

Artist uses dolls, boxes in Burchfield exhibit

By BARBARA HARASYM
RECORD Staff Reporter

Dolls: paper, broken and antique are the dominant figurative element in the works of Suzann Phelan Denny on exhibit at the Burchfield Center in Rockwell Hall from March 14 through April 18.

Denny, a Buffalo artist and BSC associate professor of design since 1974, is looking forward to the opening of her first one artist exhibit. She returned to BSC this fall after a sabbatical during the spring semester of 1981.

"Since, based on my proposal, the State of New York granted a sabbatical and relieved me of my teaching duties for a semester," Denny said. "I felt it was incumbent on me to exhibit my work.

Denny, who has exhibited her work in Boston and at other Buffalo galleries is happy to be showing it at the Burchfield Center.

"The opportunity for BSC faculty to exhibit their work at Burchfield Center is not automatically afforded them," Denny said. "My work had to be reviewed in slide form before it was accepted.

"The Burchfield Center enjoys a museum status," she explained. "I am very proud that they accepted my work. I am also happy that my work is being shown on campus where my students can see what I do."

Denny is exhibiting 30 pieces which, she said, consist mainly of three-dimensional wall pieces, supplemented by small collages and drawings in water color with pastel and pencil.

The wall hangings in Denny's exhibit are plexiglass boxes which house and integrate a collection of parts she found to create the structures.

"One thing that is consistent about all of these boxes," said Denny, "is that the elements contained in all of them are delicate and breakable. The plexiglass keeps the viewer at a distance."

Another consistency in Denny's boxes is the reoccurrence of paperdoll pieces of various reminders of dolls and childhood articles.

Denny's fascination with boxes began quite by accident three or four years ago. She explained that she had set a group of things together to draw from.

"When my drawing was completed I liked the set-up so much that I decided not to take it apart but to keep it."

Since then, many collectibles and odd pieces (junk to many, but art potential to Denny) have found their way into Denny's boxes.

"Now people save things for me," Denny said. "I have the most selective garbage in my house!"

The largest drawing in Denny's

show is entitled ".....and Grace" and offers a feeling of renewal - spring light as seen across a crumpled bed-sheet and through an open window.

"This piece I began when I first went on sabbatical and finished at the conclusion of it," Denny said.

Another drawing called "Look in any window," uses antique doll images integrated with newer interior elements.

The Burchfield Center is located on the second floor of Rockwell Hall and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10-5 p.m. and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. Admission is free.



Suzann Phelan Denny