

# 'Boxcar' exhibit keeps city on track with abstraction

By ELISABETH KIRSCH  
Special to The Star

## THE SHOW

**L**ester Goldman's paintings and sculpture have always maintained a dialogue with a panoply of modern and contemporary art styles. In his generously catholic approach — ranging over time from the rigorously representational to the completely abstract — he has sampled the aesthetic notions of everyone from Ozenfant to Leland Bell and Carroll Dunham. Goldman seems to be constantly searching for what he deems to be the most important signifiers of 20th century art, as he simultaneously insists on fierce personal expression.

### REVIEW

In the last few years, Goldman's inner-art-child has also come out to play, as evidenced in his current "Boxcar" series. Although this is a somewhat crowded installation, it works because the artist's strong vocabulary of forms all seem to converse with one another. These whacked-out abstractions, in which high-pitched color, insistent line and organic form raucously, albeit good-naturedly, vie for attention, support the belief that abstraction remains viable in today's art world.

In his wall works, paper works and paintings, Goldman paints and draws highly sensuous shapes on a ground of passionate, tropical colors such as chartreuse, fuchsia and turquoise. He isn't afraid to throw in some glitter, as in "Engine: er," and stripes and polka dots, as in "Madchen," while he's at it. If the famed *outré* designer Elsa Schiaparelli were alive today (she coined the term "shocking pink"), she would

■ "Lester Goldman — Boxcar: The Paintings" continues at Joseph Nease Gallery, 1819 Central, through Saturday. Hours are noon to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and by appointment. Call (816) 421-2166.

want Goldman's paintings in her salon right now.

Although abstract, Goldman's shapes are full of references to the body. Bladder and womb shapes abound throughout the show, and his two "Black Tears" sculptures include the use of actual gourds. Droopy and painted shiny black, the gourds connote feelings of impotence and offer a meaningful subtext to the overall jovial sensibility of the show.

Two wall constructions, "Metronomic Level" and "Black Diamonds," offer a hard-edged contrast to the more sinuous lines of the paintings, watercolors and sculptures. These wood, fabric and colored Plexiglas collages offer a decorative, postmodern salute to constructivist works of decades past and emphasize the overall love of modern materials inherent within the "Boxcar" series.

Concurrent with this show, in the gallery's back room, is an installation of new abstract works by artists James Brinsfield, Shaun Cassidy, Karen Owsley Nease and James Woodfill.

In media ranging from rubber tubing to painted steel and paper cut-outs, this mini-exhibit underscores the wide range of abstraction now prevalent in the Kansas City area — and beyond.



'Madchen' (Young Girl), 2002, by Lester Goldman

Courtesy Joseph Nease Gallery