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The following paragraph is intended for use by the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation in the publication of its first comprehensive catalogue of the art collection.

ON RANDALL SCHMIT'S PAINTINGS

An early painting by Randall Schmit is like a clear snapshot of a colorful blizzard of energy and forms. The works are muscular and abstract and create the impression of mysterious occurrences at multiple depths, of spaces being revealed within space. There's a suggestion that the process is endless and random, that each new level is as flush with interesting possibilities as another - an infinite universe bounded only by the choices we make among these levels. Tempering the work is a sense of the fun of having articulated precisely these figures during his exploration. Vibrant and purposeful, these shapes can suggest architecture, classical sculpture or parts of bodies, none of which fully emerge as we might expect from the action they are enmeshed in. It is as though the passages are occupied with each other at some more essential and secretive level than we are usually privy to, in an intricate relationship which feels at once material and spiritual. More recent works show the evolution of the abstract passages of earlier canvasses into more realistic (if dreamlike) scenes: haunted arenas, crumbling ruins amid which crouch a monkey, human figures in caves, eerie stretches of meadow, clouded skies and grassy plains and, most prominently, stills from old movies. While encroached upon by intricate squiggles and menacing squibs, these frames seem more stark for Schmit's faithful depictions than they possibly could have been in the context of the films from which they are derived. They are American, violent and archetypal, their characters' gestures and poses simultaneously urgent, comic, violent and sincere - and restrained, if at all, only in the final instance. While we remain unaware of the particulars of the drama, the stakes seem certain, and high. Schmit continues to work brilliantly at this keen edge.

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