

became the key to the painting. Being able to mix the gold with just the right proportion of mineral to animal skin glue, illustrates why the years of studying this technique are necessary.⁹

In all of Fujimura's art there is the sense of gift as he speaks of his paintings more as offerings than as personal expressions.¹⁰

From Cubism and Dada to the Spiritual

Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque are credited with being among the first modern Western artists to use the collage technique, in their Cubist works beginning about 1912.

Newspaper print, wallpaper, oil cloth, rope, and sand were among the many materials that worked their way into the pioneering Cubist artists' highly intellectual work. From about 1915 and continuing into the 1920s, the members of the Dada movement used these collage techniques more intuitively and even anarchistically. The German Dada artist Kurt Schwitters borrowed the idea of collage from the Cubists and used the detritus of the modern world, materials totally alien to the orthodox canon of traditional art materials, in his collaged, "assembled" works.

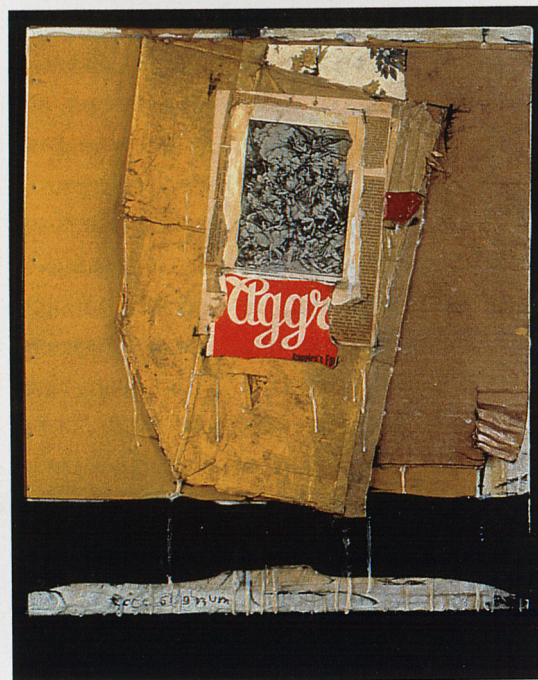


Plate 18

Gregory Gibson, *ECCE Signum*, 1998, mixed media on canvas, 25" x 22".

Charlotte, North Carolina, artist Gregory Gibson has created a body of work strongly influenced by the early collages of the Cubists and Schwitters as well as the works of the American artist Robert Rauschenberg. One of Gibson's works, *ECCE Signum* (Behold the Sign), is comprised of several layers of torn and cut cardboard, wallpaper, an image of

Durer's *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, pages from scripture, and a portion of a modern advertisement. Yellow paint is used on some of the surfaces. By drawing on the detritus of everyday contemporary life, Gibson indicates that the signs of great, even apocalyptic, significance are around us in the most surprising and often overlooked places.

Likewise, Willie Little, another Charlotte artist, has used the idea of collage in a work that, at first, appears more elegant than Gibson's edgy collage, but this is seductively deceiving, as the work is loaded with challenges to religion, politics, and morality. One work is entitled *Birbright*, and it features a page of Sacred Scripture (from the Book of Malachi) placed within a shopping bag that is adorned with crosses. The shopping bag refers to what has become Americans' favorite pastime — shopping. It is how many of us socialize, and the bag has the suggestion not of a utilitarian sack to carry food home, but rather a bag from a trendy shopping mall, where the labels we carry around with us tell other people of our success or our hipness. The labels we wear on our clothing identify us as people who can afford to spend money and thus merit the admiration we hope that we are attracting. Ironically, these labels are now called logos —

quite a departure from the religiously understood meaning of "Logos." Little explains that the title *Birbright*, like the other titles in the series, examines the sense of entitlement felt by many Americans — entitlement that, at times, has been used to justify bigotry and hatred. The cross on the page has polyvalent meanings. The immediate association is with the cross upon which Jesus offered himself for the salvation of humanity, but there are other associations, as well: the burnt impression of this cross suggests suffering and pain as an expression of God's unconditional love; or more menacingly, it also suggests the remnant of the burning cross of the Klan, used to terrify African Americans for many decades. The polyvalent nature of Little's works has the ability to inspire and disturb.

Texas artist Madeline O'Connor is known for her quiet, Post-Minimal works in which she repeats geometric forms in long rows. She effectively combines her Roman Catholic roots and her deep respect for nature by creating meditative works in which the repetition of shapes becomes the visual equivalent of the repetition found in litanies, chants, and the rhythms of nature. In the *Cross* series (featured in this exhibition) she has combined her Post-Minimalist mode with collage.