

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1987

By MICHAEL BRENSON

**Peter Flaccus,  
Helen Miranda Wilson  
and Rona Pondick**

*Zabriskie Gallery  
724 Fifth Avenue (at 56th Street)  
Through July 31*

The paintings on paper by Peter Flaccus, drawings by Helen Miranda Wilson and sculptures by Rona Pondick are all taut, closed and, at times, claustrophobic. Ms. Wilson's 1981 and 1982 drawings inspired by rumpled fabric or crumpled paper were done with quill and India ink. The drawn images are smaller than life. With her meticulously disciplined method, Ms. Wilson produced something irrational. Some images have a squeezed, almost strangled quality. Even with those that unravel in space, movement is not easy. As a group, the drawings are hard and soft, menacing and sensual, and behind them is a curious laugh.

Ms. Pondick's sculptures are beginning to get the attention they deserve. Her primary materials are bronze and wax. Her signature form is soft, slender and curved, a bit like a huge finger or maggot. In three of the four works in this show, a multitude of these forms are knotted together into something roughly the size and shape of a medicine ball. In "Rome," the wax forms seem to be climbing blindly over one another like newborn kittens over their mother, only there are not six or eight, but 25 or 50. In "Pair," it is as if two skeins of yarn had been transformed into swarms of snakes.

The power of these works has a lot to do with materials. In "Overcoat" and "Pair," steel wool on wood, or bronze on wood, creates a rude incongruity. In "Black Bed," a tiny bronze idol settles luxuriously into ample satin cushions — each cushion long and slender — which in turn rest uneasily on wood. It is a very economical work, but the effect of the juxtapositions of hard and soft, lush and stark, reverence and decay, is chilling.