

18¼ feet from the floor to the ceiling. In other sculptures, Schnabel rested fragments of the molds used to make his urns on tall, welded steel pedestals that put them well above eye level. The sculptures *Vito*, *Marie* and *Balzac* are massive mummylike forms with textured and patinaed surfaces. *Marie*, named after the bell that drove Victor Hugo's hunchback of Notre Dame crazy, was hung from the ceiling by heavy chains and contained a striker that sounded with a dull thud when the piece was rocked.

Among the paintings, a few of which were recycled from an earlier show, *Affection for Surfing* (228 inches long) was characteristically impressive. This horizontal work consists of six plate-encrusted wooden panels. A brown phallic form emanates from the left, dominating the work and surrounded on three sides by a bright orange ground. Reds, ochers, white and pink are worked into the craggy surface. Leaning against the painting was a sea-beaten, clay-encrusted post from an old dock. Schnabel tortures paint across impossible surfaces and wrenches form from a morass of distractions. His power often lies in the struggle against self-imposed obstacles. However, these pieces also appear partially to be the work of natural forces. The sculptures especially, but even his paintings, seem to have been dug from the earth, weathered fragments of a long-gone but distinctive civilization. And so one tended to overlook individual weaker pieces and experience the show as a single work—a work that drags us with sheer muscle power into the realm of the spirit.

The artist's fans credit him with single-handedly reviving American painting, while his detractors see him as the creation of media manipulators feeding an investment-hungry, neoconservative market. What cannot be disputed, though, is the remarkable impact he has had within a very short time. Although predictions have been made for an early burnout, this show indicates quite the contrary. —Ken Sofer

Robert Moskowitz

Blum Helman

THIS ARTIST'S WORK HAS BEEN categorized as new-image painting, but a more accurate definition would be Minimalism with imagery. The subjects of his large oils and equally large pastel drawings cut crisp silhouettes in the smooth, meticulous surfaces, although the hard-edge boundaries between objects and their backgrounds may be nothing more than subtle shifts in shade, density or texture.

An irregular curve topping a thick vertical band of black identifies a form as the Flatiron Building in New York, while separating it from an inkier black back-



Robert Moskowitz, *Thinker*, 1982, pastel on paper, 108 by 63 inches. Blum Helman.

ground. Another painting is dominated by a black peninsular shape that we read as Rodin's famous *The Thinker*. Here, the surrounding deep blue area has been sanded to reveal underlying layers of black and rust and, in spots, the white canvas. In these works, single objects—a sculpture, a building, a windmill, a lighthouse, a smokestack—tower above the viewer as dark and foreboding monoliths. But for all their literalness, the images themselves seem the by-products of, or the vehicles for, for-



Alfred Kubin, *The Ape*, ca. 1910, ink and sprayed paint on cartographic paper, 12 by 14¼ inches. Galerie St. Etienne.

malist concerns. Moskowitz defuses the emotive impact of his subjects by drawing our attention to the surfaces of the paintings, usually through the nuances of his process, but sometimes, as in *The Seventh Sister*, by blatantly bisecting the canvas with a thin vertical line of color. In this respect he establishes a link to an earlier generation, to Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt, for instance.

Moskowitz literally paints a fine line between illusion and surface, object and ground, childlike simplicity and exacting precision. His wit is revealed through the choice of subjects, the deadpan presentation and the laconic titles: *Stack*, *Thinker*, *Flatiron*. Moskowitz's ability to imbue simplistically rendered figures with such elegant formal relationships attests to a talent kept under tight discipline, but not without humor. —K.S.

Alfred Kubin

Galerie St. Etienne

ALTHOUGH AUSTRIAN ARTIST Kubin (1877-1959) was a founding member of the Blaue Reiter group, his work is not well-known to American audiences. This may be due to the fact that he was primarily a graphic artist and that his vision was a personal one that defies easy categorization. In his early work one can see an erie talent for visualizing nightmares, with images of bloodsuckers attacking genitals or breasts, a man hanging onto a ledge as he is pulled into an abyss by a swollen monster, or a naked human pursued by a swooping winged creature in *Storm* (circa 1902-05). Many of these early