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Tibor de Nagy Gallery Painters & Poets: Celebrating 60 Years

By LANCE ESPLUND JANUARY 22, 2011

In 1948, John Meyers and Tibor de Nagy, stirred by their love of puppets and the commercial success of Howdy Doody, started the Tibor Nagy Marionette Company. Among the collaborators and puppet makers were Jackson Pollock, Mr. de Kooning, Franz Kline and Virgil Thomson. The company didn't last, but it did entrench Messrs. Meyers and de Nagy among New York School artists and poets, who inspired them, in 1950, to open the Tibor de Nagy Gallery.

This fascinating show, teeming with pictures, poems, graphic design and memorabilia—often word-paintings jointly made by writers and artists—highlights some of the gallery's best and brightest moments of the past 60 years.

A video of Frank O'Hara reading poetry, and two film farces by Rudy Burckhardt—exploring psychotherapeutic transference and money-lust, respectively—add an auditory backdrop to this show, in which artists Nell Blaine, Joe Brainard, Alfred Leslie, Ms. Mitchell, Fairfield Porter, Larry Rivers and Trevor Winkfield, and writers John Ashbery, Mr. O'Hara, Ron Padgett and James Schuyler, pay tribute to one another.

Informative and visually stimulating, "Painters & Poets," unlike many vanity projects, celebrates not the work of a gallery, but that of its writers and artists.