

GARSTON



GERALD GARSTON

Born: May 4, 1925

Studied: Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
Student of painter/sculptor Karl Metzler, Baltimore
Student of painter Louis Boucher and printmaker
Harry Sternberg, Art Students League, New York
Student of Josef Albers, Yale University
(special color course)

U.S. Navy, 1943-1946

One-man exhibitions

- 1951 860 Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland
- 1954 Gallery 77, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1962 Poindexter Gallery, New York City
- 1964 Greenross Gallery, New York City
- 1965 Ross-Talalay Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1966 John Slade Ely House, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1967 Graham Gallery, New York City
- 1970 Pucker/Safrai Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
- 1971 Pucker/Safrai Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts

Other exhibitions

- 1960 Betty Parsons Gallery, New York City
- 1964 Stable Gallery, New York City
- 1965 A. M. Sachs Gallery, New York City
- 1966 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
- 1967 "Sport in Art", Pan-Am Building, New York City
- 1968 Quinnipiac College, Hamden, Connecticut

Museum collections

Los Angeles County Museum
William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Worcester Art Museum

(cover)

WHITE PITCHER

oil

44" x 44"

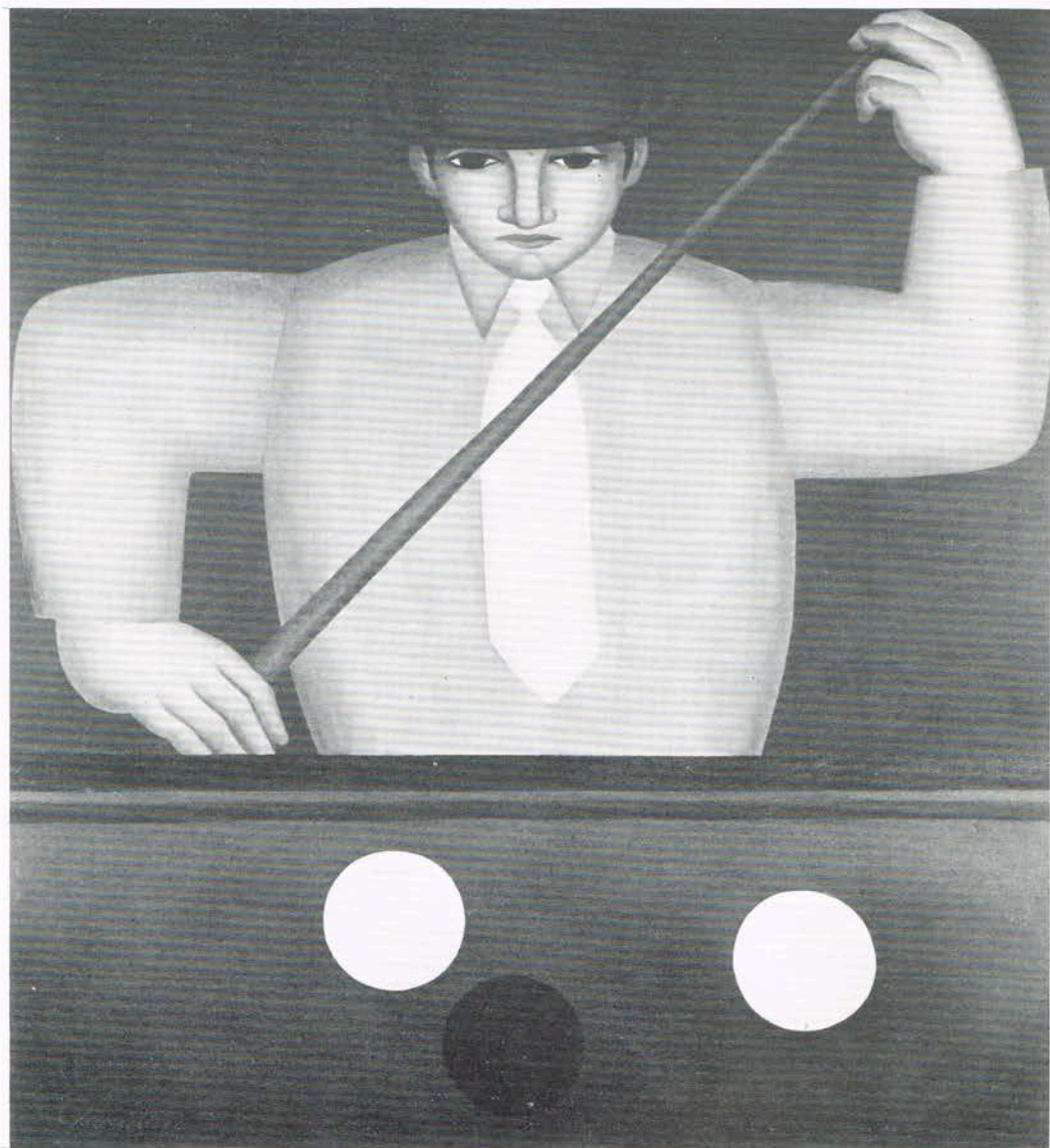
(62" diagonal)

