

Mt. San Antonio College

S A B B A T I C A L   L E A V E   R E P O R T

School Year 1978-1979

John Lees, Instructor  
Art Department

Sabbatical Leave in New York City

PART I - What I Did

1. I worked on my paintings and drawings. (see enclosed slides)
2. I visited art museums and galleries; among them: "Pompeii 79 A.D." at the Museum of Natural History; paintings by Camille Corot at the Frick Collection and Metropolitan Museum; Greek collection at the Metropolitan; Mark Rothko exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, sculpture by Medardo Rosso at the Museum of Modern Art; permanent collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art and permanent collection of all of above; paintings by Milton Reznick at Max Hutchison Gallery.
3. Participated in two group shows at Edward Thorp Gallery, N.Y.C. (February 1979, Summer 1979).
4. One-person show of paintings at Feigenson-Rosenstein Gallery, Detroit, Michigan (May-June 1979).
5. Guest artist at Wayne State University Art Department, Detroit, Michigan (November 14-17, 1978). Lectured on my own work; participated in seminar on art education with faculty and graduate students; visited graduate studios.
6. Visited facilities and discussed art education with faculty members at Columbia, Yale, and Princeton Universities, Pratt Art Institute, New School for Social Research, Cooper Union College, Hunter College.
7. Had contact on a daily basis with artists, critics, museum personnel, art dealers, collectors and art educators.

8. Visited Edward Albee Foundation in Montauk, Long Island.
9. Visited Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland Art Institutes, Toledo Museum of Art.
10. For my combined activities I received 3 units in Graduate Painting and 3 units of Independent Study from Pratt Art Institute, conferring with Gerald Hayes and Kent Flater.

My original intention to obtain units through Columbia University proved neither feasible nor appropriate.

10. Peter Frank, an art critic, is on the faculty of Columbia University. As he had sympathetically reviewed my work in Art News, I felt free to approach him about my plans to secure six graduate units from Columbia, following a course of independent work and study; that I wished the units in conjunction with a graduate seminar situation related to contemporary aesthetic problems. Frank said this would be difficult because such seminars were open only to matriculating students. He mentioned I could speak to Leon Goldin, head of the studio program, but that he had doubts about whether Goldin would allow me the wide berth I would want. He went on to say that the studio program was rather limited, that the emphasis was on Art History at Columbia, and that I'd be better off doing my work through Hunter College or Pratt Institute.

I contacted Frederick Thurz at Hunter College. Thurz and I knew each other's work through our mutual contact with the Thorp Gallery. He said there was a definite possibility of pursuing such a program at Hunter, but that I would have to speak to the Department Chairman, who was out of town for a week or so.

In the meantime, Ross Neher, a painter and critic also connected with Thorp and a graduate of Pratt, spoke to Gerald Hayes, an artist and teacher at Pratt, about my situation. I contacted Hayes, who said I could carry out my plans at Pratt, conferring with him and other members of the faculty, attend the Graduate Painting Seminars, and generally have full use of the Institute's facilities.

I pursued the same plan of study as outlined in my original sabbatical proposal, the difference being my receiving credit for the endeavor from Pratt Institute instead of Columbia University.

**ACADEMIC RECORD**  
GRADUATE STUDY

**PRATT INSTITUTE**  
BROOKLYN, N. Y. 11205

**GRADE EXPLANATION AND GRADE SCALE**  
**A—Excellent** (4)  
**B—Above Average** (3)  
**C—Acceptable** (2)  
**D—Less Than Acceptable\*** (1)  
**F—Failure** (0)  
**INC—Incomplete** (0)  
**NR—No Record** (0)

(NO GRADE SCALE)

**P—Pass**  
**U—Unsatisfactory**  
**CR—Credit**  
**NCR—No credit**  
**WD—Withdrawn**  
**AUD—Audit No Credit**  
**INX—Extended Incomplete**  
**IP—Thesis In Progress**  
**NI—No Information**  
 (Spring 1970 only)

\*Graduate Students Only:  
 After Dec. 1956, D is a Failure and C is the Lowest Passing Grade.

