

# In The Arts

## Press' colorful geometry elates at Gallery of New Masters

Linda Press explodes the academic. Using photographs to jog her memory, Press combines views of buildings and streets to create a distorted perspective that flouts the rule: always maintain the

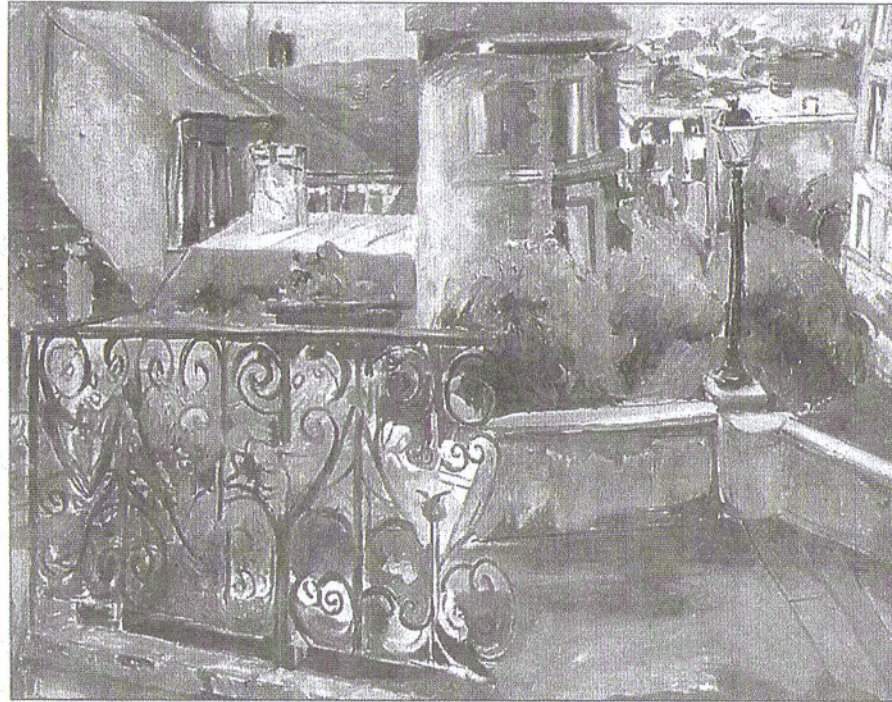
### OnView

by Nancy Ungar

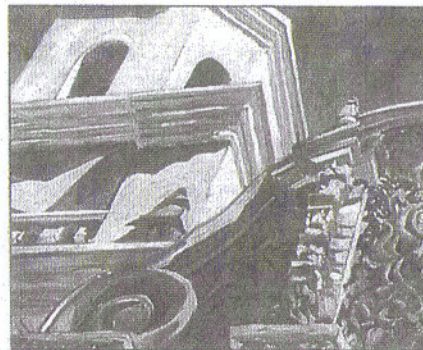
same viewpoint. Her paintings of European streets convey a greater reality than that of the visual. Her distorted perspective reflects the varied viewpoints of someone looking around a place, while her free use of color conveys her emotional reaction to it.

When we remember a place, a street, a building, we do not remember it as portrayed oh so neatly by Botticelli or Raphael but in disconnected bits. Buildings are remembered as seen from different angles. If we notice the colored reflections in windows upstaged by the wildly rich hues of flowers on balconies, it burns itself into our minds. Press succeeds in conveying this sense of an almost overwhelmingly intense experience of a place. Hers is the glance, the bit of memory, the celebration of the mundane, that lifts the spirits.

"The View" is one of Press' larger canvases. She situates us on a Paris balcony rimmed by an ornate black iron rail that reflects blue and violet in the sunlight. We look straight ahead at the protruding corner of another old building bordered on all sides by similar five-storied domiciles. Press daubs, scribbles and heavily brushes on color in this tightly structured geometry, so that it has a life of its own. Only loosely confined to the boundaries of objects, it often springs free. The curlicued iron rails of the other buildings cast colored curves into the air. Looming over the right half of this street is a church or cathedral. We see the diagonals of its sloped roofs, the vertical sides of its flying buttresses and the Romanesque window that pierces its tower. While the houses are old, the cathedral is older and yet, in this



(Above) From an exalted viewpoint "On the Verge" surveys a seaside town. (Left) In "Mission" Press captures the contrasting personas of the structures, one stern and disciplined, the other showy and colorful.



bright sunlight, the old is as fresh as the day.

A long horizontal canvas, "Ephesus," depicts a conglomerate of the columned fa-

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us that it indeed has a life in the present.

"Mission" uses an even more extreme ant's-eye perspective to portray the tower and facade of a Mexican or Californian mission against a brilliant blue sky. The clean vertical and horizontal lines of the stucco tower contrast with the shorter and wider baroque facade to its right. The contrasting personas of the mission have perhaps attracted this artist's eye. For the two married structures, one stern and disciplined, the other showy and colorful, describe the complexity of the church while echoing Press' love affair with the geometry of planes and curves in the bright light of day.

More sedate than her architectural paintings are those works that include flowers and foliage. "On the Verge" places us at the top of an outdoor stairway bordered by an iron rail and topped by an old-fashioned street light. From this vantage you can look down over the town, a jumble of buildings and foliage, to a distant shoreline. Color here is so free that even geometry is her slave and an upright street lamp loses its virtue in the seductive curve of its pole.

"Point of View," paintings by Linda Press, will continue at the Gallery of New Masters through July 1. The gallery is located at 1001 Olney Sandy Spring Road in the village of Sandy Spring, just east of Sherwood High School and the Olney Theater. For information, call 301-260-1900.

ades of Greek buildings that mark this Turkish town. Press has taken a low viewpoint, emphasizing the height of the columns with a steep angular perspective that changes as our eye moves across the canvas. The stone buildings are beige, reflecting white in the blinding sunlight. Blue and violet shadows that create contrast and welcome shade also lead us to an archway on the right through which we can see a clear cerulean sky over jumbled rocks. Press' depiction of history here screams to