

ART PICKS OF THE WEEK



Bothwell's *Skater's Waltz*, 1949

DORR BOTHWELL, HILARY BAKER

With Dorr Bothwell's death late last year at the age of 98, Los Angeles lost another link to its modernist past. From her student days at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), Bothwell was a committed non-traditionalist, trying on one avant-garde ism after another. She didn't simply regurgitate Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism and other modern modalities, however, but gave them time and space to be adequately digested. This exhibition features work from every point along Bothwell's career between the 1920s and the '50s, and while the earlier pieces have their charms (her renditions of factory towns are gritty and glowing all at once), it is her postwar pictures that are the most distinctive. Even when dark and muddy, Bothwell's abstractions have a zest to them that not only do their influences (abstract-surrealists Miro, Masson, et al.) proud, but anticipate where such abstraction would lead: to the loopy, expansive linear elaborations we associate with the atomic-organic design style of the nuclear age.

Something of Bothwell's visual spunk recurs in the recent non-objective paintings of Hilary Baker. In fact, that spunk can be found throughout Baker's oeuvre, but here Baker covers a larger expanse of visual field than usual, opening up her eccentric forms and letting her bright, odd colors really sing. They go from major to minor keys, and from big individual shapes to small, repeated ones, and back again, energetically but gracefully across and around each canvas. At this scale we see that Baker shares a sensibility with somewhat younger "new color abstractionists," but spiced with intricacies not too distant from Bothwell's work.

Dorr Bothwell at Tobey Moss, 7321 Beverly Blvd. (323) 933-5523. Hilary Baker at POST, 1904 Seventh Pl. (213) 622-8580. Both thru March 3.

—Peter Frank

We also recommend: *Dan McCleary* at Kohn Turner; *Hans Bellmer* at Christine Argillet; *Kit: Airbag Architecture* at Side Street Projects; *Carroll Dunham* at Gagosian; *Mel Bochner* at Grant Selwyn; *J.C. Whittaker* at Santa Monica College; *Ivan Morley* at Patrick Painter (see Art feature); *Richard Shaw* at Frank Lloyd; *J.H. Lartigue* at Gallery Luisotti; *Martin Lubner* at FIG.