

Carving, *Clan* & Kids

Clichés cut

Last week the Samuel J. Zack's Gallery presented a retrospective of photographs by Jacqueline Benyes, a fourth year student in both the areas of photography and design in the department of Visual Arts. The show consisted of three groups of works. Large format black and white portraits of children, smaller color prints and a sizeable number of non-silver prints, again, most of which are portraits.

Benyes' portraits of children managed to transcend the cliché of the subject matter through their ability to capture the characters and spirit of the preschoolers.

As a series the color prints were particularly interesting. Although Benyes was exploring similar subject matter—night scenes and night portraits primarily—the group represents works from a period of more than five years. Benyes began her photography career prior to entering York Fine Arts and her earlier, less technically refined works represented in the show, possess a freshness and zeal that provides a favorable contrast to the more carefully contrived, technically proficient later color works.

The series of non-silver prints, again mostly portraits, stands out primarily in technique. The non-silver technique, in which photosensitized ink colors are "painted" on a paper surface and exposed individually, gives the image a distant, muted, dreamlike presence. However, some of these portraits lacked the sensitive portrayal of the subject's uniqueness, in spite of their pleasing formal elements.

Benyes' photographs are personal dealings with events and people that touch or move her. Last week's exhibit revealed her ability to sympathetically communicate her personal vision.

by Janice Goldberg

Cave lib

Back in 1984, Daryl Hannah earned praise for her portrayal of a naive and amorous mermaid in the movie *Splash*. While it wasn't her cinematic debut, Hannah finally proved herself to be a talented actress with a strong knack for comedy. Now, two years later, Daryl Hannah returns in the oh so very serious *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, and one is forced to ask why she would willingly choose to embarrass herself by starring in this film.

Based on the first in a series of bestsellers by Jean M. Auel, *The Clan of the Cave Bear* follows the growth and development of Ayla (Hannah) as she is raised by Neanderthals some 40,000 year ago. The fact that Ayla is of the Cro-Magnon branch of humanity, blonde and very sexy, is the sole cause of conflict within the film. While she is accepted

by some members of the clan, others want to see her driven out.

Please understand this: the sole source of conflict within the film is because Ayla does not truly belong in the tribe. Any rule or tradition that the clan has is sure to be broken by Ayla, not due to her ignorance, but because she is her own woman—a liberated lady back in the days when men were Neanderthals and caves were homes.

The film's greatest obstacle is that of credibility. A film must be able to suspend disbelief and make the viewer forget s/he is watching a movie in a cozy 1986 cinema with cackling yuppies sitting all around. *The Clan of the Cave Bear* always remains just a film. It fails to draw the viewer into its story or just its setting. This because the "stranger in a strange tribe" theme has been done in countless Tarzan films and this movie fails to deliver any new twists to this overly exploited theme.

The other part of the problem is due to the casting of Daryl Hannah as the film's main character. Hannah is too blonde, too sexy and simply does not look like a Cro-Magnon woman of 40,000 years ago. Her portrayal of Ayla is not savage or untamed enough to be convincing. Daryl Hannah makes Ayla look and act like an uptown girl all decked out in primitive furs.

The lack of drama and credibility in *The Clan of the Cave Bear* makes it a dull two hours. One can only hope that this film will not have a sequel and Daryl Hannah will pick a better film to prove herself in next time.

by Kevin Pasquino

Flying fate

With titles such as *All the Unsuspecting Vegetarians in the audience gasped in horror when the vampire appeared* and *A lot of people went nowhere when the new freeway was built* one might suspect that Shawn Hill's "Life Fossils" exhibit is a collection of drugstore novel covers. These paintings however are a far cry from pop art, resembling more of a sophisticated, subtle primitivism spiked with a hearty dose of humor.

The most striking aspect of Hill's work, on display at the Founder's Gallery until Jan. 26, is its unabashed hieroglyphic simplicity. Figures, objects, and horizons are roughly carved into wood, which is then painted with a variety of substances ranging from car enamel paint to goldleaf. This offers the pieces subtle textural layering. One piece, *Desire*, is made out of rusted sheet metal; it is ultimately a sculpture mounted on wood.

