

ONLY THE SHADOW KNOWS

Falling somewhere between the description of static (but unidentifiable) objects and the animation of kinetic lines, John Monti's images reduce a given reality—or unreality—into its constituent parts. Yet these are not the analytic geometries of earlier art in this century, for Monti's reformulations evolve and expand into the world of living figures, eschewing the object-bound commentary on the commodification of the human sphere that is so prevalent in today's art.

The two drawings shown here, *Stand In*, opposite, and *Tip-Off* (each 62 by 27 inches, in charcoal and pastel, from 1988), bring to mind Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet*, 1922. The lurking motion, the development from image to image, and the consequent pentimentlike shadows of previous forms create the feeling that these mysterious, hybrid shapes walk from background into foreground, that they have a life of their own. While Monti denotes end points—finalities—by brownish embossed "lids" that seem to halt or cauterize each volume, these "figures" never accept their containment fully. Even the long supporting sticks that should ground the "rib cages" seem to quiver. And space here is not uniform: in *Tip-Off*, concentric circles are braced by axlelike supports as if to restrain an outward-moving force; the interior space in *Stand In*, on the other hand, seems to surround and envelop. These drawings attempt to jump from the shadowy reality that Monti has created for them, and in fact they ultimately do step off the paper to become sculptures in three-dimensional space.

—Charles V. Miller

