



475 Park Avenue at 57th Street, New York, New York 10022

Tel: (212) 355-4545 Fax: (212) 355-4547 www.forumgallery.com

Robert Fishko, *Director*

GREGORY GILLESPIE
(1936-2000)

Pregnant Female, 1967

oil on wood

4 3/8 x 5 3/4 inches (includes artist's frame)



Provenance

The Artist

Allan Stone Projects, New York

(Forum Gallery, New York)

Private Collection

Exhibited

Gregory Gillespie: Supernatural Observation, Forum Gallery, New York,
February 6 – March 15, 2014

Literature

Gregory Gillespie: Paintings (Italy 1962-1970), Forum Gallery, New York, NY, 1970, p. 32,
Illustrated and p. 59, Listed.

Note

“In turning away from the popular aesthetic of the sixties, Gillespie reduced the physical scale of his paintings, in sharp contrast to the enormous canvases then being produced. The small format may have resulted from his working method, that is, the use of photographs and magazine clippings, but their effect is intense, demanding close and careful scrutiny, promising some rare insight or secret to the sensitive observer...Beginning in 1967 with such paintings as... *Three Sisters*, 1969, strong currents of sexual references, explicit or insinuated, dominate Gillespie's paintings. The most innocent objects become endowed with phallic or visceral properties, even still lifes and interiors. In the complexities of a wall recess, the details of a plant form or the contours of a squash, a special or erotic element is either specifically noted or illusionistically implied. On occasion, these references are carried to extremes in morbid sexual fantasies where brutality, amputation, and seduction are components in sad and mortifying rituals. Unhappiness and pity

permeate some of the more specific paintings in which people are depicted as brutalized, injured, or debased....There is certainly no sense of pleasure or rapture suggested in any of these paintings and one may conjecture that they are reflections of a particular crisis in the artist's life."

_Abram Lerner, *Gregory Gillespie*, retrospective exhibition presented by Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; traveled to Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA, 1977; catalogue essay.



Gregory Gillespie, *Three Sisters*, 1969, oil and magazine photographs on wood, 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

The recipient of a Fulbright Grant and three Chester Dale Fellowships, Gregory Gillespie spent the 1960s studying in Italy. In Rome, he lived in the American Academy, a few steps away from St. Peter's, the ultimate symbol of his Catholic upbringing, rejected by Gillespie as a young man. Some of his paintings created whilst in Rome featured pornographic subjects that Gillespie talked about with Abram Lerner and Howard Fox in an interview conducted on the occasion of his retrospective exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum in 1977:

Q: *Why do you call them pornographic?*

A: It's just a label. They're really not pornographic. They're antipornographic. They may be pornographic if you drew up a technical definition – probably having to do with genitalia. But it comes out motivated more by a kind of horror of sex rather than a sensual approach to it. Now, as I look back, I see that kind of painting as a kind of social act. Working at the Academy was a kind of catalyst for a lot of repressed anger which sooner or later I guess I had to try to work through.

Q: *Are your paintings religious?*

A: Yes, the paintings are religious – like the erotic paintings are religious. Definitely. Because they come of repression. They come out of a dramatic reaction to repression. They come out of the impulse to do sacrilege, which is a religious impulse.