

from
New American Paintings

Number 18

A catalog of work from the winners of the 1998
Open Studios Western States Competition

Vanita Smithey

Born: 1944, Olney, TX

EDUCATION:

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX
Glassell School of Art, Houston, TX

EXHIBITIONS:

1998 Reinike Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1997 Lynn Goode Gallery, Houston, TX
1997 Karan Ruhlen Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
1996 Purse Building Studios, Main Gallery, Houston, TX
1996/92 Visual Arts Alliance, Houston, TX
1995 Nations Bank, Houston, TX
Center for Visual and Performing Arts, Munster, IN
1993 The Dishman Competition, Lamar University, Beaumont, TX
Calcasieu Arts and Humanities Council, Lake Charles, LA
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ
1992 Innova, Houston, TX
1990 Sol del rio, San Antonio, TX

COLLECTIONS:

Enron Corporation, Houston, TX
Transco Energy, Houston, TX
M Bank, San Antonio, TX
Southern Progressive Publishing, Birmingham, AL
La Mansion, San Antonio, TX
Arches Paper Company

PUBLICATIONS:

Pasatiempo 9/12/97
Behind Adobe Walls, Chronicle Books, 1997
Susie Kalil. Capitalist Realism, 1992.

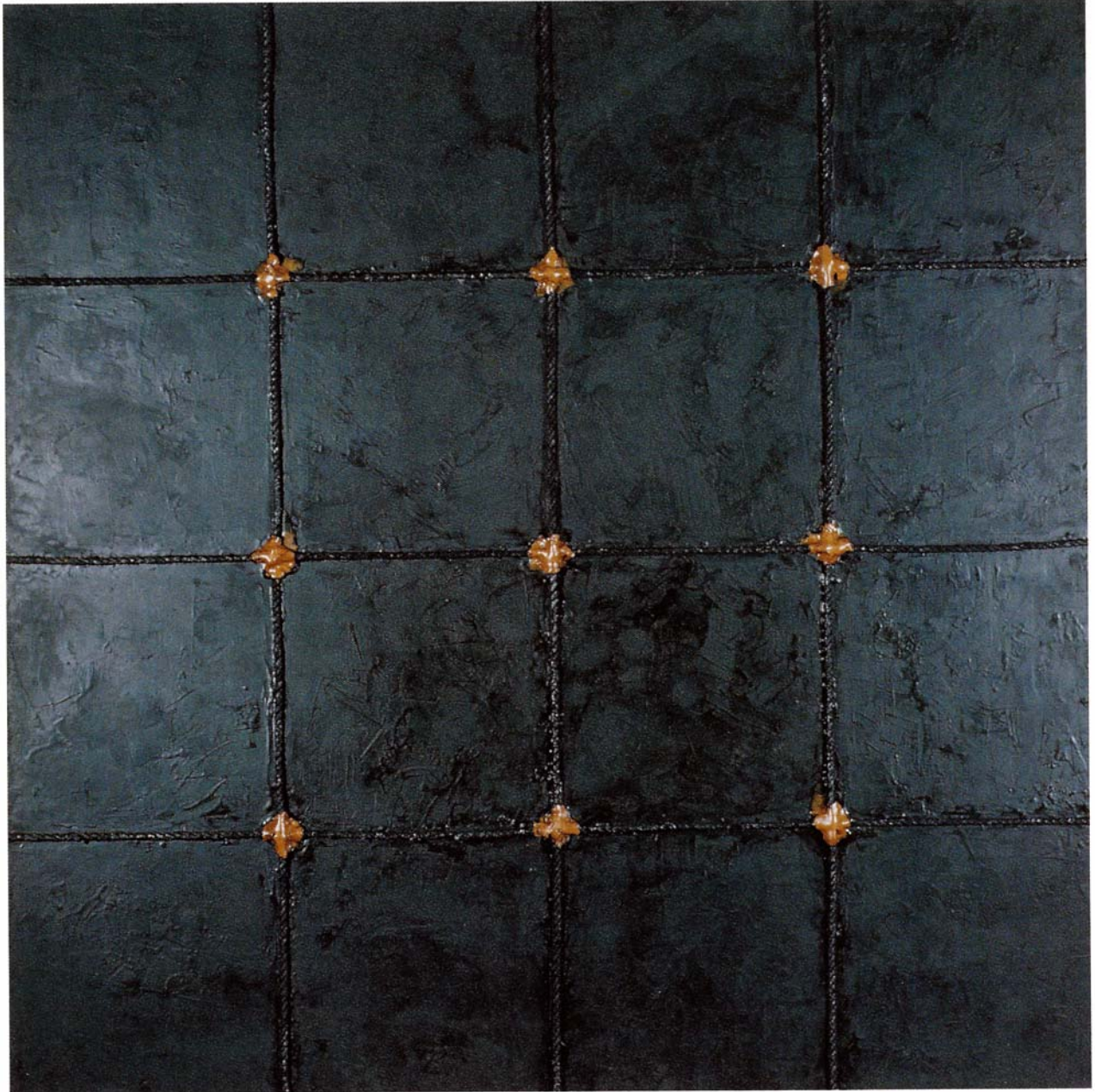
Represented by:

