

counter between the immaculate, almost luminescent French general and a sweaty, grubby peasant, surrounded by a swirl



Vasily Shulzhenko, *Napoleon in Moscow on Sadovaya-Karetnaya Street*, 2005, oil on canvas, 48 1/2" x 71".
Maya Pelsky.

of deformed wretches living in a nightmare of grime.

Not all the pleasures here were Russian. One of Pelsky's mainstay artists is Spanish sculptor José Cobo, and a number of his small napping cats and dogs appeared to melt into the floor in various corners of the gallery.

Two of Paschke's brightly colored portraits—*Gemini* (1998), featuring the head of the Venus de Milo rendered in orange vertical stripes, and *Sonnet Vert* (2003), showing three faces of William Shakespeare awash in electric bluish green—had pride of place in the show. Just as strong, despite its spot in a back corner, was an intense, vibrating little self-portrait, stylized but completely honest, by Paschke's fellow Chicagoan Susanna Coffey.

—Margaret Hawkins

Enrique Montenegro

Eric Firestone
Scottsdale

This show, the first retrospective of Enrique Montenegro's work since his death, in 2003, documented a long career creating paintings and painterly collages faithful to the spirit and formalist principles of high modernism. Educated at the Art Students League in the 1940s, Montenegro became a professor of painting at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where the majority of these works from the '60s, '70s, and '80s were made.

Each fresh and articulate painting shown here is a rigorous exploration of the delicate balance of color, line, and plane. Montenegro's most scrupulous works are highly abstracted urban land-

scapes populated with reductive representations of the human figure. In *Shopping Center* (1981), numerous small, brightly colored human forms gather in clusters in a central triangular space rendered in the neutral hues of a southwestern cityscape. The "Pedestrian" series uses directional street arrows in pure white and gray to guide the viewer's eye through the paintings. These cold works convey a sense of relentless, mechanized force. The planes that make up this pictorial space are mostly executed in ungraded areas of blue gray and charcoal, whose surfaces are sometimes roughened by silicone mixed into the oil paint.



Enrique Montenegro, *Woman on Parking Lot*, 1984, oil on canvas, 50" x 51".
Eric Firestone.

Although there was the occasional self-portrait, mannequins appear to have been the figures Montenegro studied most intimately: their rigid contours and fixed joints recur in images from throughout his prolific career. The minimalist cityscape and the blank human beings who inhabit it are the product of the artist's lifelong exploration of artificially constructed landscapes and artificial representations of the human form. —Lara Taubman

Semyon Fridlyand

University of Denver
Denver

While the work of such Soviet-era photojournalists as Dmitri Baltermants, Yevgeny Khaldei, and Boris Mikhailov is familiar in the West, a full accounting of the key practitioners from that tumultuous time in Russian history is only now being written. Long missing have been

the surprisingly wide-ranging and insightful images of Semyon Fridlyand (1905–64). Although he was one of the country's most published news photographers from the '30s through the early '60s, his work was almost unknown outside Russia until this year.

This exhibition of 82 images, titled "On the Road: Photography of the Soviet Empire," and an accompanying 72-page book offered the first comprehensive look at Fridlyand's massive output. Organized thematically, the show presented a cross section of his multifaceted subject matter, ranging from a classic portrait of two female workers on a collective farm in Ukraine to a later color photograph of two boys relaxing at a swimming pool.

If there is nothing especially groundbreaking about Fridlyand's work, he still had a good eye. In step with the modernist currents of his time, he played up formalist repetition in an overhead view of what appears to be a library reading room (most of the images have little in the way of specific titles or captions) and opted for an appealingly disorienting circular composition in a depiction of children dining in a formal garden.

Fridlyand assembled a private archive of field notebooks, prints, and more than 15,000 negatives, which his wife maintained after his death. The archive was brought to the United States in 2005 and has been loaned to the University of Denver for display, publication, and



Semyon Fridlyand, *Gas Worker*, n.d., exhibition print, dimensions variable. University of Denver.

transfer to an online database. With this ambitious undertaking, the photographer is finally getting the recognition long denied him. —Kyle MacMillan