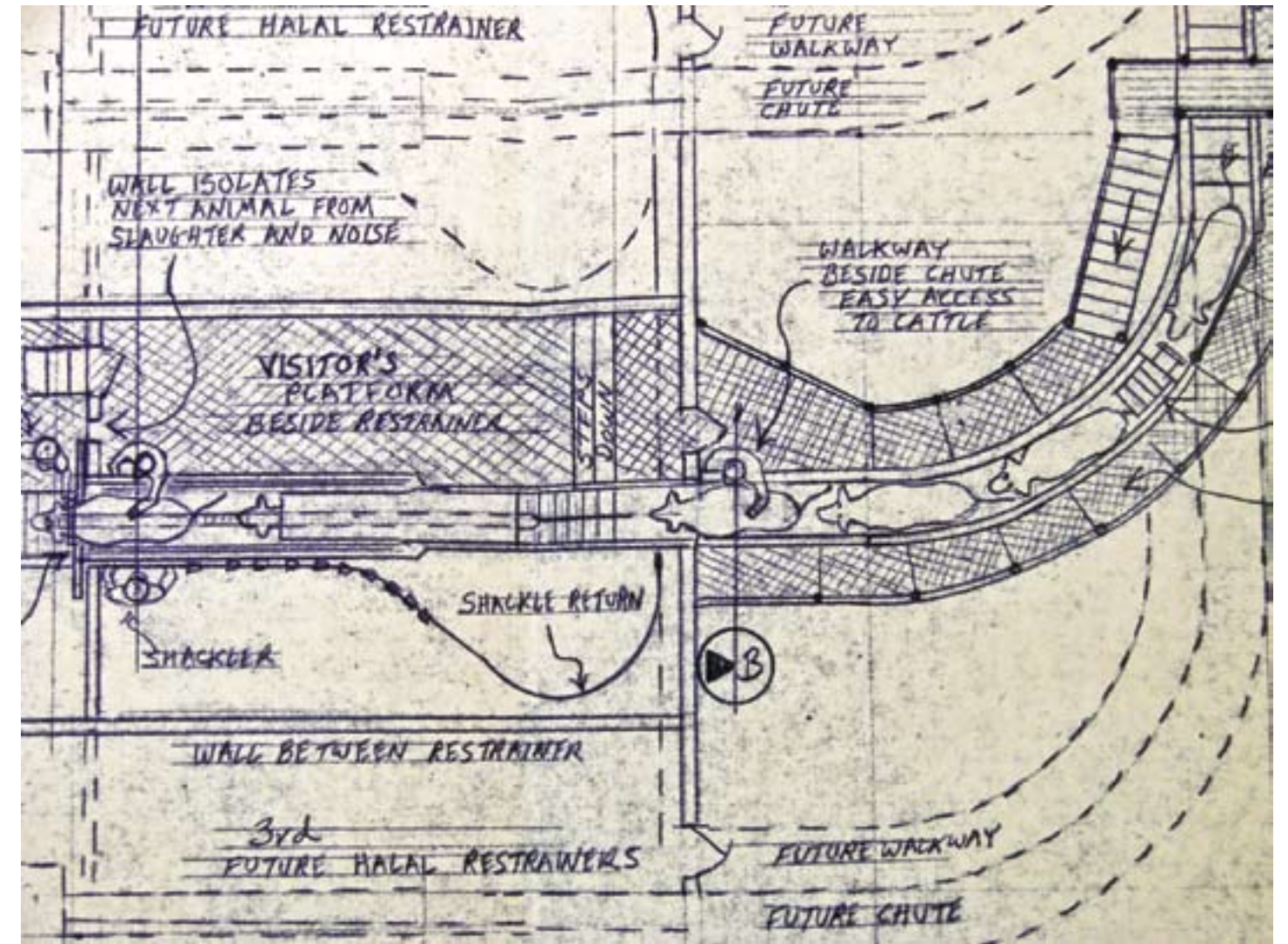
Leon McCutcheon *Jazz Singer Red Dress* Acrylic on Poster Board 13¾" x 17" 2006
Jazz Singer Yellow Dress Acrylic on Poster Board 13¾" x 17" 2006



