

# The Washington Post

## Women in Shadow; At Tartt, Watson's Haunting Sculptures

by Richard Paul, March 21, 1987

Excerpt:

Manon Cleary at Gallery 900

Washington's Manon Cleary, a professor at the University of the District of Columbia, is best known in this city for her half-ominous, half-lyrical, and remarkable self-portraits. But no figures are included in her current exhibition at UDC's downtown gallery, Gallery 900, 916 G St. NW. Her subject here is sky. Using creamy French pastels and sanded German paper, she has done more than 30 portraits of the skies of America—the low gray skies of winter, the bright blue skies of spring, the green skies that precede loud storms, and the orange skies of dawn.

Cleary has always conjured atmosphere, and these pastels, although small (most are merely post card size) are filled with light and space and air. They look like little windows cut into the wall. John Constable, the English master, used to go into the fields, lie down on his back and compile, at various times of day, what he liked to call "a natural history of the skies." Cleary's pastels have something of that verisimilitude, but they also have the look of little color field abstractions. They're lovely. They're inexpensive (most cost \$220). They will be on view through March.