

SAVOY



SAVOY

An Installation
by Richard Yarde

Organized by
The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum
South Hadley, Massachusetts

March 30–August 15, 1982
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum
South Hadley, Massachusetts

December 4, 1982–January 16, 1983
San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego, California

February 8–March 20, 1983
The Baltimore Museum of Art
Baltimore, Maryland

June 6–September 4, 1983
The Studio Museum in Harlem
New York, New York

In an interview in 1980, Richard Yarde spoke of a project that he had been contemplating for some time — a three-dimensional installation piece recreating the Savoy Ballroom of Harlem in all its splendor. *Savoy*, the artist's first venture beyond the flat painted surface, has at last taken form some two years later.

Foremost among the many people who have joined in the realization of that idea is designer Peter Bena, who worked closely with the artist from the development of the original design and construction of the model through the fabrication of this complex work. His unstinting imagination and attention to detail were key elements in the actualization of *Savoy*. Richard Yarde is especially indebted also to Carl Johnson, curator of the Paul Whiteman Collection at Williams College, for the assistance he provided in researching the history of the ballroom in the initial phases of the project, and for his enthusiastic encouragement throughout.

At Mount Holyoke, innumerable people have helped in a myriad of ways: Jean C. Harris, Director of the Art Museum, and Margery Roy, Administrative Assistant, have given invaluable advice and support from the planning stages onward; Professor Oliver Allyn generously offered the use of his studio when working space near the museum was essential; Warren McAvoy and his able staff, particularly Robert Kemple and master carpenters Anatole Burrell and Edward Michon, helped facilitate the construction of *Savoy* with professional care and admirable patience. Special thanks are due a number of indefatigable students who offered willing hands in the fabrication of the exhibition despite exams, papers, and portfolios, especially Denise Legters, Laurie Stevens, Ina Klimczuk, Hwei-Ming Boey, Valerie Tratnyek, Brooke Lynes, Carol Bowen, Mary Elizabeth Rider, Rebecca Gannon, and Lucille Harasti.

For their donations of much-needed equipment and labor, we are indebted to Mr. Richard Kleeburg, of Kleeburg Sheet Metal Inc., and Mr. John Lapinski, of Lapinski Inc. Michael Forte provided technical expertise on silkscreening, and Dick Fish contributed photographic assistance.

The largest debt of gratitude goes to the National Endowment for the Arts for its assistance in the form of a special exhibitions grant, and to the Mount Holyoke Friends of Art whose contributions helped match it. Other matching funds were provided by the Susan Davenport Page Memorial Fund and the Warbeke Museum Fund.

Wendy M. Watson

Curator
Mount Holyoke College Art Museum

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

'the corn is green,' said the musician

RICHARD YARDE'S BLUES

Just off the platform, in populist invention,
and speaking impassionately of the underside
of Vachel Lindsay's 'taking it to the people'
I cab uptown to the gallery where Richard
Yarde's black face envelopes between the phases
of the moon; black faces in the portrait gallery
on 57th street, how many blocks from Bird,
how many blocks from the *Savoy Dancers*,
project of the tse-tse fly, achilles tendon;
"white folks don't want black faces staring
at them on their walls," is why the portraits
didn't sell; so we went across the street
to celebrate over dinner — boys on roller skates
pirouetted on the cobbled walks, on splintered
alleyways and grandees — and we toasted
to the artist.

I could have asked him to recite
the famous epithets of Leadbelly, just off the chain
gang, and evil in tonalities of "Irene,"
or asked about the fingerings on the twelve string
guitar, or why Charlie Christian isn't in the gallery,
but his blind father is — or what is musicianship
to intermediaries who teach the finger positions
to the poor, the popular.

"Your pictures border
on the photographic" the reviewer said —
photography of the passbook and the blotter
where the heroes come to light; I leap upon
a subway train, another underground station,
on the way to Penn Station, tuxedo junction,
and of the painter's pride in Massachusetts.

Frederick Douglass did recruiting for the 54th
and you were born in Boston, one site of liberty,
the baritones and goosesteps of other interior
wars, spectral landscapes, and the close quarters
of the colorist, the difficult edges of the nest, (nettles)
maneuverings, and of the band on 5th Avenue.

