“Art For the Global Village”

David Barr and Instrument of Location for 4 Corners, plastic and mylar, 1987
CRISIS POINT

Money, Money, Money...Financial difficulty is a familiar topic to most artists. When the bank account reads zero, we scramble. This frantic economic dance is part of our well honed survival instinct. Currently, the Detroit Focus Gallery is scrambling. The financial status of the gallery at this moment is bleak. It is past the "running on a shoestring" stage. Detroit Focus Gallery is at a financial Crisis Point.

In an effort to save the gallery, a fundraiser has been scheduled. The details of the event are listed on the back page of this issue. Please read the "In Focus" page and urge people to attend this important "gallery saving" event.

Obviously, if the gallery closes it will affect the lives of many artists. In fact, it will affect the entire art community. The few art galleries in Detroit are linked together in a commonality: support for fine arts in Detroit. With the demise of any gallery, this wall of support is seriously weakened.

Another possible casualty of the Detroit Focus Gallery financial crunch is the possible loss of the Detroit Focus Quarterly. The Quarterly is planning its own fundraiser scheduled in August. The details of the fundraising party, "Brow Ha-Ha," will be forthcoming.

As I write these words, I am wondering with great concern — Will this be the last issue of the Quarterly? We need your help to prevent this from happening.

Sheree Rensel
Editor

An Open Letter
To The Artists of Greater Detroit,

It’s time to stop fooling ourselves. Nobody is going to play sugar daddy to aspiring artists. Unless it’s at an eventual great cost at our behalf. The National Endowment for the Arts and private enterprises have always turned into fickle pimps once the going gets tough. Recent events regarding support have proven this. While it’s important to do what we can financially to support places like Detroit Focus, The Artists Market and Michigan Gallery, these places are also at the mercy of the government and other rich groups. Unless I am mistaken.

So... maybe it’s time to approach what we do a little bit differently. Showing art in enclosed space, staging a performance (dance, music, etc.) isn’t really all that costly. Artists with roomy studios or loft type spaces, musicians with rehearsal space, dance companies, invite your artist friends over. Hang or display or perform your work. Buy some cheap wine, pass the hat, make some calls. Invite some aspiring local writers from smaller publications, (c’mon Metro Times, and art calendar just aren’t enough). And so on and so on...

In the past 10 years, we have already lost the C.A.I.D. (Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit) and the annual statewide exhibitions. Losing the above mentioned galleries looms as a real possibility. There are some solutions. Particularly if the general mindset of this area is changed back to why we do this in the very first place; and that’s because we like to...remember!!

Michael "Mickey" Vidakovich

Editor’s Note: The Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit is still active and planning a fundraising event for the fall titled, With No Content Restrictions.

Dear Ms. Rensel:

I am impelled by your "open letter to the art community" (Detroit Focus Quarterly; Spring 1990) to remind myself that it may be ill-considered to deplore a lack of "involvement" by artists in organized functions or demonstrations or organized anything. It is a time-honored privilege of a dedicated artist to be separate from the crowd. The organizationally-suited artist is unusual and may even be suspect. Not all who publicly "act" like artists are artists; the opposite may be true. To organize the public in behalf of art or artists' rights may be a worthy enterprise. To require the artist to do anything besides his/her art and what perhaps must be done to make a living, is an improbable quest. Most authentic artists have time for, and interest in, little else.

Sincerely,
Arnold Klein

Dear Mr. Klein,

It would be wonderful if in an ideal world artists could retire from society and ferociously create. And in this world, each artist would have a gallery or dealer to help develop an audience for that work and keep the money flowing. However, this is not an ideal world. Artists cannot afford to be locked behind studio doors. Galleries are scarce: therefore, there is a need for alternative spaces. These spaces need to be powered by people, namely artists, who will work to support these institutions. If all artists were concerned only with making art, the venues for showing work would be almost nonexistent. Likewise, artists are needed to educate in order to (as you state) "organize the public in behalf of art and artists." Also, with threats of increasing governmental pressure, it is vital at this time for interaction, and for artists to become involved in decision making processes.

Finally, I am aware of many "authentic" artists who give their time and energy to support the art community and still have time to make "authentic" work. I am asking artists to participate in their destiny for the good of their lives as artists.

—Editor
The woods at night... is in its way a paradigm for artists working today.

