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Marvin Bileck and Emily Nelligan
Alexandre Gallery

By JOEL SIMPSON

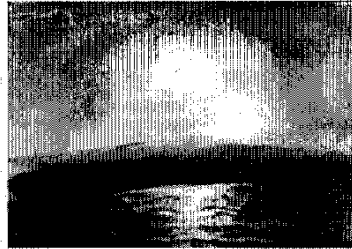
Monochromatic gems by the late Marvin Bileck and his wife Emily Nelligan present two stunningly complimentary perspectives on nature. Bileck is all *line* and Nelligan is all *tone*. Taking to the woods, with its infinity of shapes, Bileck extracts a few poignant lines, distilling an overabundance of form in the natural setting into almost dreamlike evocations. An otherwise blank sketchbook page is divided by an irregular pencil scribble, that, on closer inspection reveals itself as the exquisite profile of a fallen tree. Elsewhere are rocks,

grasses, fallen branches, bushes, low-lying plants and knots of trees. The drawings offer varying degrees of activity, but his most powerful ones are the sparest. As Picasso profiled a satyr, Bileck captures a tree trunk. And when he uses ink in a miniature of standing dead pines on an island, he reveals the similarity between tree branches and the paths the ink follows along the capillarity of the paper fibers.

Nelligan, in contrast to her husband, offers up atmospheric: lowering clouds, fogs and gloomy seascapes. Sometimes the viewer cannot quite make out the seascape; the fog is too thick, and the work becomes an exercise in tonal masses. She captures the light patterns on the water, the cloud patterns and the water spilling over rocks. In some you can practically feel the rain. Through 6/17. ☺



Marvin Bileck *Along the Shore: Cranberry Islands, c. 1950*. Etching, 2 1/8 x 8 7/8 inches.
Courtesy: Alexandre Gallery, New York



Emily Nelligan *7 Oct 2004*.
Charcoal on paper, 7 1/4 x 10 1/2 inches.
Courtesy: Alexandre Gallery, New York

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