

# ART PAPERS

M A G A Z I N E

## ATLANTA

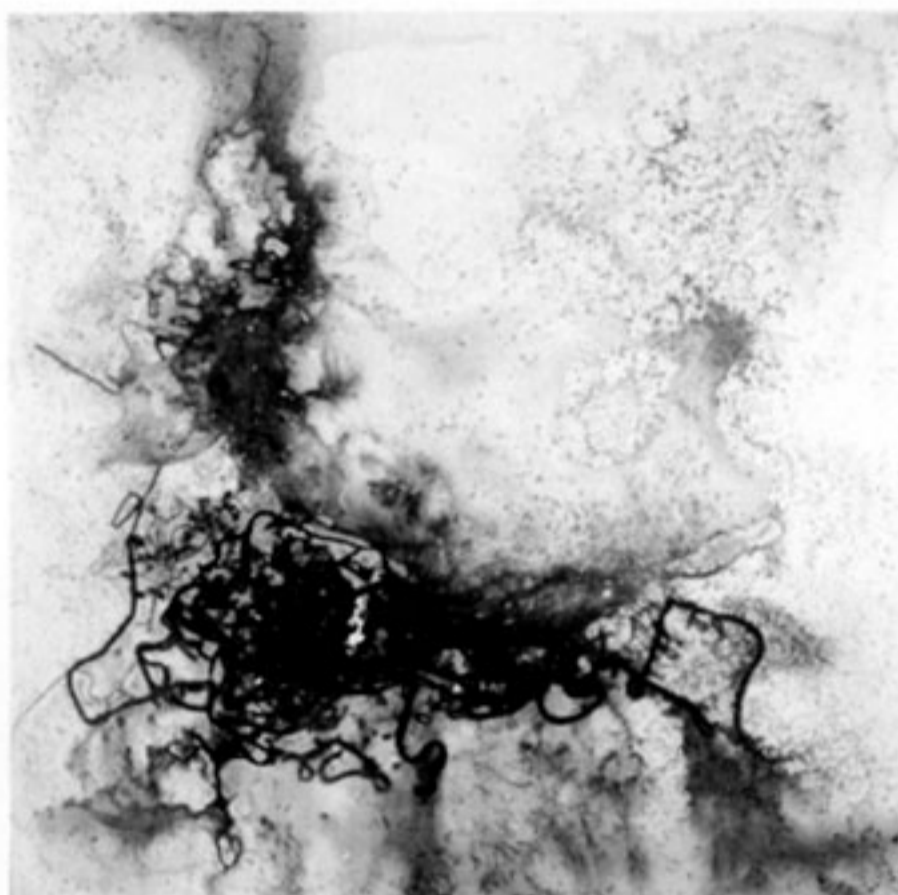
"Intimate Apparel" (*Bill Lowe Gallery, March 8—29, 2002*) is an exhibition of paintings and paper pieces by **BABS REINGOLD**. The large paintings construct a personal world and the smaller stained paper works reference a world at large. These works on canvas and paper explore skin, layers and surface and ask what it means to be on, above or below the surface in physical, emotional, spiritual and aesthetic terms.

The paper works bring the world at large together using diverse elements mimicking aspects of the human body. Found objects are placed on paper and left to soak in a water bath. They sweat and leak until a discharge leaves its mark and the skin of the paper is stained, distorted and changed. The paper soaks in its environment and develops its core.

Paper pieces #17 and #18 are assembled starting with a handmade piece of square paper. Reingold sews on it both by hand and by machine, defiantly striking out against perfection. The paper is covered with different amounts of encaustic, submerged and stained using steel rusted pellets, steel rods, fiber and thread. French knots with hanging threads cascade like the hair on a shrunken head. The work is backed and reinforced with canvas, hung, drawn and suspended by thread in the frame. The effects are both as delicate as a butterfly wing and as scarring as a sharp knife.

The paintings are more visceral than the works on paper and express her personal internal world rather than speak for an audience. Reingold's paintings illuminate her dislike of perfection. The squares are never quite square, the surfaces are never even, and nothing is centered or balanced. These dense and obsessively worked canvases mirror her psyche. Reingold's large canvases are alternatively excoriated and embossed through a process of adding, drying and sanding away modeling paste in oil and encaustic. Upon this formal square canvas structure Reingold attaches accumulated squares of silk organza and smaller square paper work pieces from her studio collection.

A pocket-handkerchief square of stained silk organza in the upper right hand corner attracts attention in painting #13. Bleeding off it is a smaller heavily encaustic organza square slightly off center on this formally arranged five-foot square canvas. The organza leads the eye to two heavily stained small rice paper works accompanied by a smaller basted thread



**Babs Reingold**, *Skin 6*, 2001, encaustic, rust, tea, thread on paper on canvas stitched into wood, 49 by 49 inches (photo courtesy Lowe Gallery).

square. The materials are integrated into the canvas whereas in #14 the work surprises. Two square pieces of stained organza are folded in a loose rectangular and square manner. They jut out from the gessoed canvas built up with minimal oils. Smaller organza squares below veil paperworks and single squares of organza.

A complex iconography emerges reading thread as hair, surface of paper as skin, indentations as scars, lines as gashes and rust as skin pigmentation. The process in the works on paper is less intimate and more detached than the paintings. The paper works set the stage and the process speaks for itself through pared down raw underlayers. In the paintings Reingold meticulously coats and recoats, covers and recovers the surface of the canvas to display many layers in a dressed up, considered fashion. In both media it is the canvas-like crinoline that supports and holds the display.

The works evoke such physical associations as scratching, cutting, scarring, paring, bleeding, burning and branding. Emotions run the gamut from skin deep diluted feelings to an outpouring, opening, eruption and weeping. Where and how does this skin breathe, begin and end in a world that is Reingold's own in the paintings and the world at large in the paper works.

**Jane Bickerton**  
*Atlanta*