MD Modern, Houston, TX
Reinike Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Karan Ruhlen Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

When I moved to my studio, a converted 1920s warehouse just east of downtown Houston, I began simplifying my work. At first, I was making acrylic still life paintings using a full range of hues; I then moved to single imagery with a limited palette, and finally to abstraction with a limited palette, gradually focusing more and more on surface and materials. Prior to this transition, I had found myself working frantically, fighting the elements. With each year of painting, I find much more satisfaction with the entire process. In response to this, I have titled my current series of work Quiet Observations. They are an on-going series of multi-media, layered works, often without any definable imagery. Some of the works are comprised of component pieces, each able to stand alone, yet working as a whole. I prefer doing large works, but find that components offer site-specific adaptability not possible with larger works.

Many of my paintings have up to ten layers of varying materials: acrylic, oil, silver leaf, encaustic and lead. They require weeks to apply, then layers are removed with knives, acetone, sandpaper and rubbing alcohol. In the process, forgotten layers and elements are uncovered. What has not been applied cannot be found, so it is important that a lot goes into the building-up process. Messages, lines, shapes and values combine to form the layers. It is a process of discovery and creation akin to the passage of time, giving the contemporary an aged look. Titles are from the writings of William Wordsworth, who used concrete forms to express abstract ideas. I have used abstract forms to repeat and explore those same themes.