Each term has a minimum length of fifteen weeks. In courses which are passed, a credit is earned for each period (50 minutes) of lecture or recitation and for approximately one and one-half periods of laboratory or studio work, each week throughout one term or the equivalent.

Transcript of student's record is Official only if it bears the original signature of the registrar (or designee) and is impressed with the Seal of Pratt Institute. This student is entitled to honorable dismissal unless otherwise indicated.

**ACADEMIC DISTINCTION**

**3.0 TERM index:** Dean's List for full-time programs.

**CUM index:** Graduation with honors.\*

**3.6 TERM index:** President's List for full-time programs.

**CUM index:** Graduation with highest honors.\*

\*To be considered for honors, a student must have completed a minimum of 50% of degree credits at Pratt.

**LIMITATION ON REDISCLOSURE**

These records are being released to you on the express condition that you will not disclose the information to any other party without the prior written consent of the student, except that if the records were released to you as the representative of an institution, agency or organization it may be used by its officers, employees, and agents, but only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made.

DATE DEGREE AWARDED		SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT Art & Design - Fine Arts		LAST NAME Lces	FIRST John	MID. IN. W.
TRANSFER CREDITS		NON-MATRICULATED 2/79	MATRICULATED		ADDRESS 177 Bleecker Street #5 New York, N.Y. 10012	
		STUDENT NUMBER 5571-68-0152		DATE OF BIRTH 2/3/43		
		ACADEMIC ACTION		TERM ENTERED 2/79		
		BASIS OF ADMISSION				

Subjects	Grade	Credits	Term Index	Cum Index	Subjects	Grade	Credits	Term Index	Cum Index
LEES JOHN									
FA 610 INDEP STUDY	A	3		2.218					
FA 621 GRAD PTG SEM	A	3		4.00					
S.H.A. 6 O.P. 24 CUM. IND				4.00					
TOTAL CREDITS ATTEMPTED		6							

PART II - What I observed

1. New York's art world is comparable to a small town: Compact and interconnected by personal linkage. This involves galleries and museums, dealers and curators, critics and magazines, artists, educators and collectors.
2. I would characterize the people I met in this context as:  
Persistant (optimistic; believing themselves capable of doing important things)  
Ambitious (aspiring to high ideals; determined to be recognized)  
Hard working (many hours are spent in the studio or doing business)  
Serious (motivated by a belief in the value of art)  
Intense (how many times was I asked if Californians were really "laid-back"?)  
A strong work ethic exists, and is considered necessary if a person is to be taken seriously.
3. Teaching positions are viewed as means of support for professionally active artists and as a way for students to come in contact with them. (Graduate students at Yale elect artists to teach courses there.) Students are extremely aware of their proximity to the center of things.
4. Artists are measured throughout the United States according to their standing in New York. Gallery connection is viewed as prestigious. My invitation to be guest artist at Wayne State University and my exhibition at Feigenson-Rosenstein Gallery in Detroit resulted directly from my connection with the Thorp Gallery.

1. See Footnote for Part I, Section 10.
  
4. An invitation to review an exhibit at U.C.L.A. for Art Week (Dec. 29, 1979) followed my return to Los Angeles. Negotiations for a large exhibit of my paintings since 1974 at either Los Angeles County Municipal Art Gallery (Barnsdall Park) or Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art during the 1980-81 season are taking place.

PART III - What I Got Out of It

I've been back on the West Coast for two months. I'm finally getting settled. I bought a car, found an apartment, unpacked my things and am getting ready to paint again. I'm just beginning to reflect upon the past year.

I am more worldly than I was. I've seen and interacted in life situations that were unfamiliar to me. Other artists taught me a lot. I saw superb art collections. A one-person show of my paintings and drawings is scheduled for Spring 1980 at Edward Thorp Gallery. My reputation as a painter has grown.

What else did I get out of it?

In what ways will my Sabbatical Leave benefit the college?

How will my students gain?

I've heard the expression, and I think I believe, that an apprenticing artist learns not so much from what his teacher knows as from what his teacher is. After all, most college art facilities and curriculums are about the same. The differences lie in individuals.