The traditional folk singers and artists of Andalusia had a name for it: duende. Early this century the poet Federico Garcia Lorca discovered it for us in the songs and folk plays of Spanish and Gypsy singers and players. Duende, like "deep song," the ancient Gypsy chanted poetry still found in Andalusia which Lorca studied during his short life, is an ineffable energy or presence in the creative act, the mark of authenticity, the self submerged in the long history of the traditional community and landscape, and yet simultaneously apart, obsessed with self-discovery in order to bring something—a song, a gesture, an object—duende—from the loneliness of the self.

Because it is spring, I have been in the woods and marshes and am thinking about the dark, obsession, and being lost. A few days ago, as we made our way out of the derelict gravel pit overgrown with sumac and Russian thistle and walked between two shallow ponds into the beech-maple grove, it was suddenly dark. We had been sitting on a high ridge overlooking the marsh, straining and squinting into the dusk sky trying to watch male woodcocks plummeting toward the ground in their mating flight. And then, walking into the deep woods, it was fully dark and we had another half-hour walk to the car. I knew the woods well, but the others with me, my wife and six year-old daughter and two of our friends, had no idea how to get back to the car.

There was suddenly a sense of excitement and dread in our group, as if a sixth body had slipped, unseen, onto the trail and joined us. My daughter put her hand in mine and tightly squeezed; our friends made nervous, terse remarks about how long it had been since they had been in the woods at night; from the trees all around us the spring peepers shrilled in our ears with an eerie, brilliant, harsh intensity, like miniature sirens wailing from an invisible city.

A few moments later I switched on the powerful flashlight which I had been carrying in my pocket. It was one of those halogen lights the size of a bloated pencil and no one knew that I had it. And as soon as I turned it on everyone laughed and exclaimed, letting loose the tension which had visited us.

The woods at night, with that mix of familiarity and strangeness which the dark brings, is in its way a paradigm for artists working today. Our history is cluttered with the various metaphors for the "artist in the dark"; the romantic notion that artists work in the murky depths of the imagination and unconscious, bringing into the light works for the community; the crass notion that artists are superior craftsmen who make rare objects for the few institutions and individuals who can afford them; the idealistic, even religious notion that the artist is a shaman, a healer who generously shares a magic for those who care to accept the blessing. The darkness of the imagination, the darkness of the workplace, the darkness of the spirit. We have built a complex mythology on this image: the artist as other, outside— or at the least beside—society. It is not that the metaphors are wrong, or even overly simple, but that they are fluid, mercurial, metamorphosing throughout history as we shape them to fit our changing perceptions of self, work, and society.

Contained in the images of the artist as the "worker in the dark" is the sense of the worker lost and finding a way out. Buson wrote:

Digging in the field—
the man who asked the way
has disappeared.

In Homer's Odyssey, we are led through the dramatic and complex story of the hero Odysseus' ten-year journey home from the Trojan War. It is fundamentally Odysseus' story Homer tells us, and it has come to be our own story as well, a tale of human frailty, of wandering in search of the self, of strategy and military force, of heroism in the face of unfair natural and supernatural interference. But in the context of our time, a smaller story in the Odyssey interests me more, the story of Odysseus' wife, Penelope. Penelope, who sat at home those ten years fending off the mob of suitors who had come to claim their customary right to compete for her as a wife. In the rigid laws and customs of ancient Greece, no kingless Queen could rule a city-state; a widowed Penelope was required to choose a new husband from among Ithaca's single noblemen. To circumvent this deeply-rooted tradition, a tradition which threatened her very existence, Penelope put off the suitors by claiming her right to weave her father's shroud: another law in ancient Greece, the daughter's duty to the father. Penelope believed that Odysseus would return, and so formed her life into a single creative act of deception.
For those ten years that Odysseus wandered, Penelope sat alone at her loom each day weaving the shroud; and each night stripping the loom of that day’s work.

Odysseus’ story is told by Homer across the distance of epic time, and so is a story about distance, a story of the individual crushed and then re-formed by the weight of ignorance we call ego, by the weight of history, and by the weight of belief and hope for divine delivery. In sharp contrast, Penelope’s story is intimate — and intimately told by asides throughout the narrative — a story of one individual’s personal work, a work which grows out of a deep understanding of the boundaries of society, and the necessities for individual survival by manipulating and challenging those boundaries. In other words, Penelope’s art, in this case her life, is simultaneously public and personal. Patience is Penelope’s instruction for us, an exquisite and subtle cunning, a cunning far more instructive than Odysseus’ dependence on supernatural intervention and military posturing.

