

Art's Future Looks Secure

Young Artists Have Integrity

By ANTHONY BANNON

News Critic

What would it take, I wondered, what experience in museum and gallery strategy, what understandings and ability, what friendships made and broken, what press relations, to make these students — whose works are on view in the Burchfield Center — the artists of the future?

That thought began at the Center's fifth annual purchase award competition — the Western New York Collegiate Drawing Exhibition — on view in Rockwell Hall, Buffalo State College through March 31, and it continued as I crossed the street to the Historical Society to view images of the past, and it grew more pressing during a visit to Niagara Falls to see the works by college professors and back in Buffalo to two shows of works by veteran artists.

What splendid alchemy of ambition and achievement, what strange blend of skill, craft and vision? What cunning, what strength of character finally enables one to become well-connected, granted, endowed, received and collected?

What a strange art world is this — a complex of mutual arrangements between the artist and audience that are mediated by a full stage of characters — dealer, curator, publisher, critic, tourists, historians, museum guards, docents, book store personnel, volunteers, maintenance crews, preparators, politicians, propagandists, teachers and more.

Someplace in this mess, the young artist, if successful — truly successful — discovers the concerns of a particular expression within a larger cultural purpose. Call it the character of our time. And then, somehow, the artist makes it clear through the work that art responds to deeper, more moving issues than fashion and gimmick. Call it integrity.

I thought that the prize winners selected in the Burchfield show by the artist Barbara Insalaco had integrity — each their own vision, responding in their own way to the nature of our time, seen in four different ways, uniquely. The full work of these young artists needs maturity, of course, since the works awarded were clearly superior to those by the same artists not picked for prizes. But that should come.

The artists are:

✓ David Cinquino of the State University of Buffalo, whose first prize drawing creates a future-seeming recession of pods that could as well be evidence from an electron microscope. Stripped into this design are faint remnants of a schematic, perhaps an engineer's plan. It's a haunting relationship.

✓ Michelle Okoniewski of Daemen College won second prize for a highly energized, multi-colored undulating surface of scribble gestures. Upon inspection, the lines reveal shapes that tend to pull from the viewer's memory an association of form. That is the challenge, for the drawing never quite becomes figuratively articulate, retaining its life in abstraction.

These two works were purchased.

Receiving honorable mention were Kim Yarwood of UB, for a fascinating Impressionist styled view from his studio window, composed from the build-up of tiny, multi-colored lines, the linear brothers of Seurat's tiny Pointillist dots, and Lawrence R. Czajkowski of Daemen for an art historical trip to a surreal and classical terrace, occupied by a proud beast fit for mythology.

Also work of integrity and style by Cindy Suffoletto, Eric J. Knerr, Donna Womeldorf and Laura J. Sadowski. The exhibition will travel to Jamestown Community College and Niagara Community College in the fall.

ACROSS THE street at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society a fine exhibition of stereo views mainly from the society collection has been assembled by staff photographer Thomas Payne, who is an exhibiting photographic artist himself. Lance Speer, a Rochester stereo collector, also lent some work to the exhibit.

During the second half of the 19th century, and briefly into this one, the stereo view was as popular as our television, with the same effect, too, namely shrinking the world.

The stereograph is a card with two images displaced by a separation corresponding to that between the human eyes, an anatomical gap that aids in producing vision in three dimensions. When viewed through a special viewer, the two

images of the stereograph converge to produce the illusion of depth.

The idea of integrity surely is increased with time, the older and the object, the more settled and venerable it becomes. Yet even with that in account, these views of Buffalo, Niagara and the world have a clearly communicative purpose, clearly describing their subject usually without pretense, yet with the pleasurable harmonies of balance, proportion and wit.

The categories of images on view describe the kinds of images a typical Buffalo family might have enjoyed early in this century — Buffalo events, architecture, waterfront and canal; Niagara Falls with its daredevils and unique bridges; wars, travel, people in other places, moralistic and comic narrative entertainments and educational views.

Another section of the show traces the history of stereo photography through early and now rare formats of the daguerreotype, tintype and tissue views cards and container to the contemporary lenticular screened images, such as by the Nimslo process.

The range of imagery is impressive — from the immediacy of a miner's daughter in Arizona to elaborate setups such as risqué grotesqueries from France, alleging to deal with moral subjects in order to tweek more prurient interests. Often similar images taken of the same subject in different historical periods are paralleled.

Rounding out this fine exhibition, Mr. Payne includes a range of equipment used to produce and view the imagery, some of it quite rare.

