

CARMEN CICERO

In showing the way to recovering art's unlimited capacity for meaning, Carmen Cicero is taking his place at the forefront of what has the potential to become one of the most promising creative developments of our times.

As we approach the end of the 1980s, a veritable revolution seems to be in the making. From many quarters can be detected growing dissatisfaction with the overly intellectualized and jargon-ridden state of contemporary art.

Just consider how accustomed we have become to viewing art in terms of what are familiarly called "the issues", which are the leading concerns of the day that double also as main determinants of quality. In the 1950s, painters incorporated "gesture" into their style in order to be considered within the progressive framework of the artistic mainstream. In the corners of hard-edge and color field painting of the 1960s, the

chief password to acceptance was, of course, none other than the hallowed convention of "flatness." And in the 1980s, the trendy focus, albeit with admittedly some shifting within groups—i.e. Image Scavenging, Neo-Expressionism, and Neo-Geo—has held fast to the currents buoyed up by the theories of appropriation and simulationism.

Also, consider please how often the discussion of the activity of making art is couched in a terminology of "problem-solving" and "strategies". Is that what art truly is about—technique, process, and product, an aesthetic species of business administration?

The cumulative effect of "the issues" is a terribly one-sided view of art stressing analytical and cognitive matters, above and beyond all else—a view of art whose giant blind-spots are clear and recognizable, however, to painter Carmen Cicero.

(continued on next page)



The Cubist
1988
Oil on canvas
72" x 90"