

## MODERN DIMENSIONS: CONTEMPORARY MODERN SCULPTURE

*EIGHT MODERN*  
231 DELGADO STREET, SANTA FE

**Have you had the Eight Modern experience?** Have you seen the glorious spanking new white walls, the luscious picture windows, and the dynamically subtle modifications they've made? If you want your beautiful old adobe to look like the Museum of Modern Art, this new gallery on Delgado Street is a total style pointer. It's all about doors and windows, entry and light. Who cares that somewhere in the seventies Modernism pattered out of the great game of miniature golf we call art history? Whether you're po-Mo or want mo' Mo, slo-mo or no-mo, the Eight place is a righteous interpretation of the spacious white box we've all come to know and love. Rumor is they plan to change the name of that particular stretch of Delgado to Modern Street soon, anyhow.

We like round shiny things, we humans, we crows, we raccoons, we modernists. If its curves gleam, we like it. We like the chain link spheres of John Rupert, made large in aluminum and steel. We like 'em for their transparency, their volume, their engineering, and their shiny curviness. We like 'em like we would like giant soap bubbles set down on the lawn, or alien robot pod husks filling the veranda, or spheroids of positive love vibration preparing to pollinate. We like 'em better than a grand piano and they're musical in a whole different way.

Oh so boldly, the new gallery led off with a power-packed show of sculpture. Walter Dusenbery, once an assistant to the venerable Isamu Noguchi, filled several rooms with his pink travertine Minimalism. Like Noguchi, Dusenbery strives for elemental forms with universal appeal that seem both ancient and modern (there's that word again). Dusenbery's chosen material is the only carving stone that hardens in response to acid rain. While the marbles of the ancient world are rapidly melting away, Dusenbery's travertines are firmly set on a foundation of architectonic timelessness.

Celeste Roberge presented an up-to-date stainless-steel chaise longue packed with river rocks in the lovely sculpture garden. Her works revolve around a bizarrely charged interest in furniture and fossilization. The most compelling pieces in the show are her miniature stackings of tiny objects and plaster. Their scale and intimacy reward intense contemplation, and they come as welcome refreshment to all this Modernist monumentality. There's a little Louise Bourgeois here and a touch of Robert Morris. Roberge is an artist we'd like to see more of. Warning: she may actually be post-modern.

Or simply surreal (the first po-modernism), like Nancy Youdelman, an assemblagist who was a member of Judy Chicago's first class in Feminist Art at Fresno. Her accumulated dresses are dense with ghosts of memory, and stand up especially well in bronze. An echo of the feminist art strategy—in which obsessive decoration becomes subject—is heard, but digging deeper each piece tells a woman's story in the fragile voices of fading photographs, love letters longingly squeezed between ribbons and medals of valor, parched paper, dried flowers, butterfly buttons, thimbles, cymbals, trinkets, fancy pins, and souvenirs. Her approach to assemblage resonates with the modes of local artists Gail Reike and Andrea Senutovitch.

Modes. Doesn't that have something to do with modern? In China, cherries mean good luck in love. I believe in America there is a similar symbolic linkage, though it remains mainly in the crass parlance of the collective unconscious, so maybe your new mode ought to be like Ming Fay's, in which there is no culture, only the elevation of nature. His sculptural gardening produces fruit, such as his oversize maraschino cherry dropped in the center of the space as if the gallery was a great big Manhattan cocktail. Robert Lobe uses a repoussé technique (it sounds French, but he's cleared it with the administration) and large sheets of aluminum to record and abstract the surfaces of trees and rocks. Two large branching configurations, "machines" as he calls them when he feels constructivist, hung alongside the gallery. Shiny, we like shiny, and these were. And Naumanesque was the sense of displacement (from the forest floor to floating above the side courtyard), making them all the more abstract and also slightly menacing.

Finally, we find the work of Robert Mangold. His colorful, pointy, tubular sculptures zig and zag like playground equipment made out of lightning bolts. Though they are pleasant enough in their sharp-angled way, they also make it clear that one of the pitfalls of Modernism is an overdependence on form all by its lonesome. Form is fine, but sometimes the Modern seems to play it safe by skirting more significant content. More artists like Celeste Roberge are the answer. Still and all, Eight Modern is off to a stunningly good start.

**JON CARVER**



Walter Dusenbery, *Study for Aurora*, travertine, 35" x 35" x 5"