In our time — a confused and disoriented and deliriously hopeful time — our metaphor for the artist is just as confused and hopeful, an amalgam of all the past metaphors. “We are orphans of ideologies,” Charles Simic said in the early 1970’s while listening to the daily body count from Vietnam on the late news. He was sitting in the dark in his underwear drinking a beer and somehow it all helped him understand that for us history is monstrous. He said, “The poet (artist) like anyone else is part of history, but he or she ought to be the conscious part. That’s the ideal.” And consciousness is the action which arises from the willingness to be lost, to disappear and reappear in a new place, the willingness to seek a kind of patience shaped by self-discovery. That is the duende, the deep song in Penelope’s work.

All artists know that some deception is necessary for making art. The imaginative life is no longer honored by our culture, if indeed it ever was in any industrial society. So artists must of necessity practice some kind of sleight-of-hand as they wander lost in the dark. And it is just this deception which requires patience, the patience to go crashing off the marked trail, to wrestle with craft and materials, to suffer through the instant analysis of journalists and critics, the patience to examine the self in a culture which denigrates and trivializes self-doubt.

One can attend dozens of museum and gallery openings, listen to curators’ and educators’ lectures on art and artists, watch the artists’ video tapes which are now an expected part of so many exhibitions, visit studios and see the newest work, “without encountering any significant aspect of our common twentieth-century existence,” Simic said twenty years ago. Said another way, one can look at hundreds of pictures, at sculpture and installations, at dances and plays, and have no sense that the artist has been willingly lost, has been in the dark and found his or her way out, that the artist has found duende. It is not news that scopism inhabits the vast majority of art of our time. It may be news of the worst sort that the metaphor that most marks our time is that of the artist as manipulator of the market economy, as victorious survivor of the perils of marketing and self-promotion. Our metaphor is the supercilious antics and consumerism of Andy Warhol not, to compare the artist of Warhol’s generation who fundamentally represents the alternative, the trickster playfulness of Joseph Beuys. And as a culture, we are the poorer for it.

Any meaningful art, whether the earliest cave drawings, the first fetishes and sculpture, the canvases of Caravaggio, Frida Kahlo’s brutally intimate paintings, the sculpture and performances of Beuys — and to choose one Detroit artist from those who work in the tradition of Penelope — Tyree Guyton’s “Heidelberg Project,” this art of duende, of deep song, comes from the transubstantiation of both personal and public material, from lament as well as celebration. Neither a singular, militant, purely political art, nor a precious, rarefied personal art, will ever, somehow, seem complete.

Ben Mitchell is Curator of Collections & Exhibition at the Art Center of Battle Creek and the Editor of Passages North.
David Barr and SunSweep, a test fragment, granite with laser, 1985

to that also generated by the societies at the four corners sites. The gate exit is in the Zen garden of Ryoan-ji in Kyoto (Japan). It has resisted the ravaging frenzies of the twentieth century and represents the serenely contemplative. The garden is designed so that the placement of the rocks can never be altogether observed from one point of view. This structural attribute, like that of the Four Corners Project, is intended to instill humility.

Barr, in projecting this idea upon the viewer, has established the next level of context within his work. By actually traveling to the sites and implanting the "corners" at the co-ordinates, he has transcended the usual finale of most conceptual art. Establishing a written dialogue with the owners of the properties, the governments and the communities involved, he has implemented his concept beyond what most would attempt or afford. Unlike Christo, who solicits monies and helpers to overcome bureaucratic twists and turns, Barr approaches these efforts as a personal mission, being a single entity, rather than an art bureaucrat wizard. Barr's art-missionary style excites admiration. Although Christo and Judy Chicago are well documented in the history books, their use of countless others for self-aggrandizement is less admirable.

Barr approaches his art with humility. To solicit people who are unfamiliar with modern art thinking, and enable them to embrace his concept and help establish the structure of the work, as gate keepers and guardians, shows how well conceived and simple the work is.

