



BARTLEBY REVIEW

Issue 7 - February 2013

.....
www.bartlebyreview.com

Slide Whistle 101 Antoni Wojtyra

Mark DeLong

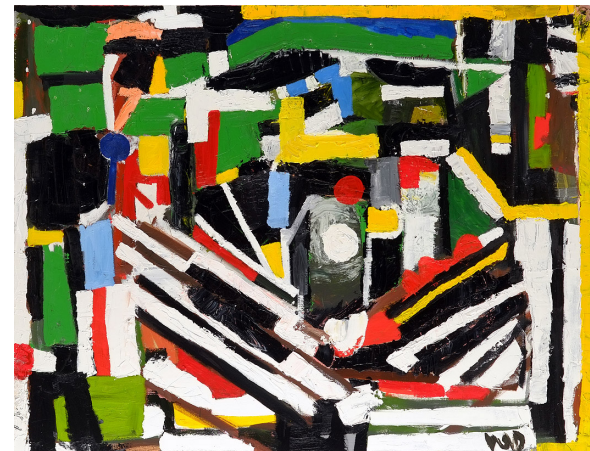
'Beautiful Pants and Hat'

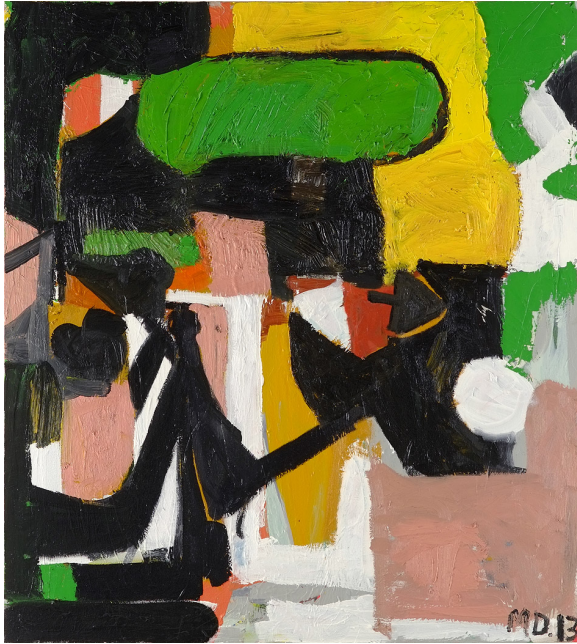
Hardscrabble Gallery

1029 East 15th Ave

Through January 20

Full disclosure: I was part of a two act performance at the opening of the exhibition of paintings. In the first act Jeff Chute sat cross-legged, dressed in white, playing a mellow meditative sitar. DeLong took





center stage, dressed in white pants and a white t-shirt. We watched for an hour as he deliberately went through his process to work a white canvas into a colorful abstraction. Meanwhile a white feathered Silkie hen wandered the floor of the gallery, clucking here and there. I sat next to DeLong's paint palette but I wasn't part of the act per se, although I occasionally talked to DeLong. Suddenly I was hushed by someone in the crowd. I obliged until nearing completion of his canvas when the crowd lost all patience and began to yak incessantly to a final crescendo. The confabulation drowned itself. Maybe it drowned out Mark's focus too.

As part of the second act DeLong asked me to play slide whistle each time he flipped his slipper. I did so, sitting cross-legged and costumed in white blankets. DeLong sat on a chair and employed a practiced right foot to flip his black slipper through the air and back onto his foot. Aaron kept count as I whistled and the audience watched engrossed. Ten flips in a row. Applause. Then DeLong flipped it over a rope. Roar!

Anti-climatically, after these acts no one spoke to me with any insight about DeLong's show. My slide whistle skill was congratulated a few times as I vainly tried to deflect attention back to the show. Finally, one person said "it was nice to see Mark's painting process". I think she meant that it was revelatory rather than tritely "nice". Her choice of adjective is telling: watching a painter make a painting in real-time is as exciting as watching paint dry. It comes as no surprise then that we excitedly watched that slipper twirl through space onto DeLong's foot. What stupid human trick isn't fleetingly more exciting when pitted against painting's unabating slow argot? DeLong's scrupulous double act elucidates a potent dialectic pitting painting against the absurdities surrounding our *raison d'être*. We cluck about, caught up in a pageantry of chattering selves and almost everyone ignores DeLong's three large and colourful paintings hung as part of the exhibition.

Antoni Wojtyra