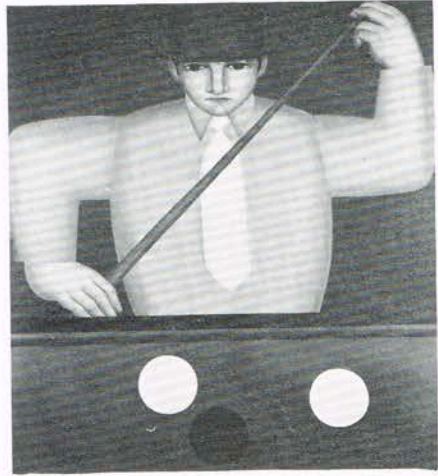


BATTER UP
oil
44" x 44"



THE BILLIARD PLAYER
oil
46" x 52"





ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT GERALD GARSTON'S **THE BILLIARD PLAYER**

If one were required to compare the paintings of Gerald Garston to works of art other than paintings, the most likely choice would be musical compositions. Nor just **any** compositions; in particular, works of the classical period, whose formal structure and contained movement underlie a cool and elegant surface of abstract purposes.

Look at **The Billiard Player**. Bathed in a subdued interior light, posed as rigidly as an Egyptian courtier, he stands against a dark wall, rubbing resin on the tip of his cue and surveying the three balls on the table. Not a ripple of expression betrays his composure. Tie neatly knotted, derby settled properly over his brows, his pink shirt unwrinkled, he is refinement personified. A billiard player of billiard players.

But more than this, he is the subject of a painting that is constructed like a classical concerto: based on a symmetrical principal, it is divided in two — orchestral and solo parts. The billiard balls, by virtue of their simple shapes and small number are the solo instruments. They perform independently of the orchestra, but are tied to it by the transitional three stripes that mark the edge of the billiard table. The billiard player himself is, of course, the orchestra, occupying the larger area and composed of a complex union of different and disparate shapes and forms. The round hat and the circles of his eyes repeat the forms of the three balls, like the interplay of a theme between solo instruments and orchestra.

Adding further to the harmony and interest of the composition is the carefully considered attitude of the player. By holding the cue diagonally, he forms between its shaft and his bent arms two irregular pentagons (variations on a theme), while the cue itself lends the major dynamic line in an otherwise horizontal-vertical arrangement. Concentrated in a small area, the numerous little details — facial features, the knot of the tie (which is also a mirror image of the chin), and the collar points — have the effect of a sudden run of sixteenth notes against the quarter-note of the tie, the half-notes of the arms, and the whole note of the player's barrel-shaped body.

