fine art in the Queen City

by Brenda Preisner

There isn't much time left to see the 81st Annual Buffalo Society of Artists exhibition at the Charles Burchfield Center, SUCB campus, 1300 Elmwood Ave. The show closes Sunday, but it's a good one to squeeze in if only to check up on what our area artists are up to these days.

Quite a few familiar names and works frequently shown here in Buffalo are represented. Juror Cheryl Towers, director of the Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center Gallery at the State University College at Fredonia, has chosen a wide range of works, although the predominant flavor of the show is representational.

The Chase Manhatten Bank Award went to Evan Summer for his black and white intaglio "Interior II," a sister piece to his "Interior I." Both are very fine studies in contrast and texture. Robert Myers, whose work I have admired in previous shows, provides us with "Two Truncated Pyramids #11." A bas-relief in white plastic, it depends on the play of light to give it definition.

I was especially impressed by Norine Spurling's small "Study" done in casein bi-chromate. It displays a lovely range of pinks and oranges while emoting a nostalgic days-gone-by feeling.

Bernice and Frederic Marschall walk away with my vote for the best photography in the show. Hyatt's Art and Craft Shop awarded Bernice their prize for "Hopscotch," a set of three color photos taken from various angles of a crazy jumping-for-joy figure painted on the sidewalk. The subject matter as well as her fine photographic technique, make this a marvelous piece. Her husband, Frederic, also exhibits a sensitive photographic style in his color photo "Traffic" in which the incongruity of a car blurred by its speed, shoots past an amazed camel.

The Gold Medal Cash Patron Award was handed to Beth dirt encased in plexiglas. I don't find the work particularly dirst encased in plexiglas. I don't find the work particularly exciting, however, either visually or intellectually.

"Mystic Shore II," a circular acyrilic painting, won William Giles the Adam Meldrum and Anderson Co. Award, although I much prefer the leafy greens and subtlety of "Mystic Shore I" over the overworked and slightly muddy "II."

Diane Aldrich should be mentioned for her "Untitled" work on paper. She successfully mingles delicate shadings of color with the darker intensities of grays to achieve an exquisite, but decorative pattern.

The exhibit is in memorium of Sally Potenza, an active member of the society, whose sudden passing shocked and saddened the group as well as all of us who knew her or her work.

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Several weeks ago, I reviewed the George Segal show now on view at the Nina Freudenheim Gallery. It has come to my attention that I erroneously reported that Segal had received a $100,000 commission here in Buffalo. He has, in fact, received $60,000 for a sculpture to be erected downtown. I also stated that the Segal on display is the Segal of years past. The work exhibited is his most recent although he began work on it two to three years ago. (But no matter how recent this work is, Segal has failed, in my mind, to build on his old work, choosing instead to continue in the same vein he has for years.)

Burchfield Center

Winners Among the Non-Winners Found at Artists' Society Show

By HAL CROWTHER

One of the small compensations for the thankless, frustrating task of reviewing large group exhibitions is the chance to 'discover' a favorite and follow that artist's progress from one show to the next.

This week I'm tipping my padded protective beret to Julia Bogacki, a painter who impressed me in last year's Patteran-Buffalo Society of Artists show at the Albright-Knox and who hasn't let me down in the 81st annual BSA exhibition that opened Sunday in the Burchfield Center.

She didn't win any of the 15 cash prizes awarded for this juried show, yet it seems to me that her latest acrylic abstractions, at once bold and quizzical, rank among the best purely abstract work being done in this area.

I admit a weakness for her literary titles — the one at the Albright was "Things Fall Apart," this one is "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times."

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BUT IT'S HER colors (we share an affinity for the violet end of the spectrum) and the minute, meticulous color build-up and shading that holds my admiration. Centimeter by centimeter she builds an enormous, celestial presence.

My other compensation is a chance to second-guess the juror. I couldn't honestly concur with the first prize selection, Beth Burgan's plexiglass structure "Seeds and Earth III." Despite my love of milkweed seeds, I couldn't see that her imaginative, even metaphorical suspension of the beautiful things outweighed all the other talents on display.

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CHARLES MUNDAY, who took third prize with his watercolor "Buick No. 2," is a wonderful painter. It seems fair to ask, though, how many more period automobiles he's going to exhibit before the subject exhausts itself.

One award I can second enthusiastically is the second prize to Russell Drisch for his photograph "Step Ladder No. I." It's a hugh hand-colored study in angles and shadows that asserts Drisch's strong claim as one of a handful of photographers whose work is genuinely expanding the boundaries of the art.