Daniel Monrose *Angel* Colored pencil on paper 12" x 17" 2006



Jacky Wojciechowski *Bull Cows* Mixed Media on Canvas 24"x 36" 2007
Cow Family Mixed Media on Canvas 20"x 24" 2007



Temple Grandin *Detail: Halal International Slaughter Facility Concept Drawing* Blueprint 23"x 34" 1990



Dr. Temple Grandin is a leading animal scientist whose humane systems of handling cattle are widely hailed by animal rights activists. Arguably the world's best known person with autism, Grandin is acutely aware of the differences — and advantages — of how she processes thought and information. "I think in pictures," she writes. This detail of a drawing of Grandin's visionary design concept for transforming a Halal meat-packing facility exemplifies the highly efficient, animal-friendly handling systems for which she is famous. It shows the sweeping curved corrals which allow the steer to pass through comfortably and without stress as they are led to slaughter in accordance with requirements set forth in the Koran. Grandin says being able to see subtleties of animal behavior and think in pictures are unique features of her autism that allow her to formulate precise designs in her mind in 3-D virtual reality. Her concepts for converting meat-packing plants have made them more efficient and humane. They have also allowed producers who use Halal and Kosher methods of slaughter to ensure that the animals do not suffer in accordance with these time honored rituals.

Our thanks to Temple Grandin for generously donating two signed prints of her remarkable engineering drawings to tonight's event.

Photograph courtesy of Joshua Nathaniel Pritikin and William Lawrence Jarrold.



Matthew Safai *Walking Man II* Mixed Media on Canvas 54"x 58" 2007

Matthew Safai, a non-verbal man with complex challenges, is a welcome member of the PVA studio. To make this mixed media work, whose swirling patterns of maps and shoe prints mark the expanding range of city neighborhoods he is continually exploring, Matthew traveled with Andrew Lee of The Shield Institute from his East Side apartment to the West 17th Street studio once a week for three months.

Walking Man II is his second large scale work created for PVA at Marlborough with the close support of the studio's staff. It picks up on *Walking Man I* which was created over an 18-month period as part of a journey Matthew began with Andrew to expand his activities across a wider range of city destinations. Matthew is a tireless walker who is often given to moving in random, criss-crossing patterns. At times he appears unable to pause, even briefly, as if he were being thrust forward by an unstoppable force. Sometimes, as Matthew quickly led Andrew by the hand across the loft space, the studio resembled a dance floor.



Making *Walking Man II* challenged Matthew to once again narrow his expansive walking patterns and work in a relatively small space. It wasn't easy, though he often succeeded, as when he applied paint with a long handled broom or helped to iron onto his canvas the various cloth prints of the different neighborhood maps which marked his new frontiers in Queens and Manhattan. Matthew simply doesn't like to touch or handle paint at close range, he just finds it too uncomfortable, but with his hand safely inside a shoe with a paint-covered sole, he made dozens of colorful impressions.

Some days he came to the canvas easily. On other days he moved in hesitantly, and sometimes, when seizures interrupted him, not at all. When he gradually began to recognize his canvas' location within the studio it was an accomplishment for him as was his willingness to hear new kinds of music or join with others alongside tables in the small kitchen. *Walking Man II* records a widening geography of important life experiences for Matthew Safai. It also maps his distinct way of moving around in the world, which adds to the richness of life within the studio. — *Joseph Gordon*

Photo: Bryant Yarborough



Donald Mitchell *Untitled* Ink on Paper 22½"x 30" 2004

SPECIAL THANKS TO CREATIVE GROWTH ART CENTER

The Creative Growth Art Center, the first independent art studio and gallery for artists with disabilities in this country, has donated this ink drawing by Donald Mitchell in generous support of tonight's exhibition. Mitchell counts among the 130 men and women who attend the Center in Oakland, California where this 56-year-old San Franciscan has worked since 1975. His highly original ink drawings and paintings are widely known for their rhythmic elegance and the intense curiosity they inspire. Mitchell's unique figures, which appear alone or in repetitive patterns, like this one, are the subject of a fascinating monograph published by Creative Growth editor Cheryl Rivers. "His work does not depend on metaphor to make a point," writes editor Cheryl Rivers. "He is not concerned with making a point. Repetition is his subject."

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