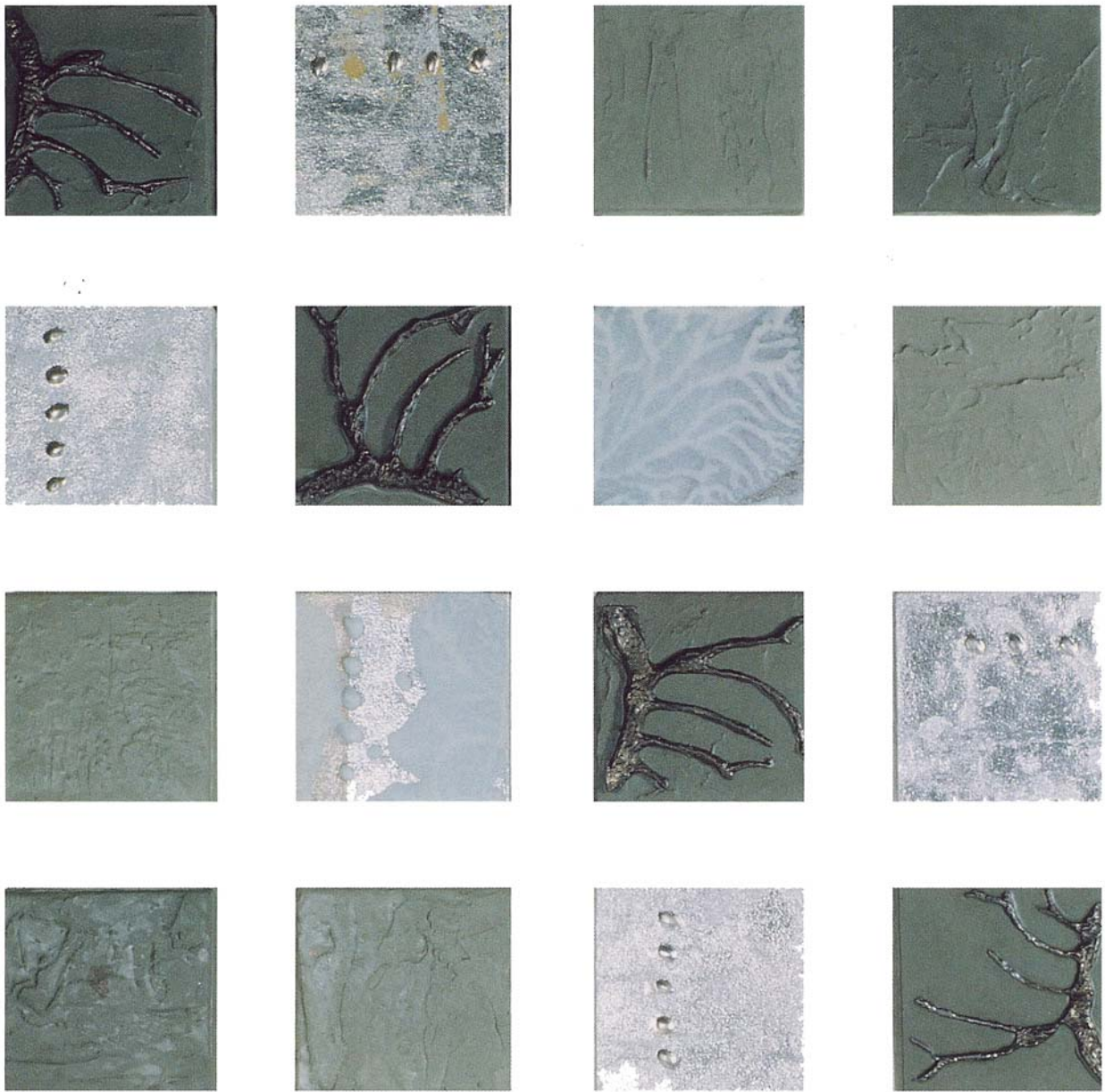




VANITA SMITHEY

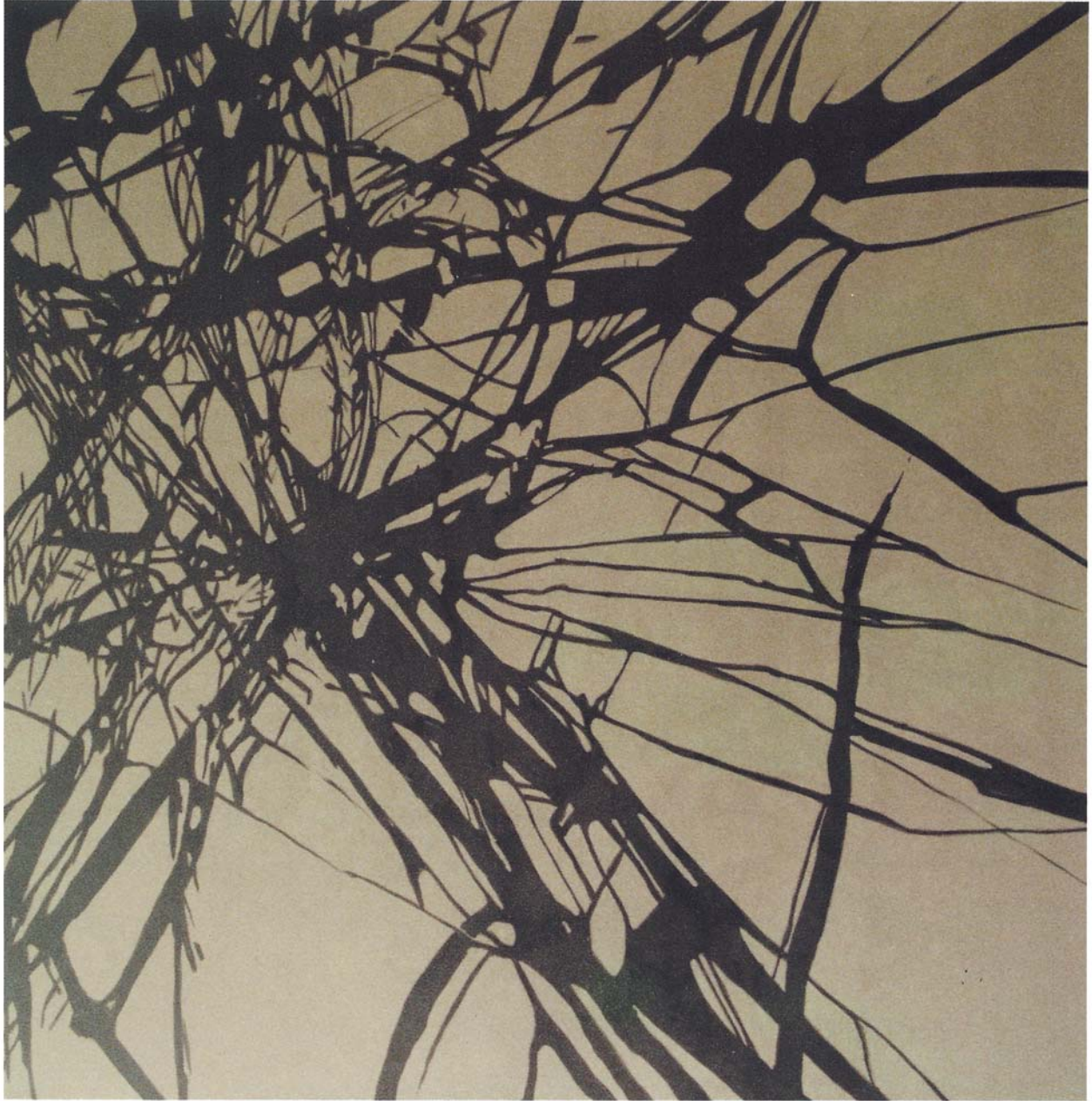
THE GIFT encaustic, rope, wax on canvas 72" x 72"

Page 164



VANITA SMITHEY

WALLS SET FREE encaustic, acrylic, silver leaf and lead on canvas, on wood (16 pieces) each 5.5" square



VANITA SMITHEY

NEW EXISTENCE encaustic and oil on canvas 40" x 40"

Page 166