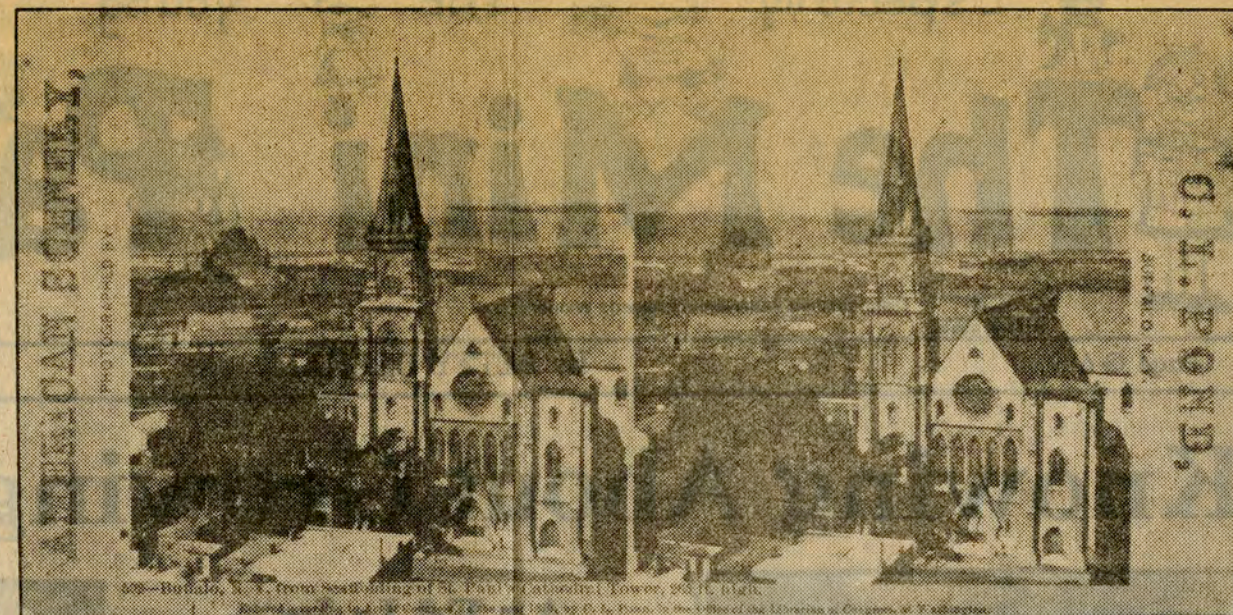
Another Historical Society exhibition of objects made in Buffalo by Buffalo Pottery, Jones Iron Works, Clay Cosack & Co. lithographers, architectural drawings by Esenwein & Johnson, maps by Matthews and Northrup and a roll-top desk by Abner Cutler & Son are on view in a new, second floor gallery created out of the former Iconography Department.

These shows continue indefinitely.

FINE contemporary art is available in a group exhibit by the State University of Brockport faculty in **Buscaglia-Castellani Art Gallery** on the DeVeaux Campus of Niagara University, and several artists there produce truly signature work.

The noted Albert Paley, frequently honored by National Endowment grants and distinguished international exhibitions, manipulates hot steel to create intricately coiled, serpentine designs for functional objects — here a plant stand and table that have the weighty presence of the material with a far lighter sense of design.

Bill Stewart, whose claywork



One of the stereoviews from the Historical Society's exhibition.

houses have been seen at the Burchfield Center, here shows fanciful, child's world altars made of clay blocks and slabs piled nigglyly-piggledy and decorated with snakes, dogs and a spotted pear. He also offers a toy boat filled with nursery rhyme characters, drawings and several of his houses. There's no one like him.

Figurative paintings and drawings by Robert Marx haunt with the melancholy of death, empty eyed people from the void of the other side, or from the dream, question us, their fingers split apart and curled with the only sign of engagement in life.

Photographs by Richard Margolis straddle the line between manipulation and recording; his pictures alter what they picture or create what they seem to record, according to the artist. He calls them "Middle Landscapes."

The visual clue for Margolis' intentions is found in framing devices he employs — often using a window or a lens hood. In that way, the image seems to emerge either from the chamber of the camera or the chamber of a room, peering outside either to reveal or block out some vision, it hardly matters which. The challenge is between the seen and unseen, what is permitted or prevented, and where the image seems to originate.

Other works on view are copper bowls by Tom Markusen and paintings by Jack Wolsky and Al Wunderlich.

THE SOPHISTICATION of these respected artists is not found in the work of Marian Boraczok and Tom Yovanovich who are showing, respectively, in the **Polish Community Center**, 1081 Broadway, and **Brian Art Galleries**, 717 Elmwood Ave.

Yet importantly, these veteran artists make art with a quiet integrity. First of all, their art has heart; secondly, it seems necessary to their lives and perhaps, too, to the lives of those in their immediate circles of influence.

Neither Boraczok's soft and

vividly colored lyric oils, nearly Pre-Raphaelite in sentiment, Impressionistic in style, nor Yovanovich's abstract, multiply printed, vividly colored monoprints will achieve true importance, though in each's collection, there are several pieces that deserve attention.

Boraczok's paintings of women have a naive charm blocked in flat poses without shadow or modeling such that the palette of pastels selected can hold full sway. These paintings — women dancing, a woman at harvest, others at a pool — have a forthright, robust quality that the artist's more derivative work lacks.

The artist is a leader in the Ukrainian-American community in Western New York, and the themes and spirit of his native country enliven his art.

The monoprints by Yovanovich are a new form for the veteran area

artist, whose earlier works have been seen in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery Western New York show and more recently in the Kenan and Burchfield Centers.

The weakness of the showing is in his eagerness to display all the styles he has been exploring, ranging from the sublime abstraction found in Mark Rothko to a more brusque, slashing manner of Willem de Kooning.

Several pieces, particularly the landscape allusions, seem worthy of continued interest. Yet the heart-force of the show is found in the artist's statement. That says it all, and forgives the excess of the work, giving it meaning.

"The passing of art from one generation to the next is a spiritual necessity. To keep it alive and ever contemporary is the force behind the artist. He must love what he is doing."

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