Among the photographers exhibiting, Drisch obviously achieves more because he dares more. Throughout the show, in photographs, drawings, graphics and watercolors, there's a tendency toward delicacy, enigma, almost coyness that may reflect the taste of the juror, Cheryl Towers, director of the Art Center at Fredonia State College.

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IN THE CONTEXT of this mood, which I call "minor mystery," the bold ones like Drisch stand out. I was refreshed by the clean, confident strength of Nadine Pikas' large geometric abstractions, especially the radiant acrylic "Cherise."

In the same stark geometric vein, a vein in which I'm hard to please, I was impressed by Robert Myers' plastic bas-relief "Two Truncated Pyramids."

My personal pick of a large field of 11 watercolors would be "Coyote Country" by Robert Blair, who seldom strikes a minor note.

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BERNICE MARSCHALL would be a strong second in photography for "What Color is a Dandelion's Blood," a bright composition in multiple color images with a fine streak of the tongue-in-cheek that this show could use more of.

Jane Malkiewicz deserves a nod for the quirky clarity and technique of "Reflective Eggs Reflected," an oil painting that won one of four special $100 prizes. And Adele Becker pleased me by exhibiting an oil from her "Nature's Images."

Shirley Kassman, Grace McKendry and William Giles also deserve more praise than there's space to give them. The exhibition, which runs through May 2.

Art Review Courier Express 3/17/76

Sensitive Juror Aids Exhibit Here

By NANCY TOBIN WILLIG
Courier-Express Art Critic

Members of the Buffalo Society of Artists have put together a solid spring exhibit, getting supportive assistance from a sensitive juror, Cheryl R. Towers, director of the Fredonia State College Art Center Gallery.

The exhibit opened Sunday at Buffalo State College's Burchfield Center.

Ms. Towers juried a tight show whose variety is sparked by a number of strongly innovative artworks, many of which won awards.

The top prize winner in the annual show is Beth Burgan, whose plexiglass structure, "Seeds & Earth III" took the $200 gold medal award. The airy, delicate plastic case in two horizontal sections is ripe with expectancy: milkweed seeds hover in the top dangerously close, but forever separate from the fertile, warm soil in the lower section.

A natural tension is created in tthe intellectual problem posed by the invisible barrier separating the seeds from their intended home, as well as an exciting visual one.

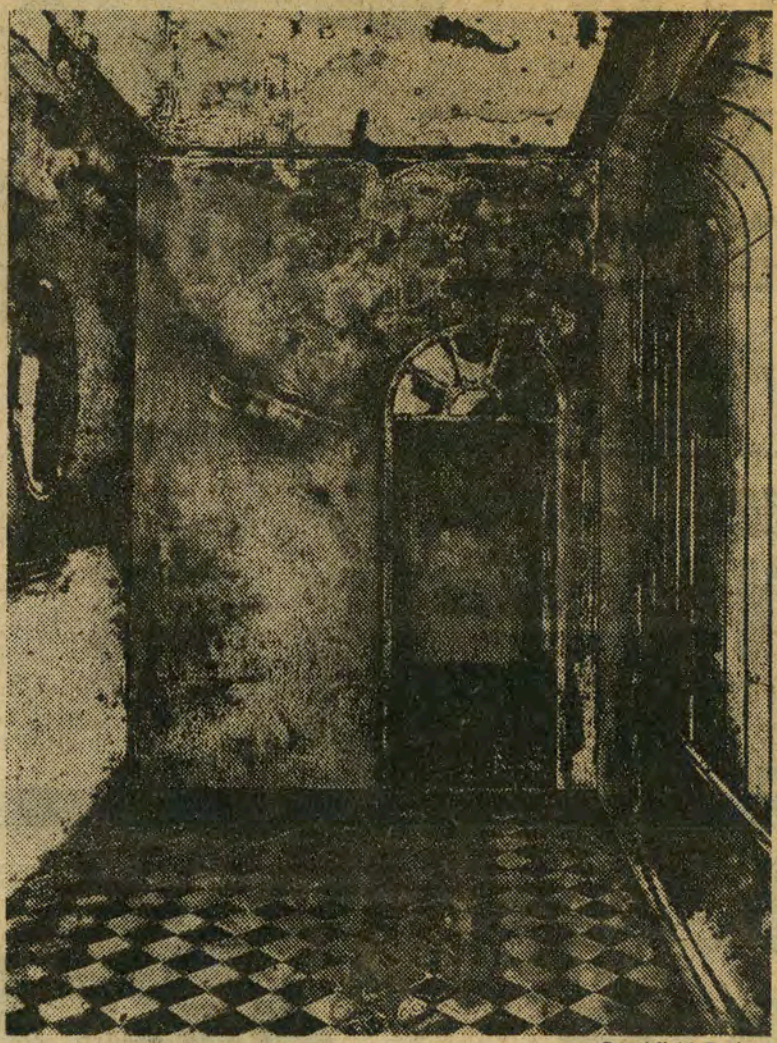
Russell Drisch's outstanding hand-colored photograph of a ladder leaning symmetrically into a vacant corner of a graying room was presented the $150 silver medal award.