I decided to spend my Sabbatical Leave in New York City because, aside from professional considerations, I was deeply moved emotionally by the city when I visited there in 1977. Truly, it was the most overwhelmingly beautiful thing I had ever seen. Throughout the past year these feelings would continue to arise, but after settling in and getting down to the business of day-to-day living, the city and the time alone forced me to look very carefully at myself. I'm still sorting out the data.



I have a few observations about my experience in relationship to Mt. San Antonio College's Art Department.

I grew aware of our growing cultural isolation. If I am to believe in the value of a cultural center as an educational resource, I must show concern for this situation, particularly as a result of the loss of many of our sources of contact with such centers. Granted New York does not "walk on water," but the resulting sophistication or provincialism from situations respectively artistically aware or underexposed deeply affect not only the student body but the faculty as well. The presence or absence of a fresh flow of cultural, intellectual or artistic stimulation is universally felt. I realized our increasing necessity for expanded facilities. I recommend:

1. Reinstating Mt. SAC library's periodical room, and resumption of subscriptions to Artforum, Arts, Art International and Studio International.

2. Increasing the number of field trips allotted each studio class.

3. Putting the Mt. SAC Art Gallery back on a full-time status with a full-time director.

4. Reinstating the Art Department's film budget to at least what it was.

5. Providing funds for visiting artists and relevant speakers.

I grew more sensitive to student needs. I am increasing:

1. Encouragement to students to seek that artistic stimulation that far exceeds the development of manual skills on their need priority.

2. Emphasis on the importance of self-motivation.
3. Emphasis on the value of Art History as a living resource.
4. Emphasis to myself that my role as a teacher is to encourage the broadening of individuals, not to teach trade skills.
5. Emphasis to my students that my value to them is the seriousness of my commitment as an artist.

These observations have particularly influenced my approach to the Intermediate Painting sections and Special Studio Arts classes.

I wish to thank the Board of Trustees and the District for making these experiences available to me. It is my hope that the sabbatical privilege given me will be earned through my increased value to the students and the college.

APPENDIX

EXCERPTS FROM MY  
NEW YORK JOURNAL

8/16/78 - (looking at the rooftops of New York at night)

On the roof of Gary Stephan's studio, Canal Street and West Avenue, I see why Elias Goldberg's city-scapes have stuck in my head and why I've always liked them. (thinking about how to paint the city).

A portable easel. White, black, cerulean blue, burnt Sienna (maybe English Red), yellow ochre. Reddish or bluish only by degrees but red in the sky.

Massive. Not linear as I'd thought. Rosso could have sculpted New York.

A portable easel, those few colors, a few brushes, a disposable palette, palette knife, thinner, medium. As portable as possible. Small canvases for on the spot studies - one shot impressions to be worked up later (?). The idea of doing a painting of Los Angeles as I'd imagined is possible and practical here. The roof as a studio. A place to paint landscapes undisturbed.

Early September

(Originally to be a letter to a friend in California. Didn't send it.)  
...about 6:30 on a Tuesday evening. I'm in the Village India - small Indian restaurant around the corner from my NEW HOME on Bleecker Street near Mac Dougal. It's more the image of a poet's apartment than artist's studio - small, overpriced and in the midst of the noisiest part of Greenwich Village. All around are Espresso houses crowded with tourists. There are many students (I'm right near N.Y.U.) so there's something of the feeling of Berkeley...the village tolerates perhaps embraces people driven mad by life and the rest of the city, much like Hollywood Blvd. only with more quaintness.

In Washington Square Park, having my after dinner cigar...2 separate jam sessions within fifty feet of me. No be-bop yet, unfortunately. The other night 2 saxaphonists, guitar, drums (full set) and broom handle and pail bass. Be-bop is taken for granted here...the indigenous folk music... saxaphone sounds come from windows more frequently than guitar sounds and

you can actually hear people listening to Ornette Coleman type jazz on their record players...I don't know whether the novelty has worn off or not. Every time I get feeling down the city goes and pulls something really beautiful and what can one do but feel moved?