The original material was a piece of white Vermont marble, left over from the City-County building in Detroit. After removing the corners from the original chunk the remaining shape was an octahedron or double pyramid. Following the global placement of the four corners, this core has been left in the case as a kind of relic. Barr has stated interesting juxtapositions in relation to the 'Four Corners Project': fire/ice; mountain/desert; tribal/technological; man/woman; young/old; 2D/3D; low/high; literate/non-literate; jungle/arctic. The location of the co-ordinates was aided by John Nystuen, geographer. Ritual tributes were danced by Barr's wife, Beth, at two sites. Jim Pallas, Detroit artist, also helped in numberless, wide ranging ways to bring the work to fruition.

SUNSWEEP

In the "SunSweep" project there are three points of reference to mark the alignments of the sun crossing the borders of Canada and the United States. The two extreme points are located in Boundary Bluffs, Point Roberts, Washington, and Roosevelt Campobello International Park, New Brunswick. Boundary Bluffs is United States property on a peninsula, but accessible only by land travel through Canada. It is just south of the 49th parallel, between the Strait of Georgia and Boundary Bay water masses. The extensive shared land mass is located on an island that is an International Park and is situated south of the 49th parallel adjoining Maine and New Brunswick. Each location has a sculpted granite stone arch projecting towards the other side. The arch end facing the opposing site has a broken surface, as if it is continued across the sky. The wide flat surface has a drawing of an open hand, with line tracings done by laser. As the silhouette markings lead away from the open hand form, the lines become contour forms, such as one would read on a geographic land map. The outermost line structure becomes a perfect ring, surrounding the hand, as if to leave a mark on the world. Much like the early cave drawings have done.

Intercepting the conceptual sky mark at mid point is the Lake of the Woods, American Point Island, Minnesota sculpture. This northern Minnesota land mass is above the 49th parallel, but still boundary connected to the forty-eight contiguous states. It is the only mid-American land mass that protrudes into Canada. American Point Island has two angled plates of granite cut and shaped by Barr into a gerrit form. Each plate aligns with the Canada/United States border. Barr's outstretched hands, finger-tip to fingertip (palms up), are the measurement unit for the parallel space between the two high points of the sculpted plates.

The sun will rise and set, but will humankind be just an accumulation of artifacts...?

The gesture of the outstretched arms portrays the transitory vulnerability of the artist and the fixed vulnerability of the location. On the flat facing surfaces, again, are single outstretched hands encircled with a radiating line indicating that a human being has touched this spot. One of the stone's angled top edges is aligned to the North Star and the solstices and equinoxes are also documented on the surface. This art piece links the Canadian and U.S. border in a partnership. Venturing to approach the mixed boundary lands and gaining cooperation from both governments reflects the humanitarian aspects of this art.

ARCTIC ARC

The idea for this piece was to work with two "Super Powers" and, through the use of art, encourage joint participation. The U.S. point is at Wales, Alaska. The U.S.S.R. point is at Cape Peak (Uelen), Chukotskiy Peninsula. The land mass locations are the closest points of the two continents below the Arctic Circle on the Bering Strait. The title "Arctic Arc" is inclusive of the connection along what was once the Bering Isthmus. It suggests the connecting link of human beings traveling from the Asian land mass to the North American continent. This important location is an opportunity for Barr to facilitate the Sino-American peace process by using an art image to help people and governments recognize our global vulnerability. The art piece, installed at Wales, is a five timbered image facing upward, with a similar image projecting outward towards the other land mass. The design alludes to, in Barr's words, "an incomplete bridge. A hand extended for
friendship, an Eskimo said. "While in the area, Barr met artist Joe Senungetuk, who was born in Wales. Senungetuk was commissioned to build a huge flying dove emerging from the lower outstretched "hand." The bird piece, seen in numerous shows and does not have the presence of a welcoming hand. The upward perpendicular thrust of "hand" reads more like a gesture, rather than a welcome, come join us gesture. Realizing that this barren, large land is difficult to decorate with complicated imagery, the form could have been considered more analytically to avoid misinterpretation. The flying bird imagery does read well (although it looks more like an Indian thunderbird than a dove), rising from the two outstretched perpendicular wooden projectiles. This brings me to the other problem that the wooden forms imply: missiles. In using this photo documentation to ensure a joint working situation with the Russians (their concurrence is not yet secured) there should be a reexamination as to how the images might inadvertently signify something other than what was initially intended. In Barr's lecture about his global village idea he did state that the Russian-side image may change form. I hope the sensitivity of this issue will be thoroughly considered before the first presentation is prepared and submitted to their government approved officials. If it is hoped a Cape Peak artist can be found, the exchange of ideas and art concepts may build a bridge that can't be disassembled by "red" or "white" tape.

