

# Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For immediate release: December 15, 2000

## BRUCE PEARSON

## PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS

JANUARY 6 – FEBRUARY 10

*Pearson's paintings thrust themselves upon us with the immediacy of their visual and tactile impact, and only gradually reveal their meaning in the complicated layers of images and texts. At once, he flirts with the high culture of contemporary art, and the pop culture of sexy, psychedelic design, color, and trash TV....Pearson's bold painted reliefs integrate idea, image, and text, creating "A New Visual Language."*

Joseph D. Ketner, Director, Rose Art Museum

Bruce Pearson will exhibit new paintings and drawings, characterized by eye-popping color and energetic design and propelled by a vigorous conceptualism. The paintings, wall reliefs carved on Styrofoam slabs, are comprised of text and imagery, abstracted to the point of indecipherability and subliminal meaning. The text is mined from contemporary pop culture and Classical sources; the imagery relates to the natural world. In Pearson's work, elaborate transformations and a dense layering of meaning synthesize form and content.

Paintings with Classical sources evoke Dionysian hedonism and seduction. *Silenus*, a satyr-like creature associated with intoxication, consists of a delicately creviced, intense yellow and red composition whose patterning is derived from text alone. *Counter Songs* references a poem written to flatter a previously insulted goddess. Paintings with pop sources comment on contemporary society: *I Am Lonely Without My Pain* combines text from self-help books and an image of a dissected brain; *My Planet Wants Me Dead* incorporates lines appropriated from fashion advertising.

Pearson's newest work, based on images abstracted from his own photographs, establishes a dialogue between imagery and text and investigates the properties of air, water, and land. Rorschach shapes, derived from cloud imagery, flatly intersect the text in the vibrantly colored *Evidence*. Shapes float from a bold background in the monochromatic *Food, Love, Air, Light, Trees, Architecture* -- a critic's characterization of French cinema. Water reflections suggest an infinite horizon in *Hope and Comfort from the Other Side*. The soft palette of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* adds a psychological dimension to *Ecstatic Explosions of Romantic Love*, the title of a romance novel. The shimmer of a moiré pattern evokes the psychedelic in *Who's To Say a Shoe is Not a Piece of Sculpture*. Grass stalks, photographed in close-up, reassume their three-dimensional state in the textured surface of *Counter Songs*.

Pearson takes as a source his series of Pollock-like gesture drawings for his painting, *Dance?*. In a triple turn, the artist further abstracts examples of "abstract art," playing off language and text.

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Bruce Pearson's recent one-person exhibitions include *A New Visual Language* at the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University in 1999. His work was included in *The End* at Exit Art/The First World and *Greater New York: New Art in New York Now, P.S.1* in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art in 2000.

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There will be a reception January 6 from 6 – 8. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 – 6. Monday by appointment. For information, contact Amy Bannon (212) 226-3232 or amy@feldmangallery.com.