9/10/78

Thinking about shaving, abandoning representational imagery. End phase one?

10/24/78

Working on a 30" square painting of two women at a table. This is the grey canvass of a year ago that began as a kind of elegy for Bing Crosby, then became a giant close-up self-portrait and then an all color stops out Peaceable Kingdom. Now it's gone full circle and it's once again grey and once again an elegy. I'm listening to a lot of Tom Waits... thinking about doing a painting of a bar interior. Did three paintings of women at ironing boards (more elegies for domesticity). Am working on the large Denville\* landscape begun in 1975 again; another landscape that looks like Los Angeles; a small reclining nude; a head of a woman. I'm thinking about doing a portrait of Lester Young.

I don't have a television and don't want one. Reading is my diversion: Wanderer by Sterling Hayden, Remembering Bix by Ralph Berton, Bix - Man and Legend by Sudhalter and Evans, Inspector Maigret, Sherlock Holmes, Dylan Thomas and of course the ever present Charles Bukowski. In concert or club situations I've seen Steve Reich, Art Blakey, Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, Walter Bishop, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner and Ron Carter.

---

\*I was born in Denville, N. J. in 1943, and lived there until 1950. I'd not been back since 1951. My coming to terms with and resolving my 28 year fantasies about the place was of major importance during the year.

The City's like a saxophone.

I identify with the work of Charles Bukowski and Tom Waits because they make beauty out of ordinary, day to day experience. (The tough guy images have nothing to do with essence of the work). Maybe I should say they see the beauty already in everyday experience and make art from it.

10/25/78

My grey elegy looking like Magritte's "Souvenirs of a Voyage".....  
Tombstone. Lots to solve. Organic forms in a recti linear space. All those years teaching life drawing. Enough distance. Nice to have those problems back to deal with. The Balthus at the Met...Japanese girl with the black box got me hungry for those problems. That's all I worried about on canvas for years - "this is too big, this is too small, this should be dark, I'll divide this in half, no, I won't, yes, I will, I'll change it back, etc., etc...."- the paintings from the chairs onward had very little of that - it was only paint to worry about...Got too organic, too non-mental. And of course Cezanne last year - that got me on the track again. An Elegy for Domesticity, (secret title) - shades of Hey! It's For You! and The Date and other works from my 1965 period of female domination. Too bad I painted them out.

10/28/79

...Paterson Sims will be seeing them (the new paintings) and it could be important. I would like to be in the Whitney Annual this next year, although I'm not telling anyone but Barbara that I really would like to be in it.

(A section follows on my traditional fantasies about Domesticity).

...Am I really putting the lid on this with my Elegy-Grey-Tombstone-Woman-At-The-Table painting? And what do I replace it with when it's time to actually say or think WHAT I WANT? To paint in unfurnished rooms?... To stay at SAC for 2 years, come back here and do this artist trip - and

by the way I'm really sick of lofts and talk of lofts. It seems too pat. Would I rather live in Denville in my old house? In Hollywood somewhere? Do I want a nice big bachelor digs like the Steppenwolf — paint, play piano and saxophone, listen to records, books, drawings and paintings tumbling all over in a mahogany overstuffed dust laden boy's room? Pennants on the wall, photos of Bix and Lester, Bing and Warner Baxter, revelling in all this thinking "Gosh! I really am getting to be like Albert Ryder!" Actually, this all sounds very appealing.

11/1/79

Got a call from John Egner\* this morning - I'm going to Wayne State (Detroit) November 14th, come back the 17th. I'll see what slides Ed has. Wish I had more older work, especially '68 - '69. All I can do is try to be vulnerable to the students - let them see what I'm about. I sure don't want to give one of those cock of the walk boy-am-I-sure-of-myself slide talks. Seven years of that is plenty.

11/3/79

Worked on the woman standing beside a table. Worked very energetically throwing the paint in the old manner. It needs a little more work in one area but I think it's where it wants to be. It's not the grey elegy I'd planned, rather it's in line with the Armchair for Corot and Fantin-Latour (1974) Ink bottle 1 & 2 (1975) and Armchair (1976). I'm feeling all right about it now.

