

A Place at the Table

Review

by Ann Weinstein

Va. Tech presented a warm and loving Festival, in April 2001, celebrating Southern food, wine, music, dance, art, stories, and culture. "A Place at the Table" was widely sponsored and attended. Both audience and participants were integrated in happy association, noting that "it's the shared joys and needs, not the differences that prevail."

Among a the wondrous events, the Blacksburg Art Association held a members' exhibition - but just for one day - also called "A Place At the Table." You could call it "A Movable Feast," as it has been reinstalled in the Blacksburg Library, at 200 Miller Street.

Hanging grapes enliven Sally Mook's inviting tablescape adorned with a loaf of bread and wine (in bottle and glass). Each viewer supplies the "thou." Also by Mook, "Breakfast Table #2" is much more complex, and also much more selfcontained. In a scatter of two hens, a dozen eggs, wild feathers, combed texture, bright color, collaged, painted and stamped patterns and teasing planes, the image coheres aesthetically.

Leslye Bloom combines highly technical procedures and organic energy, literal doilies and traditional tea cups with laser printing. She uses the computer as a medium, as other artists use paint, charcoal, or the earth. But there is nothing in her prints that readily suggest the hi-tech mechanics used to make them. In addition she often resolves them with added collage, paint, and encaustic. With a play of her imagination, she can create as many singular images from her original multiples as she chooses to.

A series of Lizabeth Weisband's paintings are titled "After Braque." A tilted table top also hints slightly of Picasso and Cezanne, who preceded them both, with grapes meant to add more compositional than edible interest.

A vertical bunch of asparagus spears, by June Mullins, unravel from left foreground across the page into a diminishing arc of equally spaced single stalks. I hear a background hum of the march from "The Marriage of Figaro" as they march gently into place.

In "Which Comes First" Lyndall Mason pays homage to a bowl and freize of eggs, drawn, dotted, outlined, and collaged, with stamped hearts and feathers.

The diagonals of a green and white tablecloth in Frances Frederick's firm oil, "Breakfast Anyone?," show through several glasses and contrasts with a variety of dishes.

Derek Parks outlines various aspects of a cabbage in black ink and marker against a loose, pink wash of watercolor, Much larger than life, his picture is both sparse and decorative.

In her photograph, "The Blush,"

Susan Lockwood relates the partial, rounded -forms and contrasting textures of artichokes and yellow apples.