"I don't believe artists are ever ahead of their time. I think that (they) are a part of their time..."

David Barr

In the gallery is a map print of the concept of "Arctic Arc." The print of two, drawn, contour lined, shaped hands reaching for each other from the Soviet Union and the United States expresses the simplicity and strength of the concept a handshake across the Bering Straits.

SUNS WEEP

Although this project was to be included in this exhibit, it was not, possibly due to the lack of space, or the art that the art work is not yet totally thought out. However, it would have been interesting to experience the drawings in progress as they are being processed by the artist. The title is a pun on the sorrow and anguish of what has been occurring at our southern border with Mexico. The reflection on the sun and the "form" as a family term are paradoxically set to alert the viewer to the ongoing tragedy at this border. The title and the two sites have been chosen. "Suns Weep" will be located at Boca Chica, Texas on the east and Border Field State Park, California on the west. It will take delicate diplomacy to bring the project along. Few areas want something that is a constant reminder of the horrors of the boundary problem. As a memorial, tribute, or challenge to the communities involved, this art piece will definitely alert those concerned to a new awareness of the situation.

David Barr's art work is constantly involved with the intangible: those moments of the sun's and earth's different alignments or those connections with people that develop into a personal bonding of art and friendship. All are attempts to approach and encourage other people to make the cosmic jump, "to things that seem to be unknown" (Barr's words), and hope to show people how small and fragile we are on this beautiful planet. Buckminster Fuller, who greatly influenced Barr's thought, stated that if we took the earth and reduced it to the size of a four foot sphere, it would be a more perfect sphere than any human would be able to make. The problem is how are we to look at it, this ball in the cosmos.

All too often we fail to think what the world is made of, and the effect on it of our every action. The ancients praised and were in awe of the sun and its timing and movements. Artifacts help us realize how rational and aware earlier dwellers were of their place and their time. We, as a global village, must now be cautious and recognize that what we do can change the earth and its markings forever. The sun will rise and set, but will humankind be just a deconstruction of artifacts done in by our own hand? The hand of a person is genuine and real. Thrust into the air, it is a symbol reaching up to trust, no weapon, no threat. These art pieces can last as long as anyone wishes them to, or are destroyed with a quick gesture, or by lack of care. Art and humankind are fragile but can be protected and nurtured by a memory of the past and faith in the future.

David Barr is urging us to embrace his tender vision of a trusting, caring world.

James R. Gilbert is a Detroit area artist.

I don't believe artists are ever ahead of their time. I think that what artists are, are a part of their time, they are in their time, and that things flow through them that they may or may not understand themselves. They sometimes look ahead of their time because there's a multitude of people who are behind the times. Eventually, what artists do is awaken them to the invisible world, to what has always been there.

What I think I try to do as an artist in all my forms, is look at the invisible world by the way it manifests itself visibly; give it form, give it experience, give it intensity, sharpen people's focus on it so that they have a different kind of experience than they otherwise would have had in existing. As an artist I am not interested in reporting the world as it exists, but searching out connections, underlying structures, underlying understandings and putting them together in a new form that I am calling "Geo-Structurist Art." It remains for history to find out whether that is important or not, or whether it has a lasting significance. I have no idea.

David Barr May 8, 1990

Ed. Note: As we go to press David Barr excitedly reports that he and his wife will be in Siberia on 7/21 to begin negotiations for Russian consideration of the ARCTIC ARC project.
IN A PAST LIFE, I WAS A TREE. THEY CUT ME DOWN WITH A NAIL.
Reviews

Peterboro
Urban Side Show-Yo
Wills Gallery
Detroit, MI
March 21, 1990 — April 7, 1990