11/4/79

Last night heard Le Roi Jones, Ted Joans and Jack Micheline read their poetry.

---

\*In charge of visiting artist program - Wayne State

I want to get this down - meeting Jack Micheline the next day and giving him a drawing he inspired...it's very important and very exciting but right now my head is too full of...

1/18/80

I'll get it down now. (Jones, Joans, and Micheline are well known Beat poets...while Le Roi Jones, or Arami Baraka, has continued to be known as a playwright and political activist, Ted Joans and Jack Micheline are known primarily within the time context of the late 1950's. Micheline appeared that night with a tenor saxophonist to accompany his readings. I had seen him weeks earlier in a bar and wondered if it was him - strange too, as he'd gained weight and his hair was white. And I'd see him around Soho drawing pictures. I was very moved by his poetry and went to a book store the day after the reading where they carried his collected poems. They were out of the book but said Jack might be by in a little while and might know where I could get a copy. I went out for coffee and ran into Micheline on the street. I introduced myself, said I really liked his work and wanted to get a copy of his book. We got to talking painting after I told him what I did. He said he went to Mt. Sac in 1949 studying agriculture prior to his stay on a Kibbutz in Israel. We were both headed in the same direction so I invited him up to see my paintings.

I gave him a drawing I did of a man on stilts I saw that morning on 6th Avenue. The desire to record the event was inspired by his poetry, which celebrates the beauty and magic of every day street experience. I kept running into him in Soho and Greenwich Village afterwards and he always thanked me again for the drawing. This is one of my warmest memories of my time in New York.

11/6/78

The Woman in a Room (2 Women at a Table, Woman Standing Beside a Table) has been scraped considerably, now looking like Self portrait 3 and others



of 1977 that received this treatment. I suppose I'm painting my way up to the present and beyond but it's slow and painful. This picture deals with so much that is unresolved. It's physical condition is a reflection of my life at present.

11/12/78 - 5:00 a.m.

Today. Paterson Sims.

A very young looking man of about thirty in a very prestigious position: CURATOR OF THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART.

Ed\* admitted it: he made the mistake of optimism. So did I. I in fact expected a kind of shining knight in the form of Paterson Sims to champion the cause of John Lees. Mr. Sims is polite, smiles a lot, speaks PAST you, always with a note of levity. ("I thought you'd look more tortured"). He looked through my slides, ("My God! This is your life's work!"). I mentioned I was going to show them to Wayne State students. He continued Oh my God! how could I expose my soul to them like that! My God! what NERVE that must take, and so on. My God. As if my students can hurt you. Students - who are always encouraging because they are so plagued by doubt and so desperate for encouragement themselves? Did he realize that I cleaned the studio, the bathroom (although yes I do like it better clean than dirty myself) because he was coming? Does he realize (OF COURSE HE DOES!) how vulnerable an artist makes himself having him over? Well...

I've done it before

I'll do it again.

Tonight I'm just feeling a little down. I work so long on these things and so little so little so little. But this is my journal and I can feel sorry for myself in it if I want. And no - I'm not going to be in the Whitney Biennial.

---

\*Edward Thorp, my dealer since 1974.

8:00 p.m. Rothko at the Guggenheim

Strange that Mark Rothko - Marcus Rothkowitz, the Russian Jewish immigrant whose suicide may turn out to be as famous as Van Gogh's should give me the feeling there's so much to live for and so much for me to do.

Self-indulgent bastard that I am, I of course looked at all the dates of his paintings with the thought of his age when he painted them flashing to what I was doing at that age. (Mark, you lucky devil! You get to hold my Fantasy's hand for the afternoon!).

Rothko was born in 1903. In the early thirties he worked in a loose figurative style often compared to Milton Avery, although I see more of Max Weber in some of the figures. His color sense is already very strong by the middle and late thirties - (the subway paintings with those strange elongated figures) - his use of pinks and greys is beautiful. Then a shift - 1938 - age 35 - an abstract period featuring these kind of undersea forms with mythological and references in their titles. He refers to the archaic constantly. Certainly they don't have the solidity I think of when I think of archaic forms - rather there's a nervousness. That archaic solidity comes later - "the Tragic and the Timeless" Rothko calls it.