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15 March 1982

Dear Richard:

When I wrote *Richard Yarde's Blues* I had just been to an opening of yours in New York City; the poem testifies to that — the poem also shortens the space and tightens the lens, as commentary, about the nature of artists, the consciousness they bring to solving an artistic problem, but there is always the question of politics, somehow embossed on the landscape any artist brings to composition. Painters like you take chances while the critics wait, for you've insisted for some time now on painting on your own terms. What are the models? In this exhibition, Savoy, grandiloquent with all those references to Italian art and history, all those questions of what does one do with one's feet; apparently you're talking about the choreography of the body, in all its complexity of parts and wholes, with and without accents, and questioning the perennial question, one might say balance, between the notion of entertainment, and the quality of performance. Audiences on the dancefloor are not

always participants; sometimes they provide comic relief, a psychological function which operates at aesthetic and cultural posture: the quest for excellence. The symbolic outlets circulate around human and divine perceptions of culture; they make us uncomfortable, both at the level of perception, and the level of technique. The Savoy gave easy access to symbolic acts: that we are not ever completely knowledgeable about self; that death is inevitable; that many experiences prevent us from the acquisition of power and passion; that sexual aggressiveness and style always cost us something, as expression, as 'equipment for living.' Our status in life is always openended, but change costs; nothing comes without effort and the risk of pain. Personal relationships are often made difficult under social restrictions; social mores, folksay, propriety and demeanor, taste, the equity of fantasy and the real world, offer options and catharsis. We have the question of cultural identity before us; 'nothing more nor less than the mean between

selfhood and otherness, between our respect for ourselves and our relationship with our fellow men and women.' As you know I grew up in Brooklyn, New York in the 40's; Bird was alive; one rode the subway from B'klyn to 52nd St for kicks, after early church service, to listen through the cracks, at the best, as our parents had taught us. Talk from parents and relatives, even neighbors, designated the Savoy as the place: this was the era of the big bands, Chick Webb and Fletcher Henderson, and the remnants of the Blue Devils, to mention only a FEW. My folks listened to Savoy Jam Sessions on the radio; when they couldn't afford to go, or had to travel too far, or there was a curfew, as there sometimes was, you could still imagine the architecture, spacious lobby, huge cutglass chandelier, the marble staircase, and four thousand people standing and rocking in a block-long building. There was no policy of discrimination; anybody who was 'presentable' could come in. There's a tale that Lana Turner coined the Savoy 'home of the happy feet,' her own im-

age of *Imitation of Life* throbbing in the cinema. Her comment described the race-rituals of the day; what of race relations? The Irish, Germans, Jews had systematically moved out; Negroes moved in, the 'prosperity' aftermath of the War (I) almost unfelt uptown. There were still remnants of the 369th Division; there were semi-literate toughs who organized themselves into gangs: the Meteors, Buffaloes, True Pals, Harlem Habits, Forty Thieves, and the Jolly Fellows, a secret organization, with its own clubhouse, initiation rites and territory. Many of these club members were the dancers; the bouncers often controlled the clubs, and each club was like a family, obedience to hierarchal rule, protection, and a place to go. The Savoy was that place. There was much action and fighting for territory, but there were also codes of honor: courtesy to women, fair fights (with groundrules), weapons, territory, emissaries to settle or announce disputes. That siphoning off of gang energies was also the invention of The Lindy. These tight organizations often captured the dance contests,

marathons, and jitterbug reputations in Harlem and 'outer' New York City, and beyond, Jersey and sometimes Connecticut (Hartford) and Philly.

The Savoy was the emporium; it had class, magnitude, glamour, a new floor installed every three years. In the early days, 1926 to 1930, the price for admission varied: 30¢ before 6pm, when you danced to records; 60¢ before 8pm, still no band music; 85¢ thereafter. One could see many poor people attending every night; you were sometimes greeted by hostesses, who served as dance partners, 3 dances for 25¢, and after Repeal, you could stand at the bar. Saturday was squares' night, those who put the accent on the first syllable of 'Savoy.' They came in when it was too crowded to dance. Wednesdays and Fridays were reserved for social clubs and fraternities; Monday was Ladies Night; Thursday 'kitchen mechanics,' monopolized by domestics, not too crowded and good for practicing. Tuesday was the night of the '400' club, reserved for dancers only, at re-