The Willis Gallery continues to be the premiere alternative space in the Detroit Metro Area. After nineteen years the gallery still clings to its grass roots past, and allows the artist total freedom to exhibit and install work on the cutting edge of the art world. The Willis Gallery presented a three person exhibit with work ranging from excellent to contrived. Mike Slattery, Cranbrook Academy of Art graduate, now residing in Chicago, installed three sculptures, two of which utilized the floor as well as the ceiling. This 'Ultra Media oriented artist commanded the entire space with the use of lights, assorted noises, and smoke. The artist's streamline approach to the assembly of each individual piece charged the Willis Gallery. Neither Confirn Nor Deny was activated by a ceiling mounted motion detector, which would set off a pump that would transport an oil-water mixture from an illuminated bluish green enclosed glass reservoir to a horizontal glass plate mounted a few feet below the ceiling. This ever changing glass 'slide' was lit from below projecting a blue green image on the ceiling. As the motion detector was set off, more fluid was pumped to the glass slide forcing other liquid to gravity feed via tube to the reservoir on the floor. Techniques of Displacement (see photo) consisted of a beaker, long coil heater and a lead reservoir which contained smoke producing fluid. At irregular intervals some fluid was pumped through the heater coil producing smoke which was fired into the beaker, which would catch the smoke and dissipate the haze into the free air. The beaker looked as though it were producing smoke from an unknown source. Slattery's last piece was a statement about the hole in the ozone. This work also included light and sound with an array of other materials including growing mold. This artist is a master of fusing technology and material, as well as addressing concerns facing end of the century America.

Christine Burchnall exhibited two seg­ments of a larger piece entitled Ex Voto. The piece on the east gallery wall consisted of eight plaques hung near the ceiling as if they were in a place of worship. All plaques had Roman numerals on them as well as a statement on the condition of Jesus Christ. Neither the numbers nor statements had an order, numerical or sequential. Four of the plaques had vague black and white images, while the remaining four plaques were devoid of images. The lack of order and image directly commented on an empty faith or the inaccessibility of the hierarchy of religion. The second segment of Ex Voto located on the rear gallery wall consisted of three photos and two large glass sheets with statements flanking both sides of the photographs. Both statements spoke of losing one's self in the vast population, one declaring the importance of selfhood, and the other the fear of selfhood. Burchnall's good placement and installation added punch to the powerful statements.

David Marion occupied the west third of the Willis Gallery, displaying well crafted sculptures, drawings and combined paintings of Science Fiction botany. He showed superb ability in the use of materials including bronze, plaster, cloth and assorted painted colors, yet the materials were lost in the weak subject matter. The viewer was faced with too-cute isolated characters from B sci-fi movies no one would admit watching. Caged, Spiral Defense, and Natural Defense. painted bronze's bracketed to the wall, were geared for kids in a Halloween toy store or second rate horror house. A large piece called Satellite Disc sat heavily on the floor. cousin to the blood sucking monster in Little Shop of Horrors. Neither disgusting nor confrontational, the simulated fictional plants/animals by Marion belonged in a cheap Hollywood movie, instead of in a gallery.

Robert Crise, Jr. is a Detroit area artist.

NADINE DELAWRENCE
Sculptures from the Soul
Sherry Washington Gallery
Detroit
April/May 1990

As befitting the title of her recent exhibition at the Sherry Washington Gallery Nadine Delawrence's SCULPTURES FROM THE SOUL reveal a strong sense of spiritual­ity and energy. In this series of wall relief sculptures she draws upon ancient themes and images, and then couples them with modern artistic techniques. In her best pieces she has succeeded in forging a link between cultures and times. The artist as teacher, interpreter, mirror — these are roles Delawrence plays in all aspects of her career.

The raw materials and formats used — sheet aluminum cut into rough, biomorphic shapes which are then welded together with visual dissonance; thick paint dragged across unyielding surfaces; and the odd juxtapositioning of personal word/symbols with un­disciplined color — are not unfamiliar to the interested observer of recent art history, using as an example sculpture and assem­blages created in the last thirty or so years. What makes Delawrence's work different is the richness of the historical and cultural background she draws inspiration from. Her work demands contemplative time; spect­ators are asked to involve themselves more than usual. One gets the feeling that the artist has seen herself in each story, and rather than make a more specific statement, alludes to identities through the use of metaphor. This is not art derived from other art, but an art that attempts to describe a life, or a way of living.

In viewing this body of work it is mandatory to go further than the limitations of the material. By going past the welded metal and paint we enter into a narrative. Our minds can roam freely through the stories revealed — we are encouraged to add some elements of our own. The resultant dialogue is full enough so any level of wanderlust will be satisfied.

