

Artscope.net Reviews

ART SCENE CHICAGO 2000:

Grace Cole, Andrew Conklin,
Kathleen King, Marion Kryczka,
Roland Kulla, Helen Oh, Mark Pelnar

February 1 - 24, 2001

Wed-Sat: Noon-6 PM

Fine Arts Building Gallery
410 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
Telephone: 312/ 922-8050

Fan Piece For Her Imperial Lord

O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade.
You also are laid aside.

Ezra Pound

A succinct, momentary observation, without elaboration or gloss. Myriad, open-ended associations have flooded each individual reader of this short poem ever since 1909. Never has the single word – "also" – expressed so much, so poignantly. In poetry, the aesthetic is named 'Imagism.' In art, the particular term is used differently, but Poetic Imagism – sounding a simple note to orchestrate deep resonance and overtones – has parallels in the visual. The art of Grace Cole reveals just such a sensibility....



Museum of...Passions, 2000
Oil on linen
28"x22"x2"
Collection of John and Ladd Mengel
© Grace V. Cole

Grace Cole's most recent paintings reveal affinities with a *Scuola Metafisica*. The three oils on canvas in this showing were executed immediately prior to the exhibition and, while no slides were available for the opening, the displayed art furthers her approach as presented in *Art Scene, Chicago 2000*. These paintings – *Museum of...Lamentation*; *Museum of...Creation*; and *Museum of...Faith* (all 22"x28") – reveal Cole's ability to imbue a sparse vocabulary of image element with strong contemplative, and yet emotive strength. Her spartan sense of composition and palette is further heightened in effect by the artist's recourse to a uniform visual format in her *Museum* series: a viewer's attention is compelled to study subtle variations of composition, of visual gestures. Neither anecdotal nor narrative, nor even 'declarative,' but rather evocative, her art solicits from the viewer – much like Pound's short poem – a response; one anchored to a material actuality, but which engages associations well beyond the direct image. Much of the visual richness in these paintings comes from the artist's glazing technique: colors reflecting from beneath overlying, thinner hues, and Cole has noted her admiration of past masters: "Rembrandt for humanness, Titian for color and the contemporary artist, Odd Nerdrum, for atmosphere." Her art does share a kinship in spirit with the Italian metaphysical painters such as de Chirico, and perhaps with Morandi; and it does demonstrate that a contemplation of worldly object needn't be morose. It may indeed be profound and serene. Grace Cole also studied at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago; the University of Chicago; and with Ted Seth Jacobs at the Ecole Albert du Fois Vihiers, France. She has a website: <http://www.gracecole.com>