

color also changes, and how the intensity of the color is modified in its relative replacement, and in its coexistence with another set of colors and shapes. It is not unlike the color experiments of Joseph Albers.

Cicero's drawings, on the other hand, are done strictly on impulse, and indicate the early states of the paintings. Their peculiar animation and energy become in the paintings an underlying, exploratory linearity. Randomly searching and moving, he begins to draw, scribbling on the canvas. As he has noted, he then waits until he is in an "intense mood" be it happy or sad, so long as the emotion is strong.

Then he begins to paint, and hopes that his subconscious material will begin to reveal itself out of the meandering framework he has set up. This method reminds one of a combination of a Zen Buddhist watercolor master and a surrealist automatist. Like the surrealist who uses "frottage," he meditates on the unguided scribbles to see imagery, to find it out of the maze.

The cartoon quality of the paintings make them seem so casual, and this belies the obsessive process that Cicero brings to each work, the care with which he places each color and shape, seeking in that process to maintain a certain freshness. For instance, he uses color not merely to depict light but also as

light itself. In "Provincetown Princess" (see Page 3) he searched tirelessly for the right tonalities for the sky and the water, painting and repainting that area of the composition. He finally took a clue from the observation of a friend who reminded him that in Provincetown one experiences a warm sun, but at the same time the air remains cool. The rosy blondness that he achieved in the gargantuan bather only serves to enhance our empathetic experience of that blue in the painting. We cannot help but conjure the work of Milton Avery who was also painting in the same area, and indeed Cicero achieves a play on perspective and flatness in this composition that would have been appreciated by Avery.

I mentioned earlier that in spite of the currency of the "look" of Cicero's work that his is not to be confused with the philosophical and formal foundations of the newer generation of figural artists. Above all Cicero is mired in his generation, and he proceeds out of the influence of Avery and Hofmann and their particular translation of Matisse and Picasso. Cicero's mythologies are also grounded in his youth. His persona is the tough hipster of the beat generation, an imagery culled from figures as varied as James Dean, Jack Kerouac, and even Norman Mailer. For this reason his work has an especial interest to us in this time and place.

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*Looney Tunes*, 1975. Acrylic on canvas; 72 x 108"