

Excerpts from reviews of exhibition work by Irving Kriesberg

“Irving Kriesberg literally makes creation his central theme. He directly describes generative action. Time for him is palpable and sequential, moment following moment. He ponders organic energy, seeing it as an event, embodied in hieratic transmutations from animal to human to inanimate nature, back and forth, a simultaneously progressive and retrogressive Darwinism. Obliquely, he is thus referring to the creation of art...Kriesberg’s method of enumerating his themes (or more precisely, his enactments of creation) into evenly cadenced and often symmetrical groupings, induce the beholder a response which customarily accompanies religious or mystical experience (ancient hieratic arts, like the Egyptian’s, knew this well), though no nameable cult is here referred to. Marking off and centering objects or signs, which are deemed revelatory, suggests not only their potency, but heightens their discreteness, as in the tick of a clock. The multiple panels and “charts” of animals are like periodic tables in some grand genealogy. Their chemistry is cosmic and Kriesberg in directing it is a High Priest, but the potential lesson in this conception of art is of importance to all artists....”

-Allan Kaprow: Art International Jan. 16, 1964

“In a year Kriesberg has made amazing advances. A generous spirit has entered his work, in the form of richer color and a more relaxed attitude to composition...Kriesberg’s work has always been dense with shapes and hard to describe; it is no less complex with its combinations of symbols, patterns and actual representations, but it now seems to have zest...”

-Arts Magazine February 1965

“Irving Kriesberg’s recent paintings make one think of the late Cliff Sterrett’s comic-strip Polly and Her Pals. This famous series delighted readers, and for good reasons: its amiable satire, its remarkable draftsmanship, its sensitive handling of lights and darks. Kriesberg’s paintings, on a different level, have a similar lusty directness. He has combined what might have been daily panels into single paintings. The mood and color is of half-night. There is a deepening alarm. His paintings are places for him to store thoughts, but they keep spilling out – erotic fancies, snakes, germ-bloated forms, squeaky blots, hairy objects...”

-Art News February 1965