duced prices, with no crowds, full of local talent, lots of floor space, and a chance to watch the best dancers and sharpen your 'rap.' Sunday was the best night of all — the night of celebrities and movie-stars, the real publicity agents of the Savoy, and the 'Opportunity' contest, where prizes were given. Almost always 'Shorty' Snowden was asked to lay out, not to compete; later, he was asked and then paid to compete; his feet were sometimes wringing wet inside his shoes. There was a Cat's Corner, where the best dancers held court, and had to dance their ways in and out; this was where the elect, by invitation only, brought their damsels, fancy girls; if you got lost you got kicked in your shins, or worse. NOBODY WAS ALLOWED TO COPY ANYBODY'S STEPS, an iron-clad law of the elect. Shorty Snowden, Leon James and Al Minns were the best dancers. There were great stories: during a dance marathon, with #7 on Shorty's back, Walter and Ed (Winchell and Sullivan) served as reporters the night Shorty coined 'the

breakaway,' flinging his partner out and improvising a few solo steps of his own. In the midst of a dance marathon the effect was spectacular; even the musicians came to life, no longer playing mechanical statements, but answering back. When "Fox Movietone News" took a closeup of Shorty's feet Shorty was asked: "What are you doing with your feet?" There was no answer prepared for the theatrical interviewer; Shorty was doing the Lindy, named for Charles Lindbergh, where you focused on speed; Shorty could do seven complete steps to "Tiger Rag" in less than two minutes.

"I was sure having a ball, doing whatever came into my head."

Shorty gained weight the longer he danced, won all the contest money, hands down. Shorty invented an improvised 'run' which added to the Lindy; he had a lifetime pass after all the publicity. The Savoy was called the Track, named after dog-racing, and Shorty was the baddest hound.

The bands were a constant inspiration, their rhythming setting the pace, with power and drive, for the dancers. There were many 'battles of the bands,' each on a double bandstand, the fast steps accenting the fast tempos of the players. The dancers created new styles to fit an evolving big-band sound; invaders came from everywhere within hearing. The Lindy was a classic syncopated two-step (or box step), accenting the offbeat; after these basic treatments one went into a breakaway, the creative part of the dance: you added whatever you wanted, the dance providing the frame into which any movement could be inserted, before the dancers returned to each other; Lindy Hop for the Lindbergh Hop across the Atlantic. The best bands stimulated the great improvisations of the dancers, playing in unison, or with mixed solos, creating a lifting momentum. The trick was to increase the energy and speed of execution, a necessary preliminary for the acrobatics which followed. The musicians and dancers

challenged each other; great dancers inspired the great players, and a great player like Lester Young was heard to say 'the rhythm of the dancers comes back to you when you're playing.' Dancers split into two groups: floor steps and air steps. The attractions were Shorty and Big Bea, Stretch Jones and Little Bea (giant Bea with a foot-shorter Shorty, Little Bea a foot shorter than Stretch) who filled the joint with hilarity, by their incongruous combination, but Shorty was opposed to 'air steps,' for he would have to be thrown. The high school dancers started the air steps with basic ju-jitsu, back flip, over the head, and snatch. There was a tale that the Harlem Riot of 1943 would never have happened if the Savoy hadn't been temporarily closed, off-limits, a war zone for interracial gatherings, but this was speculation from social workers and 'enemies of the public dance.' There was no hiding place in the lives of the people, their tragic predicament, though one could see the revelation of their inner worlds in the attitudes posed. It was a commentary on how we experience; it was re-

fined, energetic, resonant, full of tension, and balance. It was unique, discriminating, disciplined; there was the clash of social realism, race-relations, race rituals, religious fervor, a freedom to define an individual style: there was no conceptual failure, no technical lapses, great challenges met. The dance documented change; it defined time and augmented rhythms; it offered aggressive solutions to artistic problems without ignoring the social world. There was comic strip, cinema, Hollywood names; there was a narrative of gesture and a code of recognition for talent and justice. It demonstrated the individual brilliance of making a mark and remaining with a group, a couple and a band. It offered metaphoric complaint, but no self-pity; it was not sentimental, though full of feeling; it did not ignore the social realities, but it transcended the national predicament of race, at least within its confines, and that was an achievement. It taught the world artistic freedom, group value, and improvisatory soloing; it taught the people of

