



Left: "The Bugger," 1986, glass and oil on wood by Janusz Andrzej Walentynowicz.



Anne O'Brien Gallery (1701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW) has carved itself a niche by showing artists who utilize "craft" materials — glass, metal, clay, wood — to make "high art" statements. The blend gives the work Miss O'Brien shows a heightened accessibility, as even the unsophisticated viewer can usually appreciate fine craftsmanship.

Miss O'Brien's current show of works by Polish-born Janusz Andrzej Walentynowicz fits the bill; having studied glass in Denmark, the artist incorporates his extensive knowledge of glass techniques in engaging mixed-media reliefs that explore the ups and downs, primarily downs, of love.

The work retains a sense of humor while admitting of an existential edge. "Oh Suzanne" mourns a lost love. Her painted visage, remote, unreachable as in a dream, gazes out from behind a thick "window" of glass surrounded by crude

stick figures of splintered wood.

"The Bugger" is similarly melancholy. The solitary figure perched atop a ghostly triangular head of cast glass suggests obsession. The image is almost too simple, but the artist's lively handling of surface and materials endows it with staying power.

This is an enjoyable show — light, for all the pathos of its theme, at once tactile and visual. "His Room," featuring a motley glass head perched on a painted mountaintop, is particularly captivating for its offbeat composition and shadowy humor. Throughout, the artist's mastery of process serves him well, enhancing, but not overpowering, his expression. (Through May 9.)

