**New Mexico**

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Many of the provocatively flagellated figures. Oil Baile de la Muerte (Dance of Death), it seems to dance and in theatrical light so that its shadow on a purple backdrop becomes an integral part of the piece itself. Richard Thompson’s freakish figures sport flat profiles and fixed smiles in the face of a watery disaster that threatens to wash it all away. The work is of an ongoing series which looks at the Southwest in a costume strip kind of way.

Other outstanding pieces to look for are works by Bill Sagefield, Ken Saville, Randy Lee Whittestone. Jean Quick-to-See Smith, J. Pearson, Rick Dillingham and Woody Gwyn. Space does not, unfortunately, allow well-deserved praise.

And as for the end Apart, the photographs are integrated with the rest of the exhibition and work very well. Many relate to other works of art in the show. Walter Chappell’s Metaphora Series: Bleeding Heart Leaf, for example, seems related to both Finchers and King’s works. It is a luminous gelatin silver print that glows with an aura of light. Each vein and edge of each leaf exudes a florescent radiance. A large format photograph of a nude woman by Wayne R. Lazarus hangs next to Rick Addalba’s stunning Kimo Series: Diamond Back, photograph and painting combine cooler, more formalist concerns with the warmer, seductive curves of the female torso.

The quality of the light in New Mexico has always attracted photographers to the area. Add to this the influence of Van Deren Coke, who came to the University of New Mexico some 30 years ago to build a distinguished photography program, and such distinguished teachers as Lazarus, Richard Rudin, Betty Hahn who came to UNM in 1979 and has a piece in the show. Ann Noggle (also represented) and Tom Barrow (who is showing a work from his cryptic Cancellation Series).

Of equal or greater influence is Beacon Newhall, leading photo-historian who selected the 18 photographers in the show. Newhall retired from deanship of the George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y. to become the more relaxed permanent visiting professor of photo history at UNM. Newhall included in the show such internationally known photographers as Paul Caponigro and Elliot Porter, along with such rising young stars as Meridel Ruben-stein.

And so we both pose and answer this question: “Can artists who live and work outside of New York produce sophisticated, original work that is capable of achieving national and international recognition?”

The answer: a hearty and unequivocal “Yes!”