Harlem how to see themselves, releasing the dancers and musicians in a dynamic recreation of the word, Harlem, through misnomers, profiteering, a false optimism, as though life would have no cost. It was an essay in culture, offering options in naming: the Lindy Hop, the Break, Shim/sham/shimmy, Snake-hips, Truckin', Down to the Very Bricks. There was the fantasy that Dizzy Gillespie would be late for his performance, but always arrive on time, but never early; and Bird 'Stompin' at the Savoy.' The iconography of the country resides on this dance floor, on the bandstand, on the burnished floor and carpet; this is vernacular elegance, a TOUCH stone to an era, a way of seeing, a mode of thought, the pitch and precision of feeling. Many of the greatest dancers went to work in factories rather than to Broadway, and Shorty ended up unable to walk at all. The blues offers us little option for meeting life's terms, hazardous as they are. You know the Savoy was *everybody's forum*; there's the bandstand, perhaps, 'hunchbacked'

Chick Webb and the 'pretty' Fletcher Henderson. So many whites eavesdropped, but some danced, and there were few if any autograph seekers; you were there to participate, in a most demographic and democratic manner, to learn how to conduct yourself, in time and space, to appreciate the neighborhood, and the world. To meet life's terms but never accept them; to dance and sing in the syncretism which is art.

"The blues ain't nothin' but a poor man's heart disease."

'In love and service evermore'—

Michael S. Harper

Professor of English
Brown University

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RICHARD YARDE'S SAVOY

The exuberant dancers of Richard Yarde's *Savoy* draw resonance from the energetic, fluent handling of paint. Yet there is about the image as a whole a fixity and distance. *Savoy* celebrates the great Harlem ballroom opened in 1926, which flourished, in defiance of the sombre mood of the Depression, during the thirties, and into the forties, finally closing in 1959. Yarde recalls the importance of dancing as an almost ritualized way of having fun while he was growing up in the South End of Boston in the forties and fifties. Attached to the block dances and house parties was a tremendous sense of joy.¹ The *Savoy* ballroom, which was in reality a city block long and weekly welcomed thousands, was for him a subject which reflected an indomitable spirit. The initial and enduring inspiration for the piece has, however, been visual rather than narrative. In the late seventies Yarde became intrigued by a photographic, fragmented view of the patterns of the *Savoy's* canopy and floor, at a time when he was exploring the pictorial possibilities of patterned surfaces in such paintings as *Sweet Daddy Grace*.

Since the late sixties when he turned away from abstraction, photographs, regarded by Yarde as "found objects", have played a role in his working process. Isolating figures, spaces and details for scrutiny in watercolors and oil paintings, he has been vividly aware of the acute distortions of even the most mundane-seeming photos. Of the several photographs of the *Savoy* with which Yarde worked, three showing the empty space of the ballroom proved for him to be the most evocative. Yarde's use of black and white photographic images transformed and rendered in color may reflect his early experience of the linking of photography and painting in the studio of his godfather, Amos Gibson, who hand-tinted the portrait photographs which he did in the evenings. Not only did the young Richard become absorbed in applying color to extra prints made by Gibson, but he began to overpaint, in watercolor, photos which he selected from newspapers.²

In the late sixties Yarde embarked on a series of paintings of such architectural forms as doors, windows, gates, and sections of facades, depicted



at actual size, in unmixed primary colors. This subject matter facilitated a transition from abstraction to a tautly structured representation. By 1970 figures had appeared before urban street facades and within the spaces of rooms. With the introduction of the figure, Yarde muted his palette, ochres, browns and other earth tones replacing the brilliant, saturated colors of the doors. Bathed in golden light and with her back to us, the seated figure of *The Wait* of 1970-71 has a symmetrical and strangely hieratic presence.

