

veenema is still reading

by Nancy Bevan

Veenema works by the book. At least that's what his *Still Reading* exhibition at Founders Gallery October 3-14 would lead us to believe at first.

Through an enterprising mixed media approach, Veenema, winner of the York Murals Competition 1989, explores the relationships between the writer as an artist and the reader as an observer of the artwork or text.

In all three of his works, Veenema walks an ambiguous line between sculpture and painting, while the viewer is often required to take an active role, as a reader must do to understand the text. The first installation (untitled) is a freestanding conglomeration of metal, paint and books on upright plywood in blue, black and aqua.

and try to read the two open books shadowed back into the crevice. Appreciate from your difficult perspective how books incorporate a certain perspective of their own, which we may be unaware of or might accept without questioning alternatives. Now walk around behind and discover that this wall, like the printed page, is a facade. Each detail of its fabrication is apparent, as though the artist, or author, has suddenly become visible. As a creative metaphor for bookcraft, this work speaks volumes.

Creativity becomes the task of the reader heading "Toward Ruins One More Time." Composed of two distinct parts, the observer's challenge is to find some meaning for himself or herself to reconnect them. A patchwork, metallic, upside-down "4" in relief argues with a distorted centaur, stolen

from a Grecian frieze, in plaster, graphite, oils and acrylics. The industrial coldness of the "4" speaks of the disorder of contemporary society, while the centaur echoes a warmer, organic and accompanied by an old blue chair and a book imbedded with nails, the dynamics between the three elements should lead the viewer inwards.

Veenema explains, "I think normally, when you look at a picture or painting, they tend to be illusionistic; they tend to refer to something outside the painting. This piece tries to go away from that. It tries to bring attention to the actual surface, which is the object itself, rather than referring to something else." It's obvious illusionistic art is turning over a new leaf.

Ever been confronted by "Author-ity"? Submit yourself

STILL READING



RECENT ARTWORK BY JOHN VEENEMA

OCTOBER 3 - 14, 1989
FOUNDERS GALLERY
YORK UNIVERSITY
GALLERY OPEN DAILY
10:00 AM - 9:00 PM

RECEPTION: WED, OCT. 4, 5:30 - 8:30 PM

then, to the large brick-block style wall a few feet away. