

# ARTFORUM

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Ernest Briggs and Edward Dugmore  
GREEN MOUNTAIN GALLERY

Ernest Briggs, born 1923, Edward Dugmore, born 1915, and Michael Goldberg, born 1924, are members of the second generation of Abstract Expressionism. They all flourished during the '50s, working out of the pioneering efforts of the first generation of American art pioneers. Briggs and Dugmore were influenced by Clyfford Still, Goldberg by Willem de Kooning. Briggs studied with Still at the California School of Fine Arts and was a close follower of his work. Though his paintings in The Museum of Modern Art's "12 Americans" show in 1956 have a powerful diagonal thrust and a fractured New York kind of violence that is not characteristic of Still's work, their vocabularies were quite similar. Then, Briggs' oil paint was thick and slablike, applied and shaped with a palette knife. Now it is acrylic paint applied in broad swaths; he scrapes or wipes out the centers of these swaths to produce line by a process of subtraction. Then as now, Briggs' involvement is with process. His image is not nearly so personal as his method of paint handling. The early work was huge and wall-like; currently the paintings are closer to traditional easel size. Conversely, his image has expanded. Whereas smallish, rhythmic units massed forces across the canvas in earlier times, huge, sweeping pathways now show an arm's range of motion. The new paintings are structured in quarters or halves, their internal units frequently repeating the framing edge in a square-within-a-square format. His curving, overlapping, collagelike forms read like undecipherable calligraphy viewed macroscopically. His gestures are intense and forceful; they walk a narrow line between the preplanned and the automatist.

Edward Dugmore\* was also a student of Clyfford Still, a fact that his work clearly reflected in the '50s. Horizontally banded into jagged, interlocking areas of dark and light, his dramatically cracked configurations increased in tortuous splinteriness in the early '60s. He, like Briggs, was and still is very involved with Abstract Expressionism. Like Briggs, too, Dugmore has tended recently to work on a nonmural, easel size painting which is eminently suited to his new work. For the past three or four years Dugmore has been working in an abstractly figurative mode that is highly reminiscent of de Kooning's black-and-white paintings of the late '40s. Dugmore's work is fleshier and more illusionistically volumetric than de Kooning's, however. His contours are intentionally rounded, though, and the figurative references are hardly ever descriptive. He seems to be interested in a shallow, depicted space which he reinforces by the gray neutrality of his color. The imagery is obsessive, and the painterly approach is anguished, in true Abstract Expressionist style.

—April Kingsley