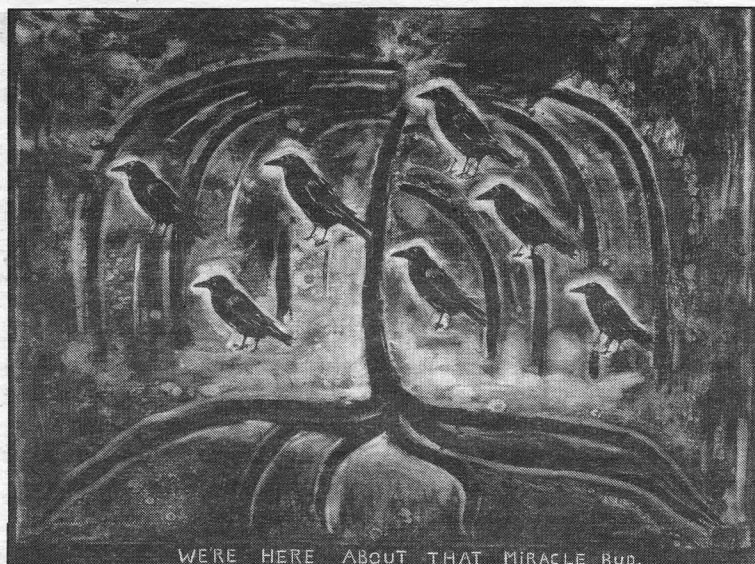




Michele Roberts, *We're Here About That Miracle, Bud*, oil on canvas, 36" x 48".

Michele Roberts

When I was five years old, I had a dream which to this day I remember vividly. In this dream, a winged white horse came down to Earth. It was the most beautiful horse I'd ever seen. I asked the horse if I could ride him and the horse replied 'yes.' Together, we flew up into the clouds. We arrived at a house where the horse lived. We stayed there for many days, until one day when I asked the horse to take me back down to visit my family and friends, who I now missed. We flew to Earth and I climbed down from the horse and entered my mother's kitchen. And then I woke up.

At the time, this dream was terribly important to me. So much so that I began to draw pictures depicting different scenes from the dream. I spent many hours on these pictures. By drawing these scenes, I was able to capture what was only a dream and turn it into a semblance of reality. I was only five at the time, but that was when I realized I wanted to be an artist. To be able to stop time, in a sense, and capture a particular moment—that's what I wanted to do. And for me, drawing and painting gave me that magical control. To this day, I can keep an experience, a dream or a thought alive once I have made it into an image.

Not long ago, however, another reason I paint was revealed to me. It was when I couldn't paint anymore that I began to understand *why* I paint. I suffered my first 'creative block' following the death of my father. A friend helped me by telling me that I was unable to paint because I was in mourning. As soon as she said this, I immediately realized that she was right. It was then that I understood that painting for me is an affirmation of life; a rejoicing in and loving of life. I paint to express my love for life.

At the time, it was impossible for me to paint and to therefore rejoice in life, because I felt such a great sadness at losing my father.

I can't imagine living without being able to paint pictures. For me, it's as essential to life as breathing.

Irene Pijoan

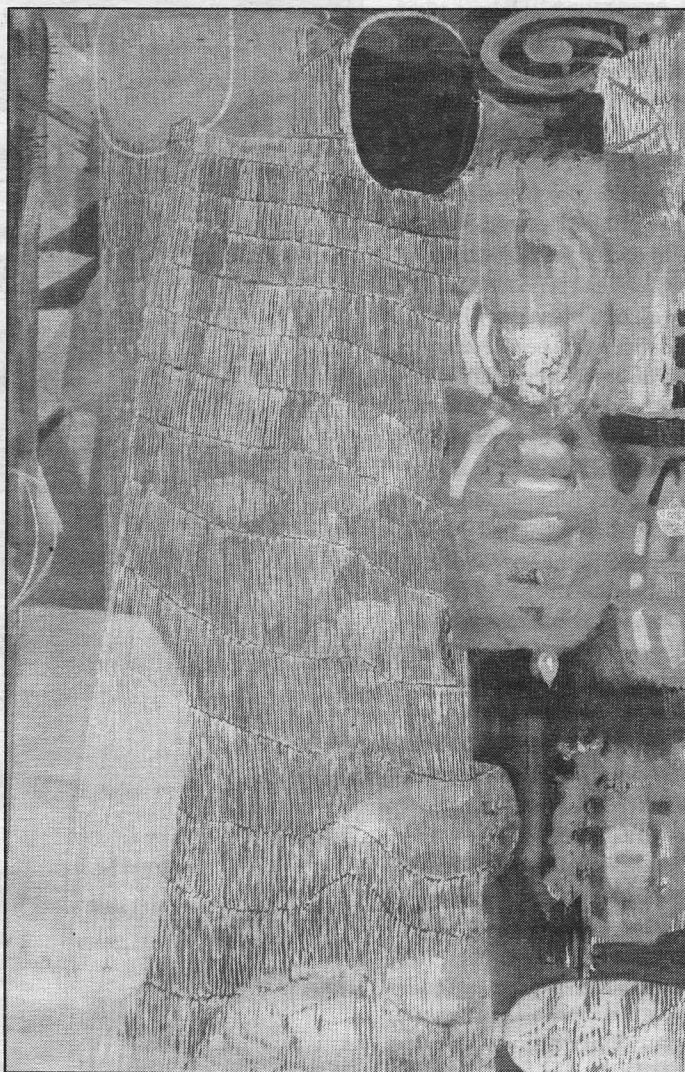
My working hypothesis is that, by and large, there is a link between the transformative capability of painting and the demands it makes on the painter in the course of the making. The practice is to be what we are, where

we are. So really it's nothing special.

Paint and canvas afford a conjunction that is highly amorphous: physical resistance and material identity are at a minimum. The dangerous shapeability of paint means that tough choices must be negotiated at every juncture. Much current work holds little interest for me because the choices in it are preprogrammed. In its disembodied effort

toward analysis, such work rests its case on strategy—it neglects the fact of making as an opportunity to enter a numinous dimension. As such, its prophecies about painting become self-filling: paint is dead and the artist's role is to advertise its lapse, along with the moral and psychic bankruptcy of late capitalist endeavor.

Despite the art world's finite capacity to co-opt, to suggest that the arena of the canvas exhausted ignores the obvious: the absence of a hegemony of taste, the field is returned to a difficult, unpleasant vagaries



Irene Pijoan, *Ulls i Cara*, 1991, oil on canvas, 84" (Photo: Jacques Cressaty. Courtesy Rena Bransten Gallery,