Their subjects drawn from autobiography and black history, Yarde's figurative works focus on the pictorial relationship of the figures to their surroundings, often composed as rich floral patterns. The funeral wreaths of *Johnny's Gone* (1975-76), an homage to blues singer Johnny Ace, are a strident echo of the victory garlands of Yarde's images of prizefighter Jack Johnson. Kenneth Baker has reflected that

The historical content of Yarde's pictures remains remote, even when it centers on recognizable figures like Jack Johnson. The

*true subject matter of his work seems to be his own memories and visions of social experience in black America. His work has an autobiographical quality that accords perfectly with the way it is made. Each picture is made as if painting itself were a narrative, even an autobiographical process.*³

Two distinct treatments of color in Yarde's earlier work — the use of primary color in connection with architectural subjects, and the association of more muted hues with figurative imagery — are brought together in *Savoy*. An earth yellow mediates between the high-keyed reds and blues and the more subdued browns, blacks and whites. While the proportions of particular colors vary with the arrangement of shapes, and although each pair of dancing figures has its own internal color organization, *Savoy* is tied together by a palette which is constant throughout. In this overall conception Yarde is working consciously within the context of mural rather than easel painting. The impulse to create an enveloping painted environment may be traced back through ancient Egyptian tomb



*Study for
Sweet Daddy Grace
Watercolor, 1976
Private Collection, Boston*

*The Wait
Oil on canvas, 1970-71
Private collection, New York*

interiors, in which a consistent palette unifies sculpture, wall painting and architecture. Yarde kept photographs of the tomb of Nefertari in his studio while at work on *Savoy*, and has remarked that the designer of the original ballroom must have been familiar with Egyptian motifs, which are suggested by the soffit molding, lamps and carpeting.⁴

While the dancers of *Savoy* are depicted in more vibrant color than the musicians, all seem veiled in their unnatural, blue-green flesh tones, intended by the artist to detach the figures from the present. Having begun to use non-naturalistic color for this expressive purpose in 1970-71, Yarde was intrigued on a trip to the western region of Nigeria in 1971 to learn that in Yoruba sculpture a blue or green skin color is sometimes employed to distinguish ancestral images from portraits of the living.⁵

Although the canopied stage and geometrically patterned carpet of *Savoy* are closely re-

lated to the pulpit and floor of *Sweet Daddy Grace*, *Savoy* marks a major departure for the artist in its three-dimensional form, and in its use of such contrasting textural elements as wood, carpeting, metal, and mirror. Yarde's restless expansion of the boundaries of painting began in the early seventies. Long impressed by the freshness of William Blake's watercolors,⁶ Yarde has for more than a decade guarded the spontaneity of his own, allowing them to extend beyond the confines of the paper on which they are begun, adding sheets to accommodate the growing image. This piecing together of the picture surface underlines the constructed, physical nature of the work. That there are no preliminary drawings for the watercolors is crucial to their immediacy, the emerging image moving, as Kenneth Baker has noted, like handwriting on unruled paper. In a perceptive discussion of the watercolors, Baker has observed that

Yarde relies deftly on the white of the page in composing his

images — so much so that he makes it behave as both drawing and color. . . . Each image seems to drift within the space of the paper, as if afloat on a fluid or elastic surface. And it is this floating quality that suggests the retrospective blue of memory.⁷

The constructed aspect of the watercolors has been carried into such oil painting as *Sweet Daddy Grace* and *Johnny's Gone*, in which additional stretched canvases have been used to extend the original surface. The internal edge introduced by butted canvases or overlapping sheets of paper draws attention to the artist's means. Similarly in *Sweet Daddy Grace* the flattened pattern of the floor confounds any impression of depth. In probing the interplay of three-dimensional illusion and surface-asserting pattern, Yarde touches on issues investigated earlier in the century by Matisse.

Savoy, conceived as an evocative image rather than as a re-



Johnny's Gone
Oil on canvas, 1976
Museum of Fine Arts,
Springfield, Massachusetts

construction of the ballroom, calls upon devices of both painting and sculpture, its literally three-dimensional space rendered illusionistically deeper by the diminishing scale of the less than life-size figures. In this mingling of media, Yarde's recent work parallels that of contemporary artist Red Grooms. While foreshortened contours suggest the movement in space of the dancers, their blank sides and backs belie that illusion. The tension between the flat surfaces of the figures and their arrangement in actual depth engenders the piece with a mysterious presence akin to that of folk art. A signal work for Yarde has been black folk artist James Hampton's *Throne of the Third Heaven of the Nations Millennium General Assembly* (National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.), made from bits of discarded gold and silver foil and other found materials. Created by Hampton in virtual isolation from 1950 until his death in 1964, the *Throne* is of

compelling force for Yarde in its willful molding of rough, non-art materials into a powerful, visionary expression.⁸

The ballroom setting of *Savoy* — with its Venetian blinds, mirrors, canopy, and colorful carpet — becomes a frame for the dancers and musicians, and establishes a context for the viewer, the silver columns topped by lights acting as totemic guardians of the dance floor and stage. There is thus imposed on the painterly figurative imagery a formality and remove like that of the tableaux of Edward Kienholz. For finally we view the piece from a distance, sensing in the marks of the painter and in the gestures of his figures the style and grace which were gathered at the *Savoy* some years ago.

