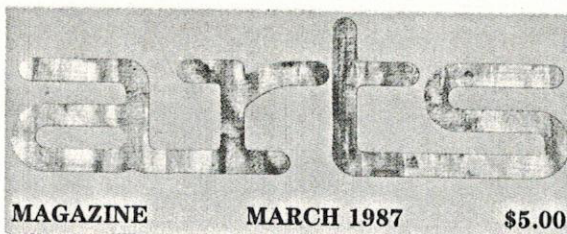


RUSSEL SHARON Hal Bromm/Avenue A



RUSSELL SHARON

One of the strengths of Russell Sharon's work has been his large-scale, outdoor installations, but perhaps it is time for this outside roughness to come indoors. Because one of Sharon's vacant lot menageries was the victim of a local safari of destruction (Sharon had to launch a preservation effort with his saw and hammer) Sharon's current exhibit features five animal heads mounted on the walls *inside*. Though tempted to mount them like trophies up near the ceiling, Sharon decided to mount the heads at eye level on a white wall in a way that conjures the rest of the wild animal in a tame and quiet setting. The animal shapes are born from mirages seen in found pieces of wood. In some pieces the type of wood adds to the demeanor of the animal. Sharon likes to work with sharp points—he has chosen the four sharpest points of schoolboy monster mythology: the crocodile, the panther, the bull, and the unicorn. The panther is all an earthy criss-cross of spikes, with great prehistoric fangs that send a shiver of visualization down through the shadow. A crocodile lunges out of another wall with such a sharp tongue it almost becomes a dragon. The unicorn is the purest symbol of pointyness. Sharon's new color—lightest lavender and yellow in this piece—make the unicorn float: the point pricks off the skylight of the gallery. The color is so soft it makes the wall behind it glow with hallucinatory sparkle. Outsideness turned inside gives Sharon's work its best edge; the wild is tamed, but it's still wild. (Hal Bromm, *January 8-February 8*)

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