Perhaps it's a cultural issue. Maybe Rothko, simply because of the time and place he lived in, matured late. He matured at the same time as Pollock and Hoffman - and he stood about mid-point in age of the two of them. Perhaps mature is the wrong word: there was nothing immature about his subway paintings just as there was nothing immature about Hoffman's 30's still lifes. Rothko's own word "clarity" is more accurate.

Around 1944 there's another very radical shift: the nervous writing of the paintings with mythological titles disappears and paintings are now untitled, numbered or named after the colors that appear. The color patches that formerly served as a kind of backdrop for the written stuff are the sole, subject matter. That must've been one hell of a year!

(I'm curious to get the catalog and see if there's much said about it). A retrospective is hardly the best place to look at paintings for their dramatic effect. It was the same at the Pollock, de Kooning and Guston retrospectives. It's like you become Mary Jane and Sniffles and walk through this enormous picture book - an enormous catalogue. It's just a special breed of show. Merl Shippers said (referring to the Baziotos retrospective in Newport) that a retrospective reveals an artists true stature. Baziotos looked frail, like he didn't have enough work for the show. How much of this was a curatorial problem I couldn't say - but not much I'd venture, as I don't think anything in that Newport show was that strong. Always those annoying insect-legs drawn all over his paintings. One gigantic Surrealist hangover. Rothko's career is certainly true to his statement that an artist's work is a search for clarity and the elimination of obstacles to that clarity INCLUDING HISTORICAL AND STYLISTIC AFFECTIONS. And I think some of the paintings of the 60's deserve to be called great. They'll outlast their time. They've got it. Timeless and tragic.

Mark, was it worth it? Yes, yes, I know that's a dumb question. You had no choice.

This reminds me of one of those spectacular Western movies from the late thirties or early forties where suddenly there's a shot of the White House and then you see President Grant putting all the events of the movie in a larger perspective...telling Joel McCrea that Brian Donlevy and his boys must be stopped if America is to realize her Destiny. Well, I'm doing sort of the same thing, only to put things in a smaller perspective. Back to Notes from Underground 1978 or The Underground Man on Bleecker St.

Things like the Paterson Sims visit as well as the Rothko show must be viewed in a positive way. How can they be used for my benefit? What am I to learn?

The question of clarity - at least the business of seeing things in the light of day - is what this is about. The paintings I've been working on

in New York have been paying such enormous concessions to the real world-- are so timid in the face of the subject I've been trying to portray that they're BORING and BANAL. That goes for the ironing boards and especially the Woman at the Table. As if anybody could care about my elegy for Domesticity--what a pile of self-pity! My last real paintings were the ones I did in Los Angeles. The new stuff has a long way to go to find out the snail's pace forward they're to take. GOOD! Let it be tight like that then!

Obstacles. Remove them. Weights on shoulders. Them, too.

Clarity - the question:

What attracts me in a painting?

What qualities in paintings made me want to be a painter?

What do I really want to paint?

What is most important?

Why does a Morandi relate to a Vermeer, a Chardin, a Corot, or an early Johns?

11/14 - 3:00

Painted an homage to Morandi. I didn't know that was going to be it--it just became. I knew I wanted a white still life. Started as a paint brush, was an abstract landscape, tried to be Dürer's hare, got some rectilinear shape, looked like a city which in turn looked like a Morandi still life. So I pushed it.

Heard Jack Michilene read.

Today I'm off for Detroit.

Bought an Irish walking hat.

11/24/78

...Bought coloring books at Macy's. My Morandi painting failed, got scraped. Told Barbara I was starting to get Ed in my head when painting--making art for the wrong reasons\*. She said that was a good thing to write down.

Most people do not express themselves--the tragedy of not being an artist or a free person. I'm not doing it either. I'm used to not feeling like a free person...these times of artistic impotence double the problem.

