

maifone wood rockers are whimsical touches on a modern classic. In his combinations of wrought iron bases and wood table tops the merging is less successful than his combinations of different woods. They do convey an unusual lightness, but the need for screws and fittings to hold the two diverse materials together as yet lacks the refining and formal accomplishment that his chairs have attained. □

MICHELLE ROBERTS

(Jennifer Dumas Gallery, p. 9)

Simplified, sometimes distorted forms representing animals and human beings fill compartmentalized spaces in these loosely narrative paintings and mono-prints. Working in a rapid, "get it out" manner, horses, dogs, and totemic figures are freely drawn as symbolic vehicles of emotion.

Color is a key element throughout the series. The artist is adept at developing a frantically charged spectrum of color by painting areas over and out until areas of emphasis, contrast, and intense movement yield some sort of visual unity. The idea is to provide a hierarchy of divisions within each painting, while keeping the viewer's eye active.

Typical is "Ha Ha Death", in which Roberts divides the heart of the canvas into roughly equal areas that command most of the attention. A suited, silhouetted male figure set against a

stage-like ground of blue, blue-green, red and rose introduces the eye to a roughly executed dog/man spirit scratched into the black void of night/death. The perimeter of the picture possesses vignettes of color and form that add visual stimulation and frames the interior.

The newest painting in the show treats spatial compartmentalization as a cut-away dollhouse, the small human figure set in the "attic" watching TV in order to escape the larger demons of his own psyche down below, and in order to avoid the barking issues of the world outside.

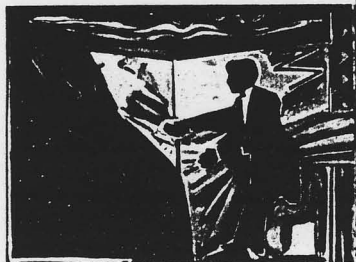
Personal expression, social didacticism, and a concern for visual embellishment are brought together in work that is simplified but not simple. Though subject to a degree of disjointedness and tentativeness, Roberts is working towards relating the technical and visual demands of draughtsmanship to the intellectual and emotional concerns of content. There is sufficient muscle in this work to be both joyfully amusing and seriously engaging. □

CHAGALL'S BIBLE

(Galerie Michael, p. 21)

When, in 1931, the French publisher Ambrose Vollard conceived the idea of commissioning a cycle of illustrations for the Old Testament, Marc Chagall was the fortunate choice. The result was one of the very few major 20th century Bible cycles. One hundred suites of 105 etched plates were printed, plus five artists proofs, all of them handcolored by the artist.

Having grown up in the Russian village of Vitebsk in a Jewish Hassidic community, the Old Testament had colored and enriched Chagall's life since childhood. Chagall was deeply familiar with all the passages



Michelle Roberts, "Ha Ha Death", 5½'x7', o/c, 1983. Photo courtesy Jennifer Dumas Gallery.