"Step Ladder I" is a tightly composed study whose repeated angles form an abstract pattern of geometric shapes contrasting successfully against the utter reality of the paint-stained ladder and peeling walls.

It is the strongest work yet exhibited by Drisch, who is scheduled for a one-artist show this summer at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

The bronze medal was awarded to Charles Munday for another of his clean watercolor designs based on sections of period automobiles . . . this titled "Buick No. 2."

The show is balanced unusually well between abstraction and realism with an obvious return here to an emotional artistic response as opposed to an uninvolved abstraction of only a few years ago.



Burchfield Center

Evan Summer's intaglio print, "Interior II"
. . . in Buffalo Society of Artists exhibit

Striking works by Jane Malkiewicz, Charlie Roth, Norine Spurling and Larry Bell show a social sensitivity to contemporary life through a figurative visual approach.

Equally effective through warm abstraction are works by Shirley Kassman, Joan Fitzgerald, Todd Chalk and Shirley Rosenthal. Several cool, surreally effective works surface here, from Evan Summer, Julia Bogacki and Charles Houseman.

The Buffalo Society Show is rich in variety and style, presenting a tempting exhibit by a number of talented area artists. It continues at the Burchfield Center in Rockwell Hall through May 2 with weekday hours noon-5 p.m.; Thursdays till 9 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m.

In addition to the top three prize winners, the following artists were named:

Jane Malkiewicz, Ethel & Wilbur Lytle Memorial Award, $100; Charlie Roth, Buffalo Savings Bank Award, $100; Todd Chalk, Erie County Savings Bank Award, $100; Charles Houseman, Essex Recon Corp. Award, $100.

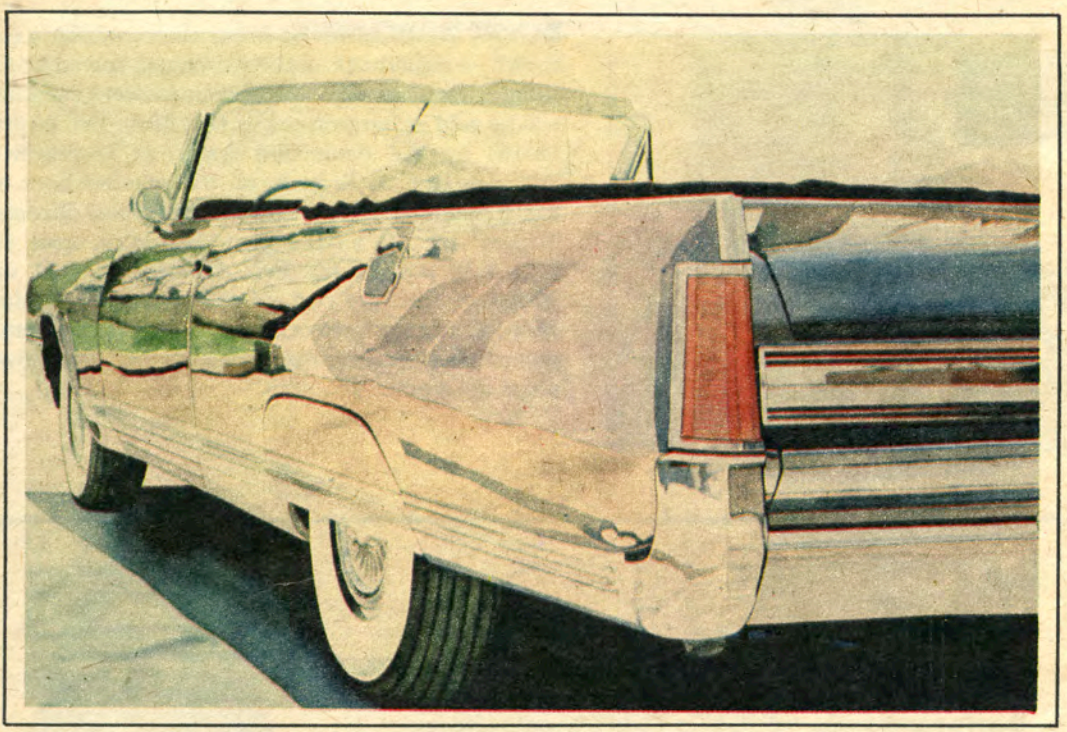
Bernice Marschall, Charles W. Lewis Color Photography Award, $75.

