



**May 16, 2001**

**Ying Li, Cecily Kahn and Kate Davis at the Painting Center, 52 Greene St. to May 19**

This is a very interesting shows not in the least for the wide range of style and approach. Kate Davis' work is quietly contemplative, Ying Li is a definitive, painterly 'wild child' with Cecily Kahn falling somewhere between the two. In terms of presentation the show is well composed by interlacing Kahn's and Li's paintings, whose work lends itself to mutual comparison, while Davis takes command of the back gallery.



Ying Li, *Skeleton of Water*, 2001, oil on canvas, 72 x 62 in

Ying Li's paintings have the widest range of approach and treatment of the three. She packs a lot into her work including an interplay between figuration and complete abstraction. One result of this is to conjure up a Pinkham-Ryder sensibility. Take a painting like '*Skeleton of Water*' where you see a spine of white color that dissipates into the surrounding thick paint. In another, titled '*Skull*' you recognize the form that provides the title. In other hands it might seem over-dramatic and obvious but Li buries it within the paint as another form that takes no more focus than any other form.



Ying Li, *Shell*, 2001, oil on canvas, 13 x 13 in



Ying Li, *Untitled*, 2001, oil on canvas, 16 x 13 in

Speaking of thick paint, Li slathers it on without inhibition or restraint. This becomes especially effective in the smaller work where the diminutive canvases are treated to 5-inch wide applications of beefy paint. 'Paint' is the subject matter in this work despite some of the figurative references and through it Li finds her way to her forms. It seems inconceivable that prior to painting she sketches out her forms; at least no evidence shows this. Instead Li plunges headward into the work damning all the torpedoes. This direct and energetic painterly rawness results in some extremely successful paintings and others that are less so. As a body, Li's work is uneven and she loses her way in some pieces (especially as they get larger). But Li's willingness to risk everything in her belief in, and application of, the medium characterizes her content.