

Faculty Artists Missing, but the Patteran Show Survives

By JEAN REEVES

News Art Critic

The current Patteran Artists exhibition at the Burchfield Center survives despite the failure of nearly all the university or college faculty artists in this area to participate.

Continuing through March 3, the show in Rockwell Hall at Buffalo State University College runs the gamut from a fine naive oil by the late Lillian Fisher to the crammed-to-overflowing, then-trussed-up soft suitcase (an assembled sculpture?) by Amy Hamouda.

Faculty artists perhaps are busy with their entries for the upcoming Western New York Show at Albright-Knox Art Gallery (April 19 to May 26), but the Patteran has always been their showcase. Their work, generally of a professional nature, is missed in this, the Patteran's one major exhibition of the year.

Most of the exhibitors, however, are familiar to frequenters of local exhibitions, and the entries almost without exception are well-executed and visually appealing, though not always offering surprises.

IN THE school of immaculate, reductive painting are the precise, cool, elegant geometric abstractions of Herta Kane, who, incidentally, carried off top prize at the 1971 Western New York Show.

Small acrylics, they are each built upon a limited range of muted intensities of a color. One is all pale, light-filled greens, the other, lemony yellows. Beautiful works, and almost missed, tucked away as they are behind a room divider.

The naive or primitive painting must meet some of the same structures as paintings in any other genre, and that is why Mrs. Fisher's oil, 'Sunset Through the Trees,' is a rarity.

A splendid thing, so simple in design, its tiny figures and stark tree trunks set upon an olive-colored ground and behind them, an unrelieved red sky casting a rosy glow over the whole. Direct and eloquent,

quaint tale. Its simple grace lingers on the eye.

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IN THE color-stripe sensibility, too, are the color-bar acrylics of Estelle Cutler. And, close in feeling, Martha Visser 't Hooft's droll "The Oval Office 1973," an acrylic in red, gray and blue which bows, deadpan, to the international style of office furnishings, as anonymous, repetitive and chilly as some of the glass and steel buildings it so chastely inhabits.

The painting section is distinguished by several excellent works, Freda Cohen's "Erupting Rhizomes," a blue-green abstraction with accents of ruby and pink that is more poetic than its title; Sally Potenza's heady, orange-red, floating-figured acrylic stain painting with the beautiful title, "Stained Space."

And Walter Prochownik's svelte oil color progression (from pearl to pink with brown undertone and back to pearl); Virginia Tillou's atmospherically-colored abstraction, very freely interpreted floral study.

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ALSO, Robert Blair's bracing water color, "Across the Desert," a glowing thing, its layers of resplendent, smoky pinks and oranges horizontally lacing the paper; Virginia Cuthbert's lyrical oil landscape (It looks so easy but only a lifetime of painting could bring it off).

And Will Harris' very large oil and acrylic, a circular image in which the crosswise stripes of color are allowed to drip, probably the tour de force of the show. I suppose one either likes it a lot or not at all; I liked its initial shock in scale, and then the immediate after-sense of lyric painting.

ought to be cited, along with those of James Kuo, which exude the richness of blossoming trees, and a single delicate water color of pine trees by Susan Read.

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ADELE COHEN is represented by a strong black and white drawing; Janet Warner by a tiny sensitive ink drawing, "Evening"; Sam Russo by incredibly delicate drawings of flowers, exquisite works, and Catherine Koenig by fine studies in water color and acrylic of drops of water and egg shells.

In the print medium, there is a superb work, "Roseland," that Robert Freeland calls a graphic collage. Its stunning layers of color range from brown with gold iridescent glints of lavender to orangey-ink. And, in a completely opposite vein, Robert W. Brock shows a lithograph featuring a section of a sphere in wine color almost covering some feet outlines in pale blue — yes, feet.

Kenneth R. Klier's soft, transparent crayon drawing, is aptly called "Transparent Morning." Milton Rogovin's photograph of the reflected

shadows of the steps of a staircase against a brick wall is a small grace note.

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ROBERT SENKPIEL'S constructions are in a class by themselves. The artist was influenced originally by Joseph Cornell, but his fantasies have become increasingly individual over the past couple of years.

"All the Children Love the Führer" is a biting commentary in the familiar box form, a young girl with blonde braids obviously overcome to be in Hitler's presence, but in his "Rommel Altar Piece," Senkpiel builds a contemporary version of the old religious tableau.

His stand-up general and aides in khaki summer issue are painted cardboard, beautifully realized dream figures, but the bullets that stand in rows on the altar wings are real enough to bite.

The Patteran Artists have assembled an exhibition with a wide survey of current expression, and it has been handsomely installed in the pleasant Burchfield Center ambience.