Sally Yarde

Assistant Professor of Art
Mount Holyoke College

1 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 21, 1982.

2 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 4, 1982.

3 Kenneth Baker, "Art — Picturing Paint," *The Boston Phoenix*, April 17, 1979, section 3, page 10.

4 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 24, 1982.

5 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 21, 1982. In the Ibeji cult of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Yarde discovered another parallel to his own intuitive approach. After the death of a twin at birth a sculpture of the figure is made and its face colored blue, again to denote its passage from this world. Yarde has also encountered the use of a green flesh tone in certain figures of gods in Egyptian art.

6 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 4, 1982. As a child Yarde was captivated by the Blake watercolors, and by Gauguin's *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

7 Kenneth Baker, "Art — Watercolor Interiors," *The Boston Phoenix*, September 30, 1980, section 3, page 10.

8 Interview with Richard Yarde, August 21, 1982.



Savoy Installation Views
1982





RICHARD YARDE

Born

Boston, Massachusetts, October 29, 1939

Teaching

Associate Professor of Art, University of Massachusetts, Harbor Campus, Boston, 1981 to present

Visiting Associate Professor of Art, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts, 1980-81

Visiting Artist, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, 1977-80

Visiting Associate Professor of Art, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1976-77

Assistant/Associate Professor of Art, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 1971-76

Assistant Professor of Art, Boston University, School for the Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1965-71

Selected one-person exhibitions

Meredith Long Gallery, Houston, Texas, 1982, 1981, 1979, and 1978

Little Center Gallery, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1981

Harcus-Krakov Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, 1980 and 1979

Roosevelt Museum, Roosevelt, New York, 1980

Meredith Long Contemporary, New York, New York, 1979 and 1977

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 1979

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1978

University of Connecticut, Storrs, 1977

Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1977

Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, New York, 1976

Museum of the National Center for Afro-American Artists, Boston, Massachusetts, 1976

Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 1975

Selected group exhibitions

A Private Vision: Contemporary Art from the Graham Gund Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1982

Contemporary American Realism: Drawings, The Boston Athenaeum, Boston, Massachusetts, 1982

Retour aux Sources, Une Exposition en Afrique d'Artistes

Afro-Américains 1980, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 1980

New Directions in Realism, Danforth Museum, Framingham, Massachusetts, 1980

Spiral: Afro-American Art of the '70s, Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Boston, Massachusetts, 1980

Recent Acquisitions, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, 1979-80

The Henry W. Ranger Exhibition, National Academy of Design, New York, New York, 1979

New England Connections, Federal Reserve Bank, Boston, Massachusetts, 1978-79

Recent Acquisitions, Herter Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1978

Hassam Fund Purchase Exhibition, The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, New York, 1982 and 1977

America 1976, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., traveling exhibition 1976-1978; museums included were:

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia

San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California

Forth Worth Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Milwaukee Art Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

Collectors Collect Contemporary, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts, 1977

Boston Watercolor Today, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1976

Jubilee: Afro-American Artists on Afro-America, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1975-76

Afro-American Artists: New York and Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1970

Public Collections

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas

Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts

Herter Gallery, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut

Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts

Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, New York

Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Boston, Massachusetts

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts

Frost Library, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

State University of New York, Binghamton

Awards and Honors

Henry W. Ranger Fund Purchase, National Academy of Design, New York, New York, 1979

Childe Hassam Purchase, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, New York, 1977

Fellowship Grant in Painting, National Endowment for the Arts, 1976

Arcadia Foundation Award for Painting, New York, New York, 1975

Blanche E. Colman Award for Travel and Study in Nigeria, 1970

Invitation to McDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, 1970 and 1968

Invitation to Yaddo Corporation, Saratoga Springs, New York, 1970, 1969, 1966, and 1964

Selected Bibliography

Laura Holland, "Stompin' at the Savoy," *Valley Advocate*, June 30, 1982.