Fate, Hill's largest work, reveals his acute sense of composition. Diametric horizontal lines offer a succinct lesson in optical physics; the eye is trapped as is the plane flying through whiteness into a massive 'fateful' arm. Hill's wit also comes through in this piece with his pun on

Grossman premieres grad in sensual dance

By NICOLE DESJARDINS

This week at Harbourfront's Premiere Dance Theatre (PDT), the Danny Grossman Dance Company will be premiering three new works: "Ces Plaisirs," "Magneto-Dynamo," and "Divine Air." Also being premiered is York Dance Graduate Brigitte Bourdeau, the latest addition to Danny Grossman's now 10-member ensemble.

After graduating in 1982, Bourdeau balanced her career with both dance and arts administration. In between working with the Peggy McCann Co. and Robert Desrosier Co., she spent a memorable year in New York where she found more competitive and dedicated attitudes towards dance. "You must totally give yourself to your art and never expect to be paid for it," said Bourdeau. "You constantly work and work. There are classes from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and I went to at least 10 auditions."

"The first time I saw Danny Grossman Dance Co. perform," Bourdeau recalls, "I said to myself: that's the kind of dance I would like to do."

In 1983 she auditioned as a dancer for Grossman's company, yet instead, two years later she was hired as a company administrator. At the same time she kept active on the dance scene, working with independent choreographers such as Randy Glynn, a member of the Danny Grossman Dance Co. At one rehearsal, Grossman was present; the rest, it seems, has become history.

Grossman's previous works have been boisterous and dynamic, requiring great stamina from the dancers. "If you don't have it, just go



HE'S MINE: Danny Grossman (left) works in close collaboration with trampolines and chiropractors. This week his company premieres the new works, including "Ces Plaisirs" (pictured above) at Harbourfront. Human relationships and the savageness of the human race are two of the topics Grossman explores.



on the trampoline and get your lungs going," Grossman said to his dancers prior to a runthrough of the athletic piece "National Spirit." It is a satire based on a medley of American patriotic music.

In contrast, "Endangered Spe-

cies" shows scenes of a post-nuclear holocaust in which the dancers portray the horrors of wars, of deprived people, and of the savageness of the human race.

Danny Grossman's latest work, "Divine Air," brings a new dimension to his style. "Divine Air" is more melancholy and ethereal. "It's my favorite," said Brigitte Bourdeau. "The movements have changed, they are more feminine, more fluid, rounded. It's about human relationships in the couple, very sensual, but brought to a higher level with nymphs and centaurs."

"Divine Air" is a close collaboration between the composer, Gordon Phillips (presently a teacher for York's Dance Department) and choreographer Danny Grossman. The music score and the choreography changed with every rehearsal. "It's wonderful to have someone who has this kind of flexibility," said Grossman. "Usually the composer comes in with the (commissioned) score and leaves, and the choreographer has to adjust to it."

It is four days prior to the January 21 opening at PDT, yet Grossman still doesn't know his part. Meanwhile, he is readjusting other sections of the piece. Grossman, however, is not worried. "A premiere helps me dig in deeper (for movements), get up from my chair and get into the piece, dance it, and then to go to the chiropractor everyday," he says. The Danny Grossman Company will be performing until this Sunday.

by Paulette Polol

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the word "plane." The plane is flying on the wrong "plane" perpendicular to the ground. That, folks, is fate.

Another example of Hill's unique spatiality is in his piece *With Trepidation*. Gold and pink footprints are engraved in a snow-scape and appear to be crossing a bridge bordered with a railing. However, on closer inspection, one realizes that there appears to be nothing under the bridge; that the railing may just exist in the middle of 'nowhere.' The piece invokes extreme hesitancy in the viewer by its intentional awkwardness.

Some of Hill's work is too simple, little more than aesthetic pleasure

(although aesthetic itself is often sufficient). Yet most of the exhibit is challenging in various ways. The titles of the pieces pull the viewer in one cerebral direction, while the paintings seem to halt this direction and stop the viewer in his visual tracks. This opposition encourages one to look more closely at the work and re-think his original, intuitive response to it. Shawn Hill makes you stop, look again, think, laugh, and enjoy his work. For a worthwhile diversion, visit Founder's gallery this week. At the least, you'll be heartily amused.

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