The golden surface of DAEDALUS manifests its identity in several ways: as a warrior's decorative shield, a barrier against harm, or a magnificent reflector to be used to send coded messages to a comrade on some distant peak. The sculpture is versatile enough to allow these references, in addi­tion to the traditional story of Daedalus and his son. Icarus, who perished when he refused to heed his father's warning about flying too close to the sun with waken
BILLY NAME  
Exhibition of Photographs
BookBeat
Oak Park, MI
April 28-June 15, 1990

Many books that document the Warhol-era neglect to mention or give credit to the in-house photographer who played a major role in capturing an insider view of the Factory. His name is Billy Linich/AKA/Billy Name. The reason for the oversight is unclear. Perhaps Andy just forgot to mention him or the other co-conspirators. After all, Andy was very busy becoming a star. Regardless, after Billy abruptly left the Factory in 1970 much of his work was left unclaimed. And since he was gone, giving credit where credit was due also went out the door. It was not until Andy's death, estate hassles, etc., that Billy's silver trunk was unearthed and reclaimed. The treasure trove of sixties memorabilia provides a crystalline look at the bizarre cast of characters who were the fuel for Warhol's fast train to glitterville.

The contents of the trunk included photos of such Pop zombies as Ultra-Violet, Edie Sedgwick, Nico, Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground. Billy should also be acknowledged for his participation in the production of exhibition catalogues, the Andy Warhol Index Book, and many of the "thermofaxes" of disasters and movie stars.

(continued on page 13)
Reviews

UFO: "The Unfound Object"
A Search for Alien Art Forms

Michigan Gallery
Detroit
May, 1990
Curated by Jim Lutomski, Michelle Spivak, and Carl Kamulski

The blond voice called and said I had to go review "U.F.O. "The Unfound Object" at the Michigan Gallery. "Wait 'til you see what's in the basement!"

Now I understand that alternative spaces must utilize whatever creative parts of the city they can afford (even catacombs and mobile homes), and that danger adds to the bohemian allure. Nevertheless, I am afraid I would still go, but I intended to grill the staff for any apparitions of dead saints or big spiders.

Wearing a rosary (for protection as well as style) I was met at the gallery by a sane city they can afford (even catacombs and must utilize whatever creative parts of the U.F.O. show concept. Jim Lutomski! Quoting the flyer. "Many have thought that Jim may well be an extraterrestrial and that this show was the first opportunity for him to invite both earth and space artists to display 'Alien Art Forms' at a Detroit gallery." (I would find someone else to go with me into the basement.)

Jim handed me a mighty fine collection of xeroxes about John Shepard of Northern, Michigan Shepard, Jim's inspiration, is an infamous, if not insane, artist who has taken over his grandparents' home with a working sculpture that beams jazz, reggae and new age (what, no rap?) music out to esthetically competent aliens.

His research on Project STRAT (Special Telemetry Research and Tracking) leads us, in some abstract way, to this collection of 40 artists, covering six rooms with roughly 90 works (Jim counted for me) in most of the two billion art mediums known to man.

Now this could frighten some who like their galleries white, sparse and sterilized, but not us, right? We like to see some action. The work in this show wasn't curated, it was accumulated and, surprise, almost everything presented has something to do with 'the theme'. (A novelly as far as theme shows go.)

The best examples of the 'unfound objects' came from Peter Hackett, Dale Wetig and David Gasowski who individually pieced together glowing plug-in-able sculptures in the assemblage tradition resembling primitive space ship stuff from old 50's TV shows.

Because found art assemblage is nothing new, and is here to stay (so old junk is cheap and of better quality than new junk), artists will have a tougher time legitimizing their works. Hackett is most thought-full with a handing club series made out of guitar handles and 'good' sticks. His Pitch Light Speed is a car speedometer-helmet that doesn't simply resemble a familiar form but becomes, to our eye, a new machine in itself. Also strong and complete is Rude Doplh with amber Christmas bulbs, adjustable lamp necks and municipal green Tonka truck body.

Gasowski's Motor City Space Lamp used an old Galaxie chrome insignia with a yellow globe. His combined a wild welded glass relief using heat bottles and glass that I hope he goes further with in the future.

Wetig's UFO Motor and Night Probe fix together a colander and old white and red baked-on painted metal elements that look like expensive alien-kitchen appliances, again, but from the 50's.

