

ART SCENE

Artists strive to make work more accessible

By ANDREA HOFFMAN

Artists all over the United States are demanding recognition by their local museums — and space in their cities — to make art accessible to the public.

A recent response to this demand has been seen in Los Angeles. While the Los Angeles County Museum belatedly plans a modern art wing, a museum of contemporary art is already under way. In its first stages of development in the Bunker Hill area of downtown Los Angeles, it will be one of few museums with an artist-run board.

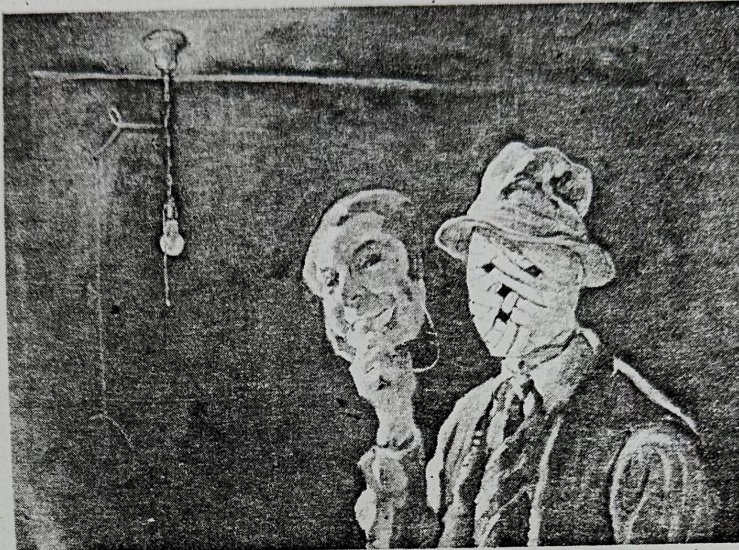
Such a movement takes determination and organization, but it also needs proven, talented local artists to achieve the desired response to the needs of the art community and public.

By comparison, San Diego is admittedly youthful on a scale of cultural sophistication on all levels. Yet San Diego does have a growing and diverse profile in the visual arts which has the potential to make a larger mark on the national scene. This would demand selectivity on the part of the galleries and recognition of real quality (which must be learned through some effort) on the part of the art collector.

Involved artists and an educated and responsive community are just as significant to the growth of this city as a well-respected symphony, ballet or opera.

Building that kind of support for the art community requires conscientious efforts by local museums, corporations and foundations to create collections of San Diego artists.

Meanwhile, more restraint in deciding which artists will show — and decisions to show only the best — are the only means by which the art community can bring to itself the respect it desires.



'ARTISTS UNMASKED' by Seymour Rosofsky, part of Chicago exhibit

Many shows currently on exhibit point up the possibilities and difficulties inherent in San Diego art, parochial despite its potential. The artists and their showplaces must ultimately be responsible for how the viewer responds to them, providing information along with stimulation.

WHAT: Chicago Currents, The Koffler Collection.

WHERE: University Gal-

lery, SDSU with parking available adjacent to the gallery.

WHEN: Noon to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays; noon to 3 p.m. Wednesdays, through Oct. 4.

This exhibit — a collection of contemporary art — exemplifies the kind of positive support the visual arts need. The S.W. and B.M. Koffler Foundation gave these works to the Smithsonian Institution. As part of the national collection, the paintings are now traveling across the country.

The 34 works represent a wealth of aesthetics: anti-war activism of the '60s, somber constructivism, social comment, surrealism and super-realism. Most of

these works from Chicago appear to be primarily object-oriented with a hard-driving directness that is offset by a few examples of cool Bauhaus influence from the city's Institute of Design. Paintings are by established, as well as younger, artists and are part of the ongoing collection activities of the Koffler Foundation.

WHAT: Recent Works of Four San Diego Artists.

WHERE: Alternative Space Gallery, 534 Sixth Ave.

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Fridays or telephone the gallery for an appointment, through Oct. 12.

Whether this exhibit provokes, puzzles or pleases, it must be appreciated for its

coherence in showing compatible works by young artists who, though still in their formative stages, have consistency of statement. Coming a long way since the first alternative space show last year, the artists are maturing into strongly individual aesthetes who continue to be avant-garde but still connected to the larger world of contemporary art.

Combining colors and objects, Lynn Schuette displays a rare joie de vivre for works with a message, heightening our awareness of things not usually given notice. Susan Versus Minnicks (whose changing middle name has become an artwork in itself) shows an enormous growth this year, with works that have become less pretentious yet more direct, and use images that mix militant feminism with new-wave. Barbara Sexton's gilded body casts with bones are like decorative tribal objects which she connects with mathematical theorems, and Diane Mouratides' industrial patterns also deal effectively with a combination of like things in serial relationships.

This is one of the few shows in town where there is a clear sensitivity to the artwork and not just the presentation of a crowded mix of canvases to fill available space.