

## Alphonse Berber Gallery Opens on Bancroft

By Peter Selz, *Special to the Planet*  
Thursday July 02, 2009 - 10:06:00 AM

A spirited new gallery opened recently on Bancroft Way in the former J. Goode men's clothing store, which was designed by Julia Morgan. The new owners had the good sense to retain the fine mahogany racks which are now used as frameworks for showing paintings. The space was launched with an innovative group exhibition that included amazing kinetic sculptures by Margolin.

Now showing is the work of three distinctive artists. The Alphonse Berber Gallery, which offers performance art, opened the current show with a work by the Macedonian artist Igor Josifov, who performed most recently at the inauguration of the new Modern Art Wing at the Art Institute of Chicago. At the gallery in Berkeley, he was joined by San Francisco performance artist Michael Ryan Noble. Josifov moved his naked body on a narrow ledge as well as up and down a stairway while his head was covered by a white cube, making it impossible for him to see where he trod. Only the head of his performance partner, Noble, was visible during the dynamic action, called *Being You Uses Me*. While the audience socialized, the two performers were an integral part of everyone's peripheral vision.

On the gallery walls there are evocative photographs by Josifov, many of them of the artist himself, wearing a mask, others addressing Christian and Moslem iconography. Many of them are rather frightening, indicating the artist's awareness of the cultural and moral realities of contemporary life.

**Joshua Dildine**, a young painter—in fact, still a student at Claremont Graduate University—is represented with a number of paintings, which prove that Abstract Expressionism is still alive and kicking. These are not latter-day appropriations of Action Painting, but a vigorous continuation of a 20th century tradition. They remind us of Joan Mitchell's abstract landscapes. Dildine knows how to wield a wide brush to apply a mixture of oil and acrylic to canvas and achieves an effect of pulsing energy. I was particularly impressed by a 30x40-inch drawing in which a web of lines converge on or diverge from great black knots.

The visitor of the exhibition will also be rewarded by Dana Costello's delightful pictures of little girls in crisp school uniforms, standing in line, playing blind man's bluff or just walking about. In the New York Times review of a previous Costello exhibition, Julia Leach compares her paintings to Henry Darger's canvases with which the artist must be familiar. Her paintings too, are dream-like, but they are not weird pictures of little girls with penises. They are uncomplicated and enchanting.

Source:

<http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2009-07-02/article/33270?headline=Alphonse-Berber-Gallery-Opens-on-Bancroft>