Anita Johnson, Joan Walton Primarano Memorial Award, $50; Joseph Whalen, L. M. Dibble Inc. Watercolor Award, $50; Adele Becker, Dr. Francis Lipinski Award, $50; Robert Myers, Western Savings Bank Award, $50.

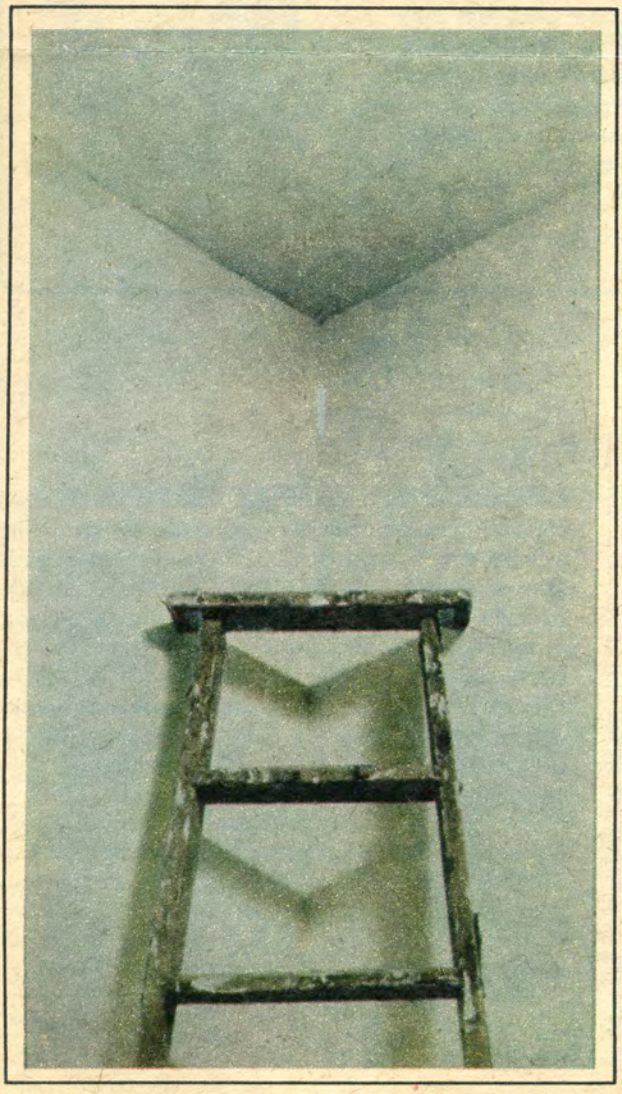
Evan Summer, Chase Manhattan Bank Award, $25; Kathleen Becker, Buffalo Picture Frame & Mirror Award, $25; and Shirley Rosenthal, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Dosberg Award, $25.

Merchandise Awards, William Giles, Stephen Makara, Joan Fitzgerald, Shirley Kassman, Bernice Marschall and Julia Bogcki.

An Art Show With an 81-Year History



"Buick No. 2", *Watercolor by Charles Munday.*



"Step Ladder No. 1", *Photo by Russell Drisch.*

THE VENERABLE and prestigious Buffalo Society of Artists Show — this one is the 81st annual — has three more weeks to go at the Burchfield Center and the University of Buffalo. The 62 works on display — juried into the show by Cheryl Towers, director of the Michael C. Rockefeller Arts Center Gallery in Fredonia — Represents a cross-section of some of the best work being done by local artists.

Beth Burgan's sculpture in plexiglas and natural materials, a work entitled "Seeds & Earth III", is the show's Gold Medal winner. Russell Drisch's life-size tinted photograph, "Step Ladder No. 1", earned the silver medal, and Charles Munday's incredibly realistic watercolor, "Buick No. 2", took the bronze.

The show continues daily through May 2. Hours are Noon-5 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays; Noon-9 p.m. Thursdays and 1-5 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is free.

J.K.