Robin Karson, "Richard Yarde," *Art New England*, May 1982.

Marilyn J. S. Goodman, "Wreaths," *Worcester Magazine*, March 1981.

Lois Tarlow, "Richard Yarde, Painter," (interview) *Art New England*, October 1980.

Kenneth Baker, "Art: Watercolor Interiors," *Boston Phoenix*, September 1980.

Mimi Crossley, "Art: Yarde: Watercolors," *Houston Post*, May 10, 1978.

Charlotte Moser, "Two New Shows: One Works, the Other Doesn't," *Houston Chronicle*, April 29, 1978.

Kenneth Baker, "Art: Picturing Paint," *Boston Phoenix*, April 17, 1979.

Hilton Kramer, "Art: Requiem for a Heavyweight," *The New York Times*, December 16, 1977.

Hilton Kramer, "Yarde Portraits Evoke Black Heroes," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1976.

Kenneth Baker, "The Art of Watercolor," *Boston Phoenix*, February 29, 1976.

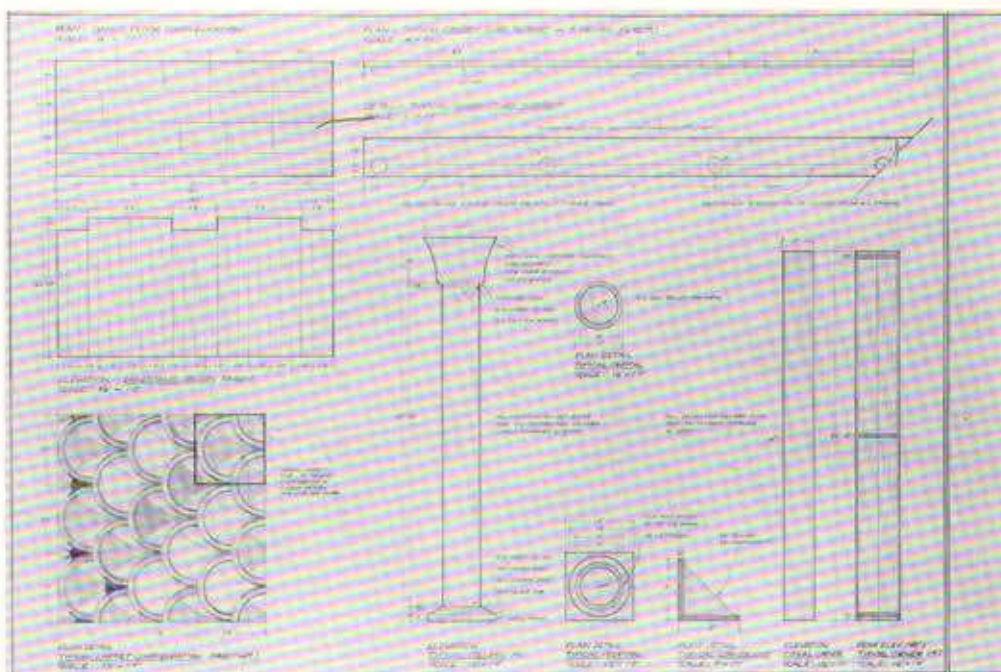
Robert Taylor, "A Deeply Satisfying Elegance in Boston Watercolor Today," *Boston Globe*, February 1, 1976.

Gallery Representation

Meredith Long Gallery, Houston, Texas

Harcus-Krakow, Boston, Massachusetts

Peter J. Bena is a designer of architecture, interiors, exhibitions and furniture in Northampton, Massachusetts. From 1975 to 1981, he held the position of Gallery Manager at the University Gallery of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. In that capacity, he worked closely with artists such as Alice Aycock, Loren Madsen, Stephen Antonakos, and Richard Fleischer in the design and fabrication of major installation pieces in a wide variety of media. He has also lectured on gallery and arts management and installation design at the University of Massachusetts. In 1976, Mr. Bena was the preparator for the United States Delegation at the Venice Biennale, and technical designer for visiting American artists there.



*Peter J. Bena
Designer and technical
consultant for Savoy*