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ARTnews**Paul Georges****ANNE PLUMB**

Anything that can be seen or imagined—from a begonia in a pot to Apollo pulling the sun with a blood-red chariot—may be the theme of a Paul Georges oil. A former abstract painter who became a major (if atypical) figure in the realist revival, Georges proudly claims a tradition of figuration that goes back at least as far as the Hellenistic Greeks.

The highlight of this compelling show was a series of monumental paintings based on Greek mythology and culture. Gods or goddesses are silhouetted against a brilliant yellow sky, sometimes with a monochrome border of interacting figures that imi-

tate a frieze. In the case of *Aurora*, the borderless version is best. In fact, this work is breathtaking. The hefty, pink-gowned goddess leaps up over mountain, bird, and rising sun to grab the crescent moon. The nine-foot-high canvas glows with bright color, rich brushwork, and a fearless joie de vivre that are the hallmarks of Georges' work. In other paintings the border is absolutely essential. *Frieze and the Temple* would be simply a view of a Doric ruin, without the energetic, battling figures that recall the vigor of ancient Greek culture.

A related show of Georges' still lifes and landscapes was shown concurrently at the More Gallery in Philadelphia, and there was also a fine selection of works done from nature here. Among the most memorable were two self-portraits: one a dramatic, cropped silhouette of the artist against a doorway, and the other of Georges standing in a shadowed corner of his studio, torn between the world of his paintings and the vibrant grass and trees of the world that can be glimpsed outside.



Paul Georges, *Frieze and the Temple*, 1990, oil on linen, 98½ by 112½ inches. Anne Plumb.

—Ruth Bass