

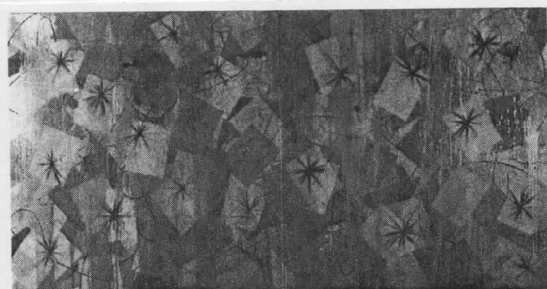
**S** tudio view

Barry Schwabsky on Sidney Tillim,  
Tod Wizon, L.C. Armstrong, and  
Joseph Marioni

**NEW YORK**

There is a curious phenomenon I've been noticing lately: the existence of a hidden subgroup of New York artists, ones who live and work here, yet are relatively unknown, sometimes even entirely unrepresented, but who have strong reputations—or at least they exhibit their work regularly—in Europe. I decided to visit four of these export-only artists and see what they were up to.

I'd first seen the work of **L.C. Armstrong** at a European art fair—this time Cologne, at Sophie Ungers's booth—but there the surprise was that I already knew the artist, though I'd never seen her work. Unlike the other artists I'm discussing here, L.C. has had a show in New York recently, but the lag between her work's



**L.C. Armstrong**

*Autumn in New York*, 1993; enamel, smoke, bullets, resin on aluminum panel; 60" x 120". Photo courtesy of John Post Lee Gallery.

reception in Germany and its emergence in New York remains notable. She makes both sculpture and painting, and more painting than sculpture. But, the paintings are very sculptural in their concern with materials (in fact she almost never uses any actual paint), although the result is usually flat, not relief-like, usually because of something having been encased in resin. These paintings have slick, cool, mirror-like surfaces that you look into. What you see when you get past the sheen tends to be far from slick and cool. This work is about repressed passion, repressed violence. Sometimes this is obvious, as in a remarkable two-panel work that was made by "drawing" an explosive-looking criss-crossing pattern of loops on the supporting surface with a fuse, then lighting the fuse. The trace of the burn, sealed in by resin, is the image presented by the painting. The very impersonality of L.C.'s technique has an autobiographical edge. Just as Georges Braque learned the technique of wood grain simulation which was so important to the development of Cubism from his father, a house decorator, her artistic language relies to a great extent on techniques she became familiar with in her father's plastic sign shop. Much of L.C.'s recent work involves a disparity between image and language. Some of the new paintings are quasi-monochrome, made of several shades of the same color somewhat obscured by gray. With these, the resin surface is not entirely smooth, but has the names of the colors it includes inscribed on it in Braille. In the hands of another artist this could be a cute gimmick, but these paintings evoke a mournful irony: the name and the experience can never coincide.