

them with the flat, brazen shapes that came to characterize his exploration of portraiture and the figure.

Echoes of this symbiotic relationship between abstraction and a naturalistic realism are evident in the striking graphic compositions of ebony dresses on a light-blue ground in *Sleeping Child* (1961). Those forms resemble the edge and color contrasts in *Positano*, painted just a year earlier. Another similar instance can be found in the way the inward-turning shapes in the shawl in *Remi* (1962) and the central blossomlike shards in *Enclosure* (1962–2003) so closely correspond with one another. *The Blue Robe* (1962), in its chromatic vibrations of abstracted passages of clothing and interiors, maintains a tense balance between these two modes of working.

Most remarkable is how in the portraits Barnet was able to incorporate the delicacy of the graphite line into the painted splinters of translucent and often glowingly colored human figures. As in a Piero della Francesca fresco, the shallow space in *Atlantis* (1975–76) compresses the figures into hovering, almost symbolic representations. Yet, unlike Alex Katz, for example, who is noted for his flattened, extremely simplified portraits, Barnet complicates a preliminary read of his images as being simply graphic and psychologically aloof, imbuing them with a sense of intimacy and warmth.

—Greg Lindquist

UP NOW

'Will Barnet at 100'

National Academy Museum
Through December 31

This vivid and rich exhibition celebrates the 100th birthday of Will Barnet with a widely varied gathering of paintings that he made between the ages of 24 and 97. These works trace the artist's development from his engagement with the naturalistic and cubistic abstraction of the '30s up through the '60s and his arrival at a figurative style. When, over the course of the last decade, Barnet revisited earlier abstract motifs, as he often did, he would enliven



Will Barnet, *The Blue Robe*, 1962, oil on canvas, 50" x 54".
National Academy Museum.