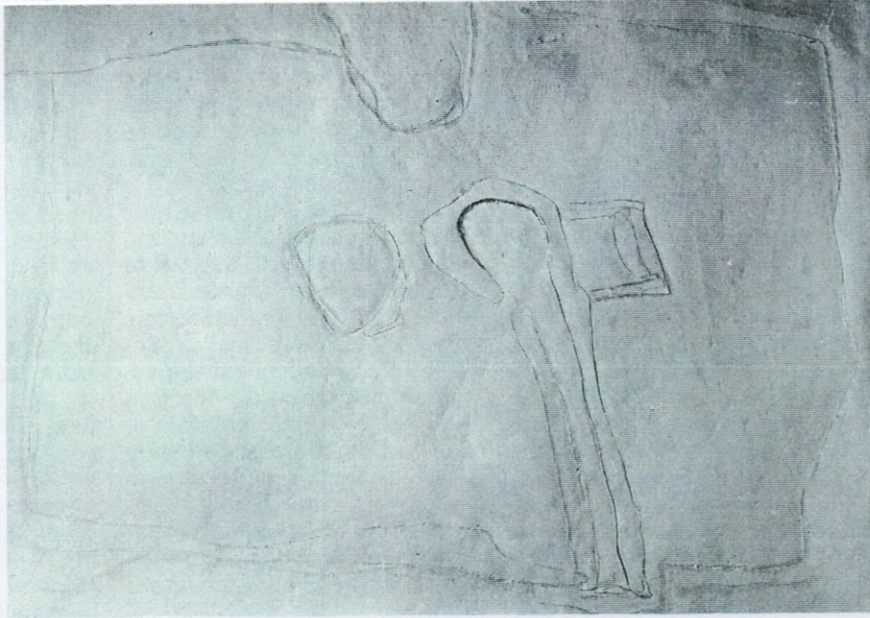
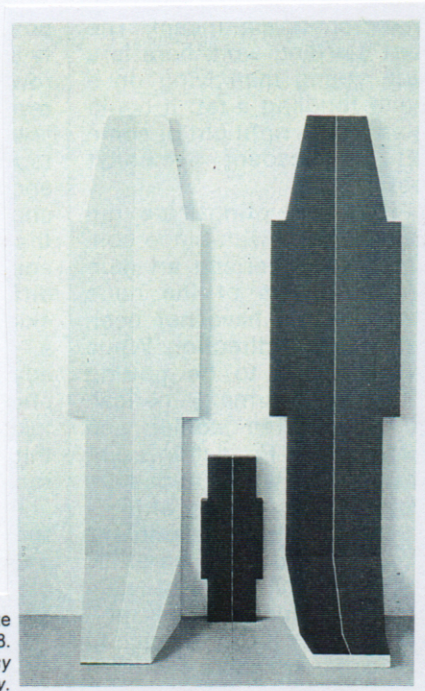


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Noel Frackman



Maria Gooding, Water Hole, 1976. Plaster, fresco pigments, 47 x 65 1/2". Courtesy Betty Parsons Gallery.



V.V. Rankine, Stay I (left), Jute (center), Stay II (right), 1978. Wood and acrylic. Courtesy Betty Parsons Gallery.

**V. V. RANKINE /
MARIA GOODING /
JOHN CUNNINGHAM**

Of the recent shows at the Betty Parsons Gallery, the most thought-provoking is the exhibition of etchings and works in plaster by Maria Gooding. Born in India, the young artist has lived in County Kerry, Ireland since 1947 on the Dingle Peninsula. Her life in this remote, isolated section of Ireland has increased her attraction to other barren, lonely sections of the world such as the uninhabited Basket Islands off the southwest tip of Ireland or Berber villages. She is magnetized by environments where life is difficult, stark areas which are often deprived by nature. In these remote areas, wells are precious and an enclosure may be specially built to contain a single animal. Fences, wells, irrigation ditches—all these images appear in Gooding's plaster paintings. Her works are done on slabs of plaster with fresco pigments applied and scraped away so that only muted, delicate hues remain and she incises lines into the plaster, sometimes filling them in with color. Thus these works are in a sense both maps and landscapes, yet the images have a whimsy of line that recalls Paul Klee. Even without knowing the artist's background or intentions, these works are visually satisfying, like personal, primitive markings where the forms seem to have been intuitively placed in exactly the right relationships.

The wall sculptures of V. V. Rankine seem somehow Egyptian; they suggest standing sarcophagi. Executed in bright primary colors, often with contrasting plays of density of hue and saturation, these works grow out of the general tradition of shaped canvases. John Cunningham's sculpture, which employs various materials including cardboard, acrylic, copper and wood, has a spiky quality. Thus they are reminiscent of crustaceans or perhaps bats' wings. There are three small sculptures here from 1978 which are especially appealing; Cunningham's best sensibility may be that expressed in these little works, a private, ambiguous, and somewhat fantastic element. (Betty Parsons, Gooding, March 28-April 15, Rankine, March 7-25, Cunningham, March 28-April 15)