Hidden in the chaos of creativity was Terry Fisher's untitled miniature shadowboxes of more 'unfound objects', referring to a woman's most personal unfound object. Subtly sexual.

Next to it was Jac Purdon's sculpture JoAnn dealing with the same female body parts. Lifesize and very flexible (doing a backflip) JoAnn has been stripped down past her clothes, past her bare skin to mere muscle. Unsubtly sexual.

Purdon's Mad Mountains is less shocking (as if anything could shock us) but pretty fascinating (if anything could fascinate us). It is a giant, textural, black-coated ant-mountain, swarming with millions of little 3/4 inch plastic metropolitan people. (I asked Jim for an exact count but he said they might make a contest out of it. Guess the number of metro-men and win a trip to John Shepard's parents' house.) The foot of the mountain was bordered with a perfect edge of piled up dead people.

Jim Puntigam's Trilogy is bright, thick and developed, with simple yet specific imagery. Michael Lett's humor comes through in Jesus at Teal Lake with John Lennon as Jesus in yellow galoshes, and Woman with Beautiful Hat, but his paint application is too easy for him. Maybe he should fight a little.

It was getting late and I still hadn't been down to the basement. In the main gallery a life drawing class was finishing up. I stalled, listening to Banda the model's taped rendition of Memories from "Cats". Finally, I could stall no more.

I descended the dangerous stairs to a place that brought back memories of the tourist traps along the 50's. The same musty smell! A light beckoned me to a small room off through a door. Inside we've got a cement. I walked slowly, carefully. My life flashed. Suddenly, there before me was. stay calm, an entire room installation done by... ILLUSTRATORS! Two dimensional minds let (continued on page 13)
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loose in a three dimensional world.

Every wall, every space, was covered by little clips and booklets of comic book creatures, spacecraft models used for videos, alien dolls, and mini-installations with titles like Troxidans Return Home and Metamorphosis something. (The latest count on titles including the word 'metamorphosis' has passed the two million mark.) The place looked like St. Sabina's Student Science Show gone heavy metal. (Maybe they would let me show the four thousand sketches of wedding gowns I drew in high school.)

Shelley Malec Vitale is an artist/writer presently looking for work.

(Billy Name cont'd. from page 9)

Also, with silver paint and lots of aluminum foil, the trademark "silver interior" of the Factory was Billy's creation.

After leaving the Factory, Billy spent years in California developing his poetic language, BANKA KRANKA. He is currently Associate Director of the Mid-Hudson Arts and Science Center in upstate New York.

So now Billy Name, here is YOUR fifteen minutes!

Sheree Rensel is an artist working in Detroit.
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In Focus • Detroit Focus In Crisis

Since the first Benefit Art Sale in Birmingham (December 1983), Detroit Focus has succeeded in maintaining a balanced budget. However, in the presence of an extremely negative nationwide attitude toward the arts, which is pervasive today, the gallery has had to contend with less available public and private funds, fewer sales, and a relatively passive public. It has become imperative that we raise $25,000 by October 1st to meet the commitments of the closing 1989/90 season and begin funding of the 1990/91 programs.

Therefore, the gallery will present:

LIVE FROM DETROIT FOCUS:

Artists John Hegarty, Glen Michaels and Robert Wilbert will paint for the benefit of Focus from model Mary Musinski at the Gallery on Saturday, July 28 from 7-10 p.m. Richard Guinton, Detroit Free Press, will comment on their progress.

Tickets are $50.00 each and allow admittance to the benefit, refreshments, and an opportunity to own one of the art works. (A drawing for the paintings will be held at the end of the evening. You do not have to be present to be a lucky winner.)

All major area galleries are supporting this exciting and unusual event. So join the fun and attend! Mail ticket requests with checks to Detroit Focus. Attendance will be limited — BE FIRST! Prepaid tickets assure admittance.

Membership

A volunteer membership committee headed by artist Lola Sonnenschein is currently calling to urge that you join, renew, or get another person to join Detroit Focus. The time is now! The ability of the gallery to enter its 12th season depends on everyone.

Return form:

All dues are to be paid annually and are tax-deductible. Your cancelled check is your receipt.

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Detroit Focus Quarterly fundraising party:

“Brew Ha-Ha” is coming in August, (Details forthcoming)