

Cont. from p.8

STUDENT SCULPTURE

McCabe and Mrs. Miller as a standard: I have found generally that people who like the one film dislike the other.

Firstly, while it may be true that there are people whose lives are as completely and narrowly devoted to their sexual organs as Nichols would like to claim his characters are, his characters aren't, in fact, among them. The female characters, especially Susan (despite Candice Bergen's usual non-performance) clearly have emotional complexities far beyond the narrow range of Nichols' satiric formula. When Nichols cuts off and abandons the development of this character, he is not revealing any "truth" about human relationships; he is violating the integrity of his image in order to make it conform to the shallowly cynical idea he wants to put across. Contrast this to the way in which everyone of Altman's images is lovingly nurtured and allowed to grow, naturally, to its fullest maturity. Altman's is a life-giving art; Nichols' is life-denying. That is, not only is he incompetent as a dramatist, his incompetence stems from a deliberate denial of creativity, the basic principle of art itself.

Secondly, even if what Nichols' presented were true (which it isn't) his attitude towards it is still contemptible. Aristotle defined the tragic emotions as pity and fear; adapting this slightly, via a cross-breeding with Jean-Luc Godard, I would suggest that the central emotions of art are rage and tenderness. Nichols' has neither; Altman has both. It is a horrifying thought to consider what Nichols' might have done to the script of *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*; a fascinating one to speculate what Altman might have done for *Carnal Knowledge*. In both cases the aesthetic values involved are also, implicitly, ethical ones. If Altman is a great artist where Nichols isn't even a good one, it is because Altman fulfills, and Nichols doesn't, the qualities described by Susan Sontag when she says:

"Art performs this 'moral' task because the qualities which are intrinsic to the aesthetic experience (disinterestedness, contemplativeness, attentiveness, the awakening of the feelings) and to the aesthetic object (grace, intelligence, expressiveness, energy, sensuousness) are also fundamental constituents of a moral response to life."

- Stephen Scobie

On display in the Students' Union Art Gallery are a number of sculpture works by second to fourth year students from the Department of Art and Design here at the University of Alberta.

In this review I shall try to deal with the pieces on their own terms. The young artists in question are as follows:

Cathy Mott with two pieces "Domed Landscape" and "Weeled Landscape". There seems to be a quality of humour in her work as the above titles suggest. In "Domed landscape", to be more specific, she has enclosed and entombed a landscape into a transparent plastic dome which from a distance, can't be seen by the observer.

A number of grey mushrooms sprouting their way through artificial grass also gives a touch of humour as well as sensuality. This untitled piece by Connie Treen reminds one in many ways of Merret Oppenheims' Fur-lined Cup and Spoon. It would have been interesting to have experienced a whole floor covered with these sensuous objects.

Ray Harper entered two untitled pieces. One made of laminated wood that is very well designed but seems to suffer from the use of a pedestal which neutralizes the totality of the work. One of the more positive aspects of the piece is the non-violation of the surface achieved by keeping the wood in its natural state.

The other piece is a white quasi-geometric box standing vertically and which is eroded a quarter of the way up. This piece seems to work quite well because on looking at it the observer would think the piece would fall apart. This piece seems to be the stronger of the two and has accomplished its ends.

John Malinowski illustrates a refreshing sensibility in terms of selection of his materials, "Found Objects" i.e. heavy timber, chain and steel. The piece falls short in carrying the relationship of the materials far enough. Materials demand intensity and force. The piece in the final conclusion is too static.

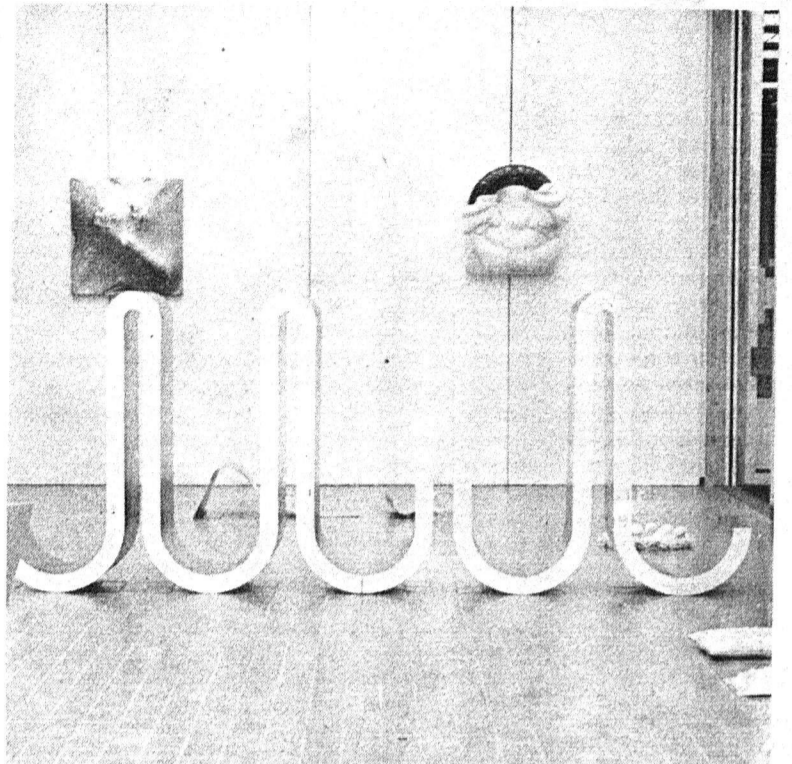
The Only figurative piece in the exhibition is that of Russel Bingham. This is a fine example of the use of the figure and in the process reads quite well. The piece consists of a head and hands pushing its way through a plastic

form. In talking to the artist, he expresses a desire to carry these figure pieces further, which would be interesting to see.

Carol Hutchinson's and Lillian Klimek's sculptures consist of rolled light gage steel on the floor. Carol's piece talks about shapes and negative space whereas Lillian Klimek uses a number of rolled steel pieces in relationship to each other. These pieces in question suffer from a lack of size and depth.

Gary Jones has three pieces on display but I shall just deal with two of the wall pieces, "Please Mind YOUR Throats Please" and "Milky Mother". The wall pieces are fabricated from plastic resin and form into geometric structures that warp their way to organic ends. The colour in these works is a well added feature and compliments the forms. The pieces might be more interesting if they could interlock and relate to each other rather than being separate units.

"Big Bag" by Margaret May is the most sensitive piece in the show both in terms of concept and execution. The wall to floor piece is made of very soft and light cloth with a small hole at the base so that children are able to crawl into the piece and participate. The most obvious question is, will the material be able to hold up? Margaret's work seems to have a concern for humanism as demonstrated in this piece.



Wave sculpture in SUB Art Gallery

Piere Lewis Photo

Wallie May is utilizing soft cloth as well, but as contrast and process i.e. from hard to soft and pushable to mere cloth. This particular piece reads well as it lays on the floor.

The last piece that I shall deal with is an untitled sculpture by Bernd Hildebrandt, which I believe to be the strongest work in the exhibition. This work has four elongated rectangles with the edges of the two bottom rectangles touching the floor, while the two above are suspended into space.

The four rectangles are all

joined at one end with a steel plate and huge bolts.

I would like to point out that the exhibition for the most part is as fine in quality as that to be found anywhere in Canada on this level. The only problem is that as a total the works are a bit slick in finish and lack of chance. I would strongly suggest and urge students and faculty to look at the show and think seriously of supporting the Young Edmonton Sculptors.

The show, called Young Edmonton Sculptors, runs to October 1.

- Tom Gallie

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