

ART COMMENTARY

With Marion Wolberg Weiss

MARIA SCHON AT EDGE MEDIA STUDIO

There's a new art gallery in town, and while this isn't particularly startling news since a lot of galleries just opened this summer, the current artist at Sag Harbor's Edge Media Studio also seems new in town. And well she should. We haven't seen work by Maria Schon in several years, but we remember it well. Although there's some structural resemblance to her furniture forms from the past, Ms. Schon has provided us with a different kind of technology, subject matter and theme this time around that is refreshing as well as striking.

Ms. Schon's series, "Tropical Elements," is a collection of limited edition digital prints which were processed from her own drawings. What is most striking, initially, are the pale pinks/purples which exert a subtle presence in the black and white landscape. We learn, in fact, that the prints are actually black and white.

What is also provocative are the unique forms: plants, sea, and mountains that define a tropical climate. There's something archetypal about the shapes,

however, a quality that goes beyond their primitive and indigenous aspects. Such configurations could be ab-



Work by Maria Schon

stract or representational, existing in exotic South America as well as on some alien planet.

Ms. Schon's use of depth is also eye-catching with background/foreground composition. It's intriguing to this critic, particularly, how both artists and filmmakers imbue flat surfaces with three - dimensionality. In cinema, movement can account for some of this depth: characters or objects moving diagonally or a camera moving toward an object.

A zoom- in by the camera lens can also evoke depth; it is this device which Ms. Schon's compositions most resemble - when the background and foreground meet midpoint. Depth is not only accomplished but also mysterious.

Which gets us to Ms. Schon's final striking element: the theme. Are these shapes the beginning of the universe or the end? Are they heaven or a metaphor for hell? Yes, they are "imaginary" landscapes, but does that notion give us a false reading? Perhaps these luscious, perfect settings are not what they seem.

"Tropical Elements" will be on view at Sag Harbor's Edge Media Studio (197 Madison Street) until September 22.