

Jim Campbell

Museum of the Moving Image and Bryce Wolkowitz

The third-floor gallery at the Museum of the Moving Image contained the first New York museum survey of the work of Jim Campbell, created over the course of 29 years. In the darkened space, the faint hum of motors—music to the ears of film buffs—created an immersive experience. Campbell's clever experimentation with film and new media produced haunting, hazy, handsome works that often appeared to have sprung from the mind of a mad scientist, a quirky but poetic one.

Visual artworks on display—part painting, part photography, part sculpture, part video—were tinged with the autobiographical as well as universal themes such as loss, memory, and the vagaries of perception.

In *Photo of My Mother* (1996), an image of the artist's mother became visible behind clouded glass, but only within the timed intervals of a recording of Campbell's steady breathing. Next to that picture hung *Portrait of My Father* (1994-95), a companion photo- and electricity-based work controlled by the timing of the artist's heartbeat.

Ambiguous Icon #1 Running Falling (2000) depicted a filmic image from a grid of 165 red LED lights that could be seen best when viewed through a clouded glass panel. Campbell has also been fascinated with obsolete technology, as demonstrated in a kinetic 2007 work, titled *Glimpse*, which consists of a slide projector mysteriously rigged to a



Jim Campbell, *Portrait of Rebecca with Power Line Fluctuations*, 1992, video monitor and custom electronics, 24" x 18" x 18". Museum of the Moving Image.

DVD player. The slides are blank, and the viewer could only perceive snippets of a slippery narrative for a magical split second as the next slide cascaded into its place.

Campbell's works examine the very act of seeing as it relates to emotion and intellect—and everything in between. A concurrent show at Bryce Wolkowitz consisted of some half-dozen light works by the artist, who was a former filmmaker. LEDs were used to make topographical reliefs for distilled home movies and projections. Visitors' eyes were challenged and stimulated by the massive chandelier of light that hung from the ceiling for *Untitled (Study for the Journey)*, 2014. As images of blurred commuters made their way across the overhead lights, Campbell's technology managed to evoke impressions of what it means to be human.

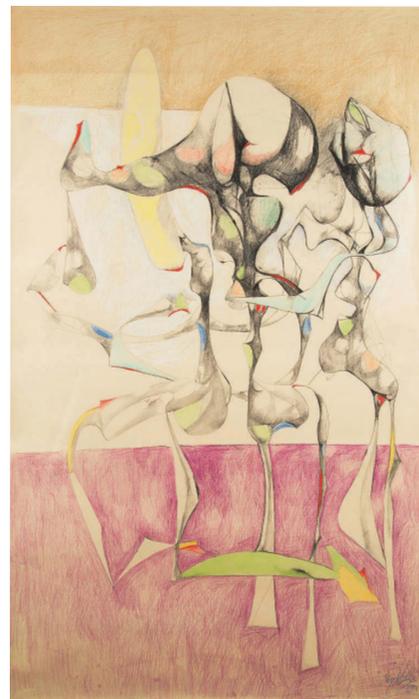
—Doug McClemtont

Leon Kelly

Francis M. Naumann Fine Art

Leon Kelly (1901-82) was a Surrealist painter from Philadelphia who showed at New York's Julien Levy Gallery in the 1940s along with Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, Roberto Matta, and Salvador Dalí. Like Dalí, Kelly was fascinated with distorted and dismembered body parts, a motif that became one of the signatures of Surrealism. But the textures of Kelly's work are, for the most part, closer to Matta's.

In addition to paintings, Kelly produced works on paper that are as remarkable for their draftsmanship as for the disturbing content. In one piece in the show, a meticulously rendered monstrous bird tortures a naked woman. In another, an avian head and pair of outstretched talons emerge from



Leon Kelly, *Untitled*, 1958, pencil on paper, 61½" x 36". Francis M. Naumann Fine Art.

the shell of a turtle. No matter what the primordial fantasy, Kelly's drawings, which merge Old Master techniques with a modernist sensibility, are nuanced and strangely beautiful.

This lovingly curated show followed Kelly's development as a master draftsman from his student years at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts to his sojourn in Paris and through his later decades, when he worked—in hermetic seclusion—on Long Beach Island in New Jersey. At the start, Kelly produced deft takes on the art of the day—Cubism and Synchronism in the 1920s and social realism in the '30s. By the '40s he had found his métier as scenographer of the weird. His human figures became elongated and skeletal until they resembled the birds and insects he had always loved to draw.

As the decades passed, the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds seemed to subsume the human. A drawing called *Boy Holding an Oursin* (1953) looks like a tangle of praying mantises. Several works from the late '50s and the '60s, in which bony figures stroll on the beach, pose a consuming question: Who are we as humans, and how are we different from mere matter? It's a puzzle that artists from Albrecht Dürer to Francis Bacon have struggled with. —Mona Molarsky