

yard)—from his 1896–97 suite “Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris” (Some Aspects of Paris Life)—has delectable touches of orange at some of the tiny windows across the way, eliminated in the last instance.

There were prints by Signac, showing how balanced and subtly colored his works can be; a rare collection of Odilon Redon lithographs; and a wall of Renoir’s graphic work that seems less to our taste today than that of the quirky Nabis with their stylishness and patterning influenced by Japanese prints.

Two outstanding Vuillard lithographs, both ca. 1899, were *La Partie de dames* (The Game of Draughts) and *La Pâtisserie*. The first admits us to the rarefied salon where writer Tristan Bernard sits before the gameboard while Misia Godebska, Thadée Natanson’s wife, presides discreetly in the background. (Natanson published *La Revue blanche*, with which the Nabis artists were associated.) The second ushers us into public life, although the typical flatness and slashes of patterned material leave us guessing whether we’re inside or outside the café.

Here, too, was Bonnard’s lithographic masterwork *La Petite Blanchisseuse* (The Little Laundress; 1895–96), which leads us down past boldly contoured, silhouetted shapes—umbrella, girl, and basket—to the textured sidewalk. Earthy, domestic, abstracted, this famous image offers a keen representation of Parisian esthetics at the turn of the century. —Lynne Lawner

Odd Nerdrum

FORUM

This show of Odd Nerdrum’s cycle of current work felt like an ancient version of reality programming. The darkened gallery was set to filmic ambiance as images of warrior-thugs threaten to threaten while beaming proudly from sand dunes. Instead of delivering agony directly, as he did in his earlier work, Nerdrum has become the master of the reenactment. The resulting moodiness is suspect. The crimes depicted have lost their horror, leaving the viewer stranded in a strange half-world.

In *Sleeping Prophet*, a fallen figure, obviously not suffering erectile dysfunction, is longingly looked at by a semiexhausted warrior deciding whether or not to have his way with the man on the ground. Four young boys look on from a hill.

In *Wanderers by the Sea*, beachcombers appear in classic Nerdrum attire (string caps and shawls) and sit



Odd Nerdrum, *Wanderers by the Sea*, 2001, oil on canvas, 78" x 101 1/2". Forum.

in staggered formation on the sand. The choreographed composition, echoed in the clouds, recalls Shirin Neshat’s now-famous beach scenes, but is engaged instead in a smoother, more lyrical dalliance. *Summer Nights* finds a young family in trouble. The husband has just sprung from bed, with rifle, leaving his wife mostly naked, with baby perched under a veil in a crib-basket on the floor.

It is curious to compare these paintings with Nerdrum’s work from the mid-1970s, with a painting like *The Arrest*, in which an unfortunate fellow is apprehended by cops and a crowd. What could be taken as a tall tale comes across as a genuine moment of post-criminal activity. The shift is not so much from Caravaggio/Hopper to Munch/Rembrandt; rather, it’s in the way Nerdrum used to let technique meet storyline and plot without overly crafting the outcome the way he now does.

—Cheryl Kaplan

Dennis Clive

ALLAN STONE

Five years in the making, this spectacular show of ceramic sculpture represents a tour de force World War II air force. Most of Clive’s planes are the size of full-grown eagles, but the largest war bird in the flock—a P-51 Mustang called *ACE’S/The EQUALIZER*—spans nearly seven feet from wingtip to wingtip. The top sides of each Allied and Axis aircraft are rippled and distressed. Contrasting with this hand-wrought surface, the bottom of every wing and underbelly is smooth as glass. You could swear that the sleek ceramic propellers were machine-made, that the minute hydraulic hoses couldn’t possibly be clay. And you’d be wrong.

Arguably these sculptures are portraits, for they manifest both specific likeness and individual character. Decorated in desert camouflage, a Nazi dive bomber looks gaudy as a leopard-skin overcoat and toxic as a poisonous fish. Spin the propeller of the green, reptilian-skinned Messerschmitt 109, and the logarithmic spiral painted on the nose cone turns into a hypnotist’s revolving disk. While the villains look evil, the good guys look great. The legendary Spitfire that flew to victory in the Battle of Britain banks steeply against one gallery wall. This graceful craft is camouflaged to mimic its homeland’s fields and meadows; layered glazes and china paint depict an overview of the White Cliffs of Dover mirrored in the cockpit.



Dennis Clive, *P-38/“Lightning Strikes,”* 2000, ceramic, 10 1/2" x 38 1/2" x 28 1/2". Allan Stone.