

ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

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The New York Art World®

“All You Need To Know.”

May 2003

Short List

SoHo

JOHN BRADFORD, Maurice Arlos Fine Art: Bradford side-steps traditional Biblical scenes and characters in his visual depictions of stories distilled from the Bible. To those unfamiliar with the Old Testament, the meaning of the explicit titles of his works may not be apparent; but these paintings are nonetheless compelling.

Drawn with sketchy, broken lines on medium dark cocoa, coffee and mustard colored backgrounds, Bradford utilizes faint traces of paint that suggest the passing of time. The work evokes the primitive spontaneity of cave paintings where often only the vestige of a form remains as a haunting impression.

There is an unconventional austerity and child-like purity in these works that recalls early nineteenth century Japanese prints. For example, the painting, *Stolen Blessings*, relies on just a few colored lines to depict figures crawling toward one another. The spatial divisions of the composition further enhance the expression (without embellishment), so that these sparse graphic lines read like prose lines in a poem. In another painting, *Joseph in Prison*, a small figure sits in the far left corner of the picture while a man, with out-stretched arms, gestures from the vantage point of a chair (which is implied without a literal depiction). The lack of detail only serves to heighten the work's expressive power.

These paintings operate on a subliminal level; while the familiar Biblical tales are not completely discernible in every image, the importance of each scene is evident to the viewer who looks carefully.
Through 5/3

MARY HRBACEK