11/25/78

Looks like I'll be doing a drawing to be published in Mary Wagner's forthcoming magazine/tabloid Biograph - carte blanche within the subject, "Life."

Let go with the paint this afternoon (Ed and Ross Neher stopping by just as my hands were cerulean blue). This is on the grey canvas that was the Morandi still life. Now there's the image of the Irish walking hat on it.

11/27/78

For Ed and Barbara - What's so good about Eilshemius', The Flood?

Its eccentricity reveals the humanness of the tragedy depicted.

The playfulness with which the traditional "edge" is handled reminds the viewer of this humanness--that the work is, after all - art - a piece - an entertainment desiring to be "Tragic and Timeless." The quality of vulnerability (awkwardness) is revealed in humor.

(Almost a year to the day following this entry I was asked to review the Louis Eilshemius show at U.C.L.A. It appears in the December 1979 issue of Art Week.)

---

\*Marketplace pressures.

11/29

Painted all afternoon. Worked on Irish walking hat.

I could be Marcel Pinchot - Parisian aristocrat and boulevardier. Water colors of French Flappers. Hawk for lots of kale. Talked to Michael Preble--seeing him tomorrow for lunch. Good Uptown Hawker he'd be for this (\$\$\$) artwork.

(entries after Christmas '78 are mostly personal, pertaining little to art. From this time until my return to Los Angeles in September 1979 I did a great deal of painting.)

2/6/79

Feigenson-Rosenstein\* are buying four paintings and taking four others on consignment.

2/7/79

Mike Tetherow<sup>†</sup> called about 9:00 p.m. He said he was "watching the snow... isn't it beautiful?" It was and I had to go out in it. I walked in Washington Square, saw my first snowman in I don't know how many years. The sky was rust color. The moon and the street lights illuminated the already illuminated snow. (I've yet to find a passage in Henry James where snow, and perhaps with luck, the snow in Washington Square is described.)

---

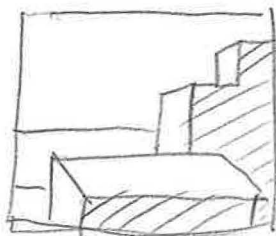
\*Art dealers in Detroit.

<sup>†</sup> An artist I'd known at Otis in 1963-64.

I felt kind of helpless, at the same time I realized it was alright to feel that way. It was beautiful and awesome, and awe doesn't imply much control on the part of the observer. It was beautiful and large...I couldn't encompass it (if that's the word)...Try to grasp, to possess every sensation. Then the old fuddy-duddy John started to worry about catching a cold.

Returned home...did a 9"x12" oil sketch of a standing woman. Henry James influence. We'll let her be.

7/5/79 (pushing 2:00 a.m.)



Working with urban landscape motif - seem to be satisfying my desires to build on what I'm learning from the Romans, Morandi and Balthus. Maybe Chardin too - the way I'm bouncing the colors around. It's nice getting out of that central image routine.

7/13/79 (Midnight)

This will be the last entry...I want to pack this with my things...it's time to move on. Unless New York has something grandly unforeseen in store for me, my business now is to wrap up matters here and proceed to Detroit.

..."proceed to Detroit." I could look back a few pages and see such apprehension ... always its been apprehension with me. This case isn't so unusual.

I am going to Detroit..for a period of six weeks. When I reread these pages back in Los Angeles, that period will have passed and I'll be apprehending over something else. Perhaps. Perhaps I'll be confident in something. Perhaps.

The portrait of my father is just about finished. The one of my mother remains a sketch. I'd like to paint them both in Los Angeles.

...(all the paintings I did in New York)...have their problems.

I like the landscape Peder Bonnier has with the least reservation. (Him buying a painting of mine!)\* There are things in the portrait of my father that are troubling...but its a well painted head. The one of my mother I'm leaving in a rough state. The fish painting's gotten some nice comments and I guess there's some good painting in it, but the main image is weakly painted and the direction itself no longer interests me.

---

\*Bonnier collected essentially minimalist works. He was very opposed to my work at first.