Garston's acute sensitivity to the possibilities of a symmetrical structure is seen in the liberties he takes with it. The ways in which he disturbs the symmetry, then restores the balance, are a pleasure to discover. The three balls, all placed off-center, create tension by their eccentric placement. But the two balls aligned at left form a diagonal that joins the player's fingers in opposing the diagonal of the cue. The resulting imaginary right angle reinforces the several others formed by the arms and body. Thus the asymmetrical placement is seen as part of a unifying theme, and harmony is restored.

If Garston's meticulous construction of this painting suggests an easy calculation, one must remember that the work is nevertheless the effort of an artist — a thinking, feeling, and capricious individual. How else can his unusual treatment of the eyes be explained? As if to surprise us, the artist outlines one eye entirely in brown, but only delineates the upper lid of the other. It is a jarring effect, an unexpected note of nonconformity in an area (the face) where we most expect the rules of symmetry to apply. A similar surprise is sprung on us in the treatment of the hands. Instead of being an inverted mirror image of the right hand, as the treatment of the arms would lead us to expect, the left hand becomes an active, unusual form that contrasts sharply with all the other rounded, regular forms in the painting. Through these treatments of the eyes and hands Garston counter-acts the static quality that could deaden a symmetrical format.

Unifying the disparate elements of the painting, the color pervades the work like the key in which a musical composition is written. In **The Billiard Player** it seems to be a minor key, with deep, resonant tonalities; though most of Garston's works resound with the brighter notes of a major key. Whatever the tonic mode, color operates in concert with the shapes, simultaneously advancing its own harmonies and tensions.

Garston has said that "my paintings do not tell stories or comment on events, on pain or love or the psyche or what have you. They are purely aesthetic objects." And so they are. Not only **The Billiard Player**; all his works, in their elegance and formality, yield the visual equivalent of the measured, precise works of the classical period. They are indeed aesthetic objects, and works of aesthetic enjoyment.

— P.T.N.



NUDE WITH NEW ENGLAND ASTER
oil
44" x 60"

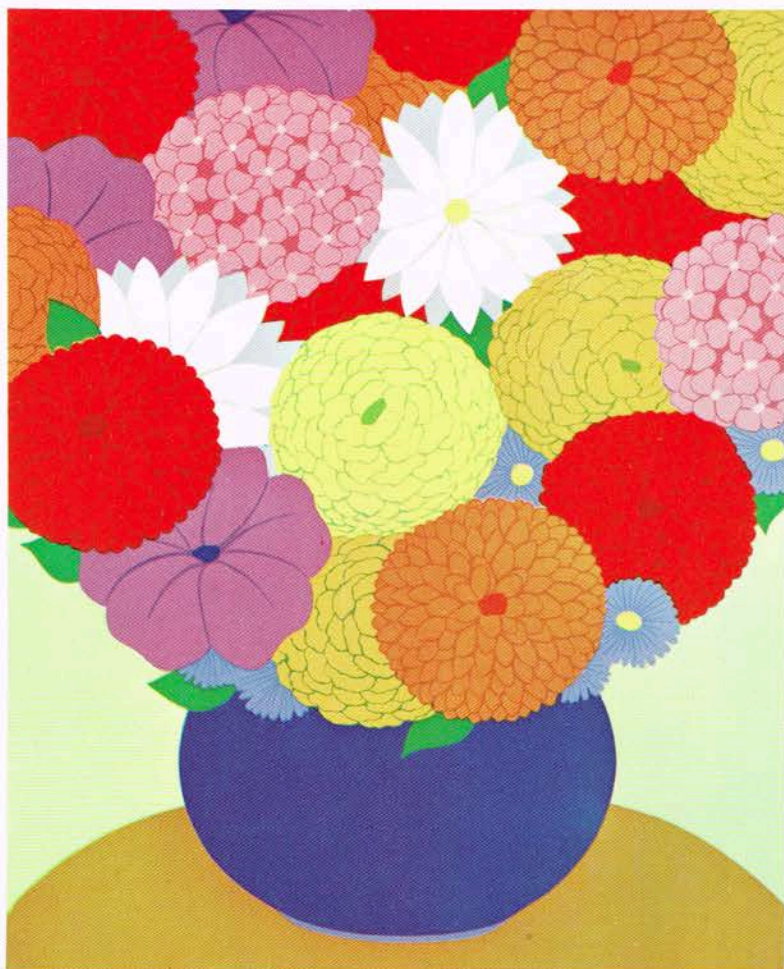
ZEBRA
oil
44" x 60"

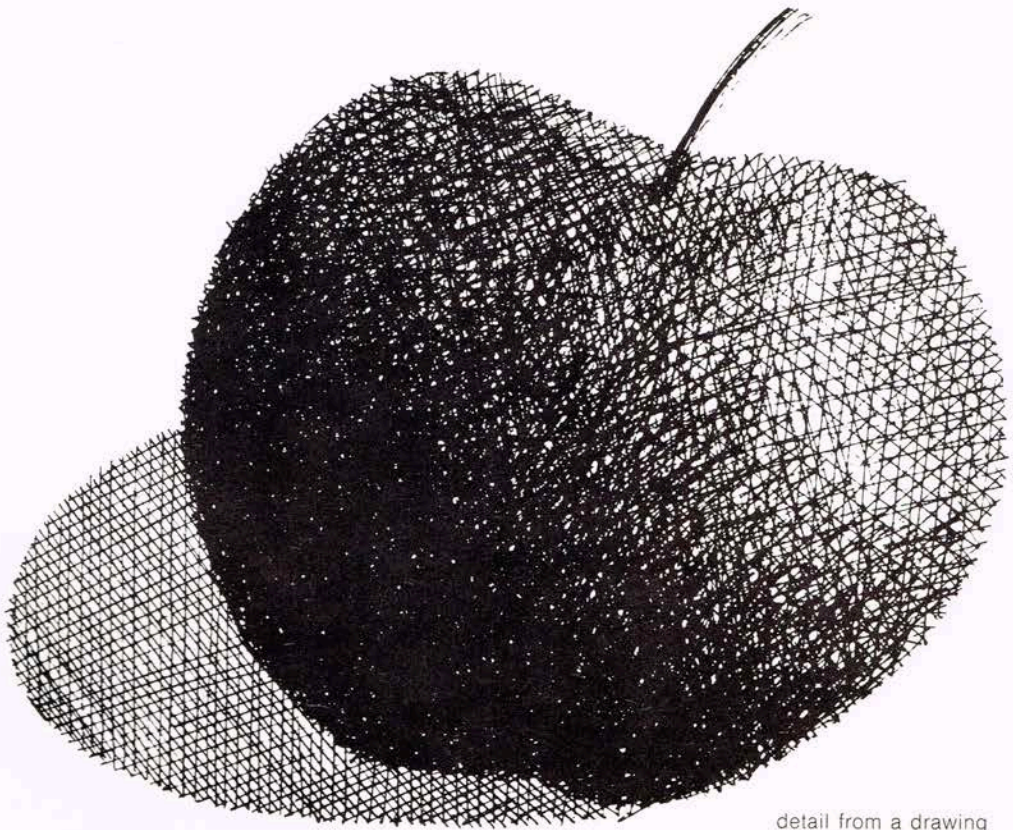




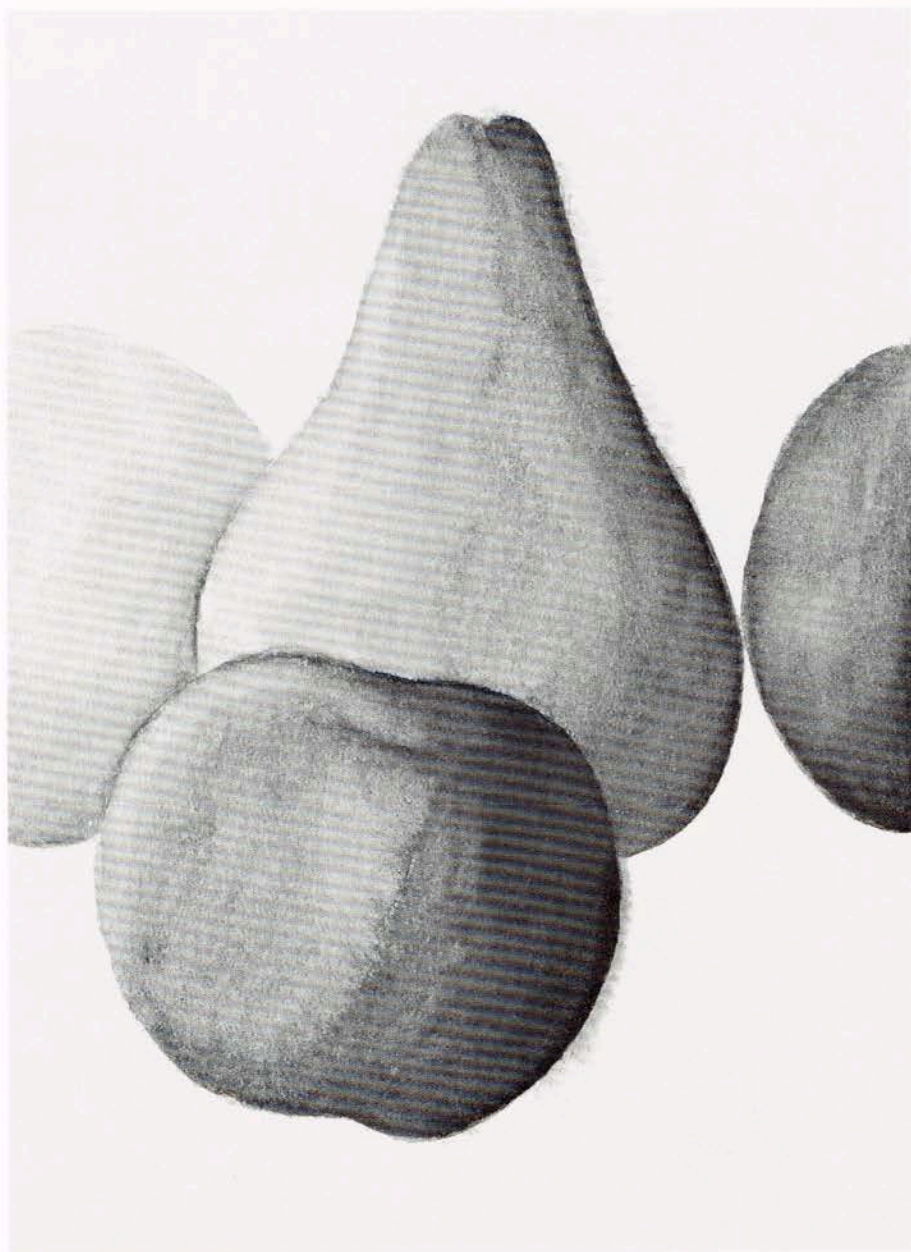
JAGUAR
serigraph
18" x 22"
edition: 90

FLOWERS
serigraph
18" x 22"
edition: 90

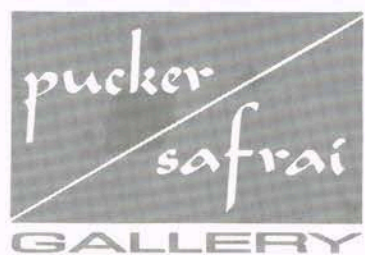




detail from a drawing
"Three Apples"



"Pear and Apples"
ink wash



171 NEWBURY STREET

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116