YVONNE JACQUETTE
TOKYO NIGHTVIEWS
Brooke Alexander
59 Wooster Street
New York, New York 10012
(212) 925-4338

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Bowdoin College Museum of Art
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Shinjuku Pleasure District, Tokyo II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art and Brooke Alexander, Inc., are pleased to collaborate in presenting this exhibition of recent drawings and paintings by Yvonne Jacquette, an artist with long ties of affection to Maine and New York.

We are grateful for the organizing talents of John Coffey, curator of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and Ted Bonin, Director of Brooke Alexander, Inc. Mr. Coffey also wrote the introduction to the catalogue. The staffs of the museum and gallery ably assisted in all aspects of the project. Special thanks are due to José Ribas, museum preparator and Catherine Little, gallery archivist.

In conclusion, we express our profound appreciation to the artist.

Katharine J. Watson  Brooke Alexander
Director  President
Bowdoin College Museum of Art  Brooke Alexander, Inc.
Tokyo Diptych
Yvonne Jacquette has a preference for high places, a circling plane, a penthouse window, an aerie from which to watch the world. Her work has often depicted the city and man-made landscape from the vantage of angels. It is a privileged perspective, long loved by photographers, who were perhaps the first to recognize the geometric grandeur of the city below. That grandeur structures Jacquette’s images but is not its full content. Her work attempts to resolve the visual and emotional paradoxes of the modern metropolis. Only from the tower is there the possibility of order and context. And unlaced beauty.

Jacquette first visited Japan in 1982. Nighttime Tokyo, its cars and crowds and canyons of loud Vegas neon, made a vivid and bewildering impression on her. The neon signs, pulsing, scaling the walls of high rises, fascinated the artist, “like Times Square spread over miles.” Her fascination was equal parts marvel, confusion, and curiosity—the sparks of art. She returned to Tokyo in May of 1985, choosing hotel rooms with expansive vistas. From these views Jacquette excerpted images for a series of pastel night scenes. The basic forms and colors of each drawing were blocked in during night sessions by the window. She worked in the dark, selecting colors by flashlight. In daylight, she sharpened the geometry and corrected ambiguous passages. She refined the drawings further in the studio until the images read clearly. Photographic correctness was not important. The finished drawings are complete statements, not simply preparatory sketches for paintings. They have the authority of expert witness. In clear, discreet jots of pastel they record the performance of seeing, each touch of color attesting to a moment’s close scrutiny.

The paintings are purely studio constructions, begun after the artist’s return from Japan. They are essentially free translations of selected drawings. Oil colors were mixed to match the pastels. Even so, the painter gave herself scope for free development, making allowances for differences of scale and medium. The increased size of the paintings permits a clarity of image that is neither possible nor desirable in the drawings. What is suggested in the pastels is now made explicit. Qualities of space and light are again questioned and defined. Size also enhances the sense of giddy height, even vertigo. With an imaginative push one might pitch through these windows.

In style each painting retains the vibrant immediacy of the drawings. But the smaller versions are too cursory to serve as more than cues for the varied textures of painted marks. Instead, the artist has invented new but equivalent textures, layering strokes of unblended color against the gray mauve ground. The gestures are fluid, dancing, almost calligraphic—the most expressive painting of Jacquette’s career. Up close, the canvas is a tangle of surfaces of varied pattern—shoots and lattices of color. Take a few steps back, and the marks recede into a deep ether. The surface is transfigured. The city forms emerge, built not of solid substance but of loosely knit filaments of light and shade. Strangely, marvelously, it all makes sense.

John Coffey
Curator
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
PASTELS

AKASAKA TRAFFIC, TOKYO I
1985
pastel on paper
22¼ x 27 inches

SHINJUKU PLEASURE DISTRICT, TOKYO I
1985
pastel on paper
22¼ x 26¾ inches

TOKYO BILLBOARDS I
1985
pastel on paper
22¼ x 27 inches

TOKYO DIPTYCH
1985
pastel on paper: diptych
17¼ x 14¾ inches each

TOKYO NIGHTVIEW WITH SHINJUKU PARK
1985
pastel on paper
17¾ x 14¾ inches

TOKYO STREET WITH PACHINKO PARLOR I
1985
pastel on paper
20¾ x 13 inches

YASUKUNI DORI, TOKYO I
1985
pastel on paper
26¾ x 22¾ inches

PAINTINGS

AKASAKA TRAFFIC, TOKYO II
1986
oil on canvas
85½ x 100¾ inches

SHINJUKU PLEASURE DISTRICT, TOKYO II
1985
oil on canvas
76½ x 92¾ inches

TOKYO BILLBOARDS II
1986
oil on canvas
85½ x 100¾ inches

TOKYO STREET WITH PACHINKO PARLOR II
1985
oil on canvas
86¾ x 55¾ inches

YASUKUNI DORI, TOKYO II
1986
oil on canvas
91½ x 76½ inches
Yasukuni Dori, Tokyo II
BIOGRAPHY

1934 Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1952–56 Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1986 Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine
Brooke Alexander, New York
1985 Yurakucho Seibu/Takanawa Art, Tokyo
1984 John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco
St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis
Brooke Alexander, New York
1982, 81 Brooke Alexander, New York
1980 Belfast Free Library, Belfast, Maine
1979, 76 Brooke Alexander, New York
1974 Brooke Alexander, New York
Fischbach Gallery, New York
1972 Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia
1971 Fischbach Gallery, New York
1965 Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Yvonne Jacquette and Sylvia Plimack Mangold: New Paintings and Pastels, John C. Stoller & Co., Minneapolis
Drawings Since 1974, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Washington, DC
Twentieth-Century Art from The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Recent Acquisitions, The Queens Museum, New York
Collector’s Choice, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis

PUBLICATIONS


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ron Hill, “Yvonne Jacquette,” Catalogue published by Yurakucho Seibu/Takanawa Art, Tokyo to accompany an exhibition, (May)
1982 Robert Berlind, “Yvonne Jacquette at Brooke Alexander,” Art in America, (October)
1981 Carter Ratcliff, “Yvonne Jacquette: American Visionary” The Print Collector’s Newsletter, (Vol. XII, No. 3) (July/August)
1979 Susan Fillin Yeh, “Yvonne Jacquette,” Arts Magazine, (May)