

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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William N. Copley May 24 – June 29, 2001

William Copley's work is a light-hearted rebuke to those who would deprive man of pleasure: priests, moralists and prudes alike. The world that Copley reveals to us is a paradise of sensual delight, populated by nymphs, where lust (if not love) reigns triumphant. Immersed in pleasure, his men and women indulge their appetites, unchastened by guilt or remorse.

Copley clearly favored hedonism, and this propensity surpassed mere subject matter. Personally, he lived the life that he portrays. He was, after all, well equipped for the task: the heir to a large fortune, he spent money lavishly and found almost all women to be irresistible. He might have been just a playboy had he not discovered Surrealism. Copley fell deeply in love, this time with art. He opened a gallery in 1948 to exhibit his heroes: Ernst, Cornell, Matta, Tanguy, and Man Ray. While the gallery ultimately failed, Copley's affection endured. He amassed a fabulous collection.

This exhibition features paintings and drawings in the decorative, cartoon-like style Copley developed in the 1950's, when he was living and painting with the Surrealists in Paris. Many of the works in the show have an autobiographical twist—look for the man in a suit and bowler hat.

William Copley was born in 1919, and died in 1996. Nolan/Eckman Gallery has shown his work since 1991, and represents the artist's estate.