

Shidoni show highlights gallery openings

In the past two weeks there have been more new shows in the galleries than I can remember for a similar period in almost three years of writing this column. I apologize in advance that spatial limitations will necessitate more abbreviated coverage than usual.

The fifth annual sculpture show at Shidoni is by far the best one to date. It has evolved from an exhibit mainly displaying works produced at the foundry to a comprehensive show including almost all of the significant sculptors in the area as well as artists from other parts of the country.

This year the work ranges from the usual western bronzes to an example of earthworks on the other extreme and a wide variety of abstractions and semi-abstractions in between. There are over 350 works done by over 85 sculptors in about every material one can conceive of.

It is virtually impossible to cover even a small part of the work in this review. I will, therefore, mention works that impressed me in a number of categories with the understanding that these are not the only pieces worthy of mention.

Let me first dispense with western bronzes. They show up year after year. They never change, probably because they sell as they are. They are, essentially three dimensional illustrations that consist of a series of facts, strung together by a story line, rather than a sense of aesthetic unity. Many of them purport to represent action and yet are often rigid, bogged

Art Review Don Fabricant

down by endless trivial details (which is ironically what appeals to their collectors). Some of the proponents of this genre, admittedly, do it better than others.

Lincoln Tow's huge, over-priced Indians have a sense of melodrama. Dennis Silvertooth has a sensitivity to facial expressions and Gary Chew at times makes cartoons instead of illustrations.

Let me diverge here, to a related subject, and then return to Shidoni.

Margaret Jamison's fund raising show at the Sweeney Convention Center is made up of works, mainly from the same genre and point up the sad fact that if you want to make money (for personal gain or for good causes) "schlock" is your best. Most of the paintings in this show are dominated by presentation of recognizable facts without the disconcerting elements of emotion or any concessions made to a contemporary sense of pictorial unity or abstraction.

Many of the artists in this show have talent. Some can draw, some have a feeling for paint, and some have a feel for composition (rather than structure). But, for the most part, the relationship to subject is tinged by bland factualness, sentimentality, empty showmanship or

cuteness. Fortunately, the rest of the Shidoni show included a number of really good sculptors. Perhaps the star of the show was Jean Denis Cruchet, whose neo-cubist abstractions in stone, bronze and wood have a wonderful sense of form coupled with whimsy and emotion. March McKinnon's white marble forms are restrained, elegant and in spite of an Art-like simplicity, they have enough complexity to hold one's interest.

Ed Haddaway's huge wooden animals and alligators are both humorous and beautifully made. Some tiny, bronze sphere-like forms by Lynn Macri, that can be moved around on their wooden bases, were more intriguing than many larger pieces. Stone carvings by Pat Stone, Jamison Wells and Phil Bircheff had a certain interest, each in their own way.

Among the more contemporary pieces was an earthwork by Phil Gudwin in which a black light attracts and then fries insects in a pit. John Masseur's kinetic figures are getting bigger and more interesting. Some very tall, welded abstractions by William Goodman were both graceful and dignified. Peter Bilen's delicately balanced wooden forms move in rhythmic paths on their bases. Several large mixed media fetish pieces by Edwin Rivera have an almost altar-like attraction.

I could go on and on. But it will suffice to say that there is something in this show for practically everyone

and that this is most likely one of the most ambitious sculpture shows in the west and possibly in the country and is well worth a visit.

The results of the City Hall mural competition were quite disappointing. Though there were relatively few entries, there were a number of designs and proposals of quality and sophistication. Excellent entries by Frank Ettenberg, Rosanna Hall, Anne Moul, John D'Emilio, Linda Nonno, Peter Rogers, Gilbert Guzman, Michaelen McGuire, Sergio Moyano, and Eric Seigliano were passed up in favor of A Saint's Day calendar in a retablo style by Carol Patterson and a 5'6" bronze of St. Francis preaching to a Squirrel by Drew Bacigalupa. Both of the award-winners were innocuous, competent and will offend no one except a relatively small contingent who might expect more from a city where art is supposedly of some importance.

Surprisingly, the judges included a number of people from whom I would have expected more discrimination.

At Hill's Gallery the monotypes of Forrest Moses and photographs by Barbara Gluck complemented each other in a manner that added up to a delightful show. Both artists focused on images of flora (and supposed in Gluck's work on fauna, which I couldn't find) in diverse ways.

Moses, who is best known for his freely brushed New Mexico landscapes, which always struck me as

being a bit too controlled, has come up with irises and tulips executed with daring and abandon. The calligraphic strokes nearly burst out of the confines of the rectangle and the color is luscious and sensual. Control, which is not one of this painter's problems, has been pushed close to its limits and has brought his work into realms that I have never seen before. It is a definite step forward.

Gluck's photographs are fuzzy and dense contrasted to Moses' almost oriental simplicity. The complex images of foliage and flowers were made from color slides employing a laser scanner to attain very accurate color. Though there is a strong abstract quality, the sense of the subject comes through. The lushness and sensuality of nature is the quality that both artists share.

At Clarke-Benton, the pottery of Rick Dillingham and pastels by Jaune Quick-To-See Smith went on display. Dillingham's new work is related to things he has been doing for a while. He still breaks and then reconstructs many of his pieces with a resulting feeling of antiquity. The new shapes seem more compact and he has introduced a conical shape that is a bit like a shell. There is more gold and silver on the new works which makes them more elegant and in some cases a little gaudy.

Quick-To-See Smith is also continuing in the same general format as in her last show though the changes are striking. There are still vague

intimations of tipis and Indian villages, but her color has become more intense and her pencil lines more scribbly, which enhances the spatial penetrations, especially in a zone toward the lower middle of many of her images. There is both new strength and whimsy in these drawings. She is still for me, the artist who exposes her American Indian heritage in the most genuine and convincing terms.

At the Black Kachina Gallery, the second consecutive show of the two dimensional works of Bradford Smith opened this weekend. This show consisted of a number of small colored pencil images of a wide variety of subjects. The overall theme is one that appears in all aspects of Smith's work; the corrupting influences of our modern environment on human life. These drawings employ satire and a more overt humor, approaching cartoons at times, to express the artist's ideas.

On a graphic level the work is very strong. I have a problem in some of the pieces with the use of color, which is sometimes a little blatant. It is really interesting to see another aspect of this multi-dimensional artist.

Space is again a problem. I will review some shows at the Contemporary Craftsman, The Plum Tree, Hill's Crafts, The Santa Fe Gallery of Photography, and Davis Mather Gallery next week. I hope I can catch up by then.

Answers for crossword on Page D-6

ASTER	HASH	SOUL	TALER
SPINE	ORNE	OLLA	AMORE
WOODY	ALLEN	BETTE	DAVIS
ARGO	FLEERS	GREW	SECT
NEA	ETON	YAP	ANET
RAIS	ANEW	AFIRE	TRET
CONDOR	GAOLERS	SCOPES	
ROADS	FURN	FATS	SPATE
ANNA	HEROD	ETAPE	IRAE
BAA	RAMONA	ROBERT	CULP
HERO		ARES	
JOSE	FERRER	JEERED	ILL
ARIL	SAONE	EBBED	FLOE
RAVES	LATE	ALOD	TIERS
SLANTS	MELANIE	XERXES	
ALTS	REBAS	HESS	
AGA	RITE	DIR	GOBS
SST	NORA	NERO	ETHANE
SITE	GRET	AGARBO	HUME
CRONYN	ESNES	MOOD	ULES
ADULT	REARS	SLED	RUST
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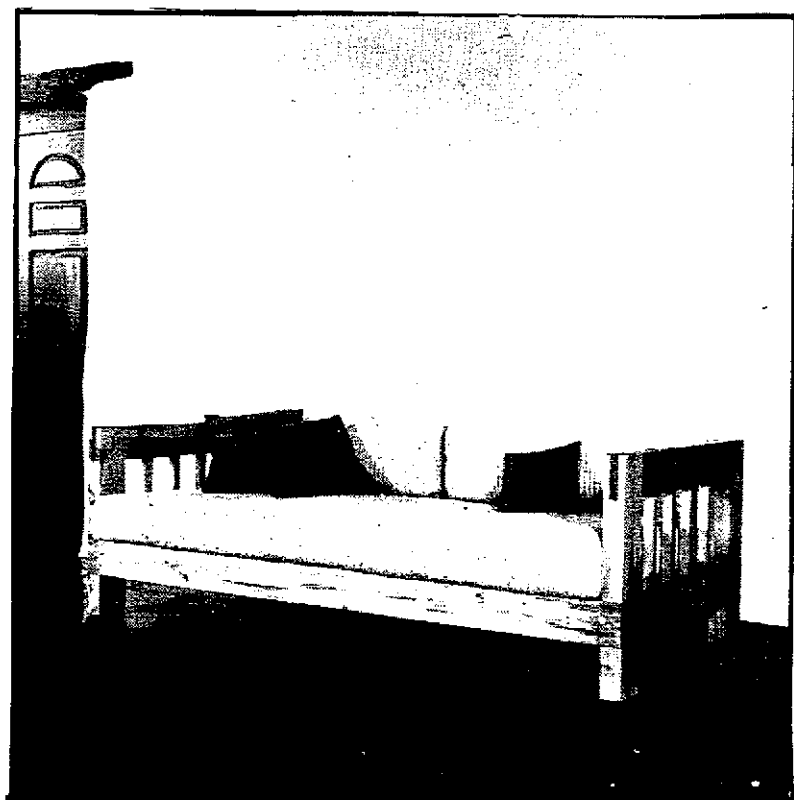
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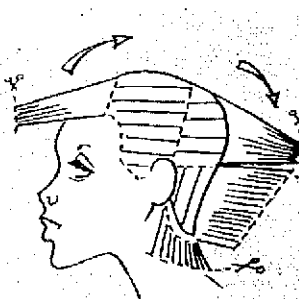
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