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Natural Elements Show January 15th 1995 - March 12th 1995

Donovan Krebs' New Painting at Just Pasta

Donovan Krebs oil paintings are smudges, blocks, blots of aggressive, fresh from the tube primary colors and luscious pinks, greens, browns, ochre's, etc. The artist is self taught ( a defining term he employs) and he builds abstract visions in paint, of paint and his experience. The work emanates, he says, with a gesture towards, "from the heart," his own.

Donovan's vibrant oil paintings exhibit in their preoccupation with color and gesture the maneuverings of abstract expressionism. The paint is stroked, dripped down, or up (when the artist has rotated the canvas) and generally explored. His own words about his work refer to gesture, impulse and pure emotion in the tradition of a true 'action painter' of the Jackson Pollack style. But Donovan's work are more contained and determined, each stroke of paint is placed carefully and the colors are balanced across the canvas. In Autumn, for example, the areas of color are meticulously brushed into forms whose beauty becomes increasingly evident with a longer look. The paintings in the current show of Donovan's work were all created in the last seven months since the artist's return from a two year stay in Colorado.

The exhibition title, "Natural Elements" is, according to the statement in the accompanying checklist, "a reminder of the link that all humans have with the planet and its forces." The painting titles reflects the artist's preoccupation with nature and evoke an idyllic, pastoral world: Through the Fields, Blue Sun Rising, In Bloom, and Enchanted Forest. The artist seems to have been exploring the same palette since then, similar colors appear in most of the paintings, all of which are oil on canvas, with occasional pieces in acrylic and enamel. This show was preceded with a display at paper which were completed while Donovan was opportunity and space to work with oil paints. but it is apparent that Donovan was working with

Cybele's on Elmwood of small pastel drawings on living in Colorado, before he had the space and These works are a bit more sparse and geometric the same issues of color and form. Donovan supports himself as a Sous chef at Just Pasta and cites cooking as a significant inspiration commenting that he confronts a canvas as he might a plate of food. In cooking, like painting, there is an important element of experimentation, combining ingredients that may not

first suggest compatibility. When I asked him the secret to culinary success he said, "when you try something and it works," (and with a gesture of tossing and a pinch of something with his fingers), "just add more." His paintings reflect this energetic and confident experimentation. The last three paintings that the artist completed, Morning Glory, Indian Summer, and Mothering Roots, reflect a departure in style. In these works the artist paints gentle forms with soft colors on areas previously primed with gesso, surrounded by large areas of bare canvass. Isolated in this way, the lines or marks are more readable, as if the artist was looking again at nature and finding it more lyrical.