

Artist's Profile: Marshall Crossman

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Marshall Crossman works in series based on the figure in motion. At present, she is exploring three separate series: the "Class Photo Series," which dates back to 1983; the "Swimmers" series of which initial work began in 1986-87; and her most recent, "Women Shopping."

Her paintings are a skillful and effective cross between figurative representational works and abstraction. They capture a moment in time: a swimmer meditatively gliding across a lap pool, the repetition of graduates on a yearbook page, shoppers eager for the bargain chase--a women's legs in high heels striding with determination and purpose. "These are women looking for something," Crossman says. Their search for objects may be to fulfill an emotional need, it may be part of the obsessive/compulsive fallout of the acquisitive '80s-- or it may be a woman's timeless desire for something to wear; there are as many interpretations as there are shoppers.

Her style is physical, these are not timid paintings. The images are arresting and the execution is confident, forceful. They are never over-painted; Crossman has a knack of sensing the painter's "decisive moment"--applying her paint with spontaneity and energy. For Crossman, paint is not just a rendering tool. "I'm constantly amazed by the range of expression communicated by paint alone. My painting process allows for a lot of spontaneity in both paint handling and color," she explains. "With me the actual execution and application of paint is as important as the subject matter."

"The Swimmers I painted back in 1986 were more frenzied and splashy. They have stylistically changed over a period of time," she claims. Crossman's recent swimmers move through space in a liquid motion, their passage marked by ripples of paint. They make you want to merge with the canvas, to attain their transitional state of buoyancy and peace.

In the "Class Photo Series" she is exploring the psychology of the individual verses the group. "I was intrigued by the repetition and exaggerated poses of yearbook photos, also the tension of the individual within the grid of the whole," Crossman says. The paintings delve into the social dynamic of the high school peer group; individuality bursts out of some grids, others are only partially limned. These paintings capture the "camera facade" of people and concentrate on such elements as the "hysterical over-emphasized smile."

Crossman, 38, was part of Introductions 1987 at Jeremy Stone Gallery. Her work was seen in a 2-person show at the gallery in 1988 and she has her first solo exhibition at the gallery May 18-June 30, 1990. Crossman moved to San Francisco 13 years ago from Omaha, Nebraska, via Fort Collins, Colorado where she received a BFA from Colorado State University.