

Art Review

Patteran Exhibit Misses Something

By NANCY TOBIN WILLIG
Courier-Express Art Critic

The Patteran Society's annual exhibit currently at the Burchfield Center in Buffalo State College's Rockwell Hall is in no way offensive. It's not even inoffensive.

Thinking back, it improved somewhat during the week that passed between my first and second visit — probably because my enthusiastic state of expectancy had vanished by the second trip.

It's not so much what's in the display that is so blah, for there are several outstanding works. It is, perhaps, what's missing that gives this Patteran display a need for an Alka-Seltzer.

The Patteran membership prides itself on being the best. Well, its membership includes a lot of the best artists who live in this area, and a healthy sprinkling of the not-quite-the-best and never-will-be's. These latter groups turned out in numbers for the annual display. Only a few from the first category obviously bothered to enter.

Several of the missing whose wrists should be slapped for either being too busy, forgetful, or snobbish to enter are (in alphabetical order) Harvey Breverman, Seymour Drumlevitch, Walter Garver, Richard Gubernick, Duayne Hatchett, Leslie Krims, John McIvor, Joseph Piccillo and Don Robertson — and there are plenty more.

Returning to the works — some 65 which fill every nook and cranny of the Burchfield Center . . .

Certainly no one can dismiss the provoking work by Robert Senkpiel, a talented young artist. I find his subject matter so distasteful, however, that there are few kind words I can find to describe his iconography. Constructions, such as "All the Children Love the "Fuhrer" or "Rommel Altar Piece" will find no enthusiast here, no matter what Senkpiel's point of view. They are superbly crafted works, strongly influenced in technique at least, by Joseph Cornell's boxes and constructions.

I will be singularly joyful to see Senkpiel's unusual gifts turn

to subject matter more appealing than Nazism. Enough.

Walter Prochowick's immaculate oil painting, "Space Series XXXV" achieves a soaring sensibility in difficult-to-work-with browns and tans. Like a meteor, a red streak slashes through the calm of the canvas, giving it motion and a strong focal point.

Sally Cook's mysterious paintings are becoming less and less "primitive" and more and more surreal. Her two paintings show attention to modeling of the figures, and there is a new turbulence emerging. Mrs. Cook is heading in an interesting direction, indicating a deepening perspective.

Beth Burgan's mixed media construction, "Ecological Compensation," is a striking visual statement, simply told by old, well-rusted fragmented mattress inner springs, partially adorned by parched, torn remnants of fabric.

Energetic Abstracts

The rectangular work is enclosed in a plexiglas box, and fabric droppings are caught by a plexiglas tray at the bottom.

It is an intriguing work returning to.

James Kuo is represented by two strong watercolor artworks. The abstracts are energetic, visually derived from natural formation, showing a new interest in texture, combining here vigorous washes with swiftness a clear impasto formed by clear acrylic.

Will Harris' oil and "The Sun and Holden B" is a ringing bull's eye of wall with his hot red sun dripping horizontal stripes in blues and browns. Harris instinctively achieves the definition his title gives of sand, sky and water.

Herta Kane's "Square 1 and No 4 are strikingly hard-edge, soft-hued paintings using the same configuration of two different sets of colors.

Several fine photographs by Bernice L. and Frederic schall and Milton Gogovin show the dimension of the display.

The Pattern exhibit can be seen at the Burchfield Center through March 3. Viewing hours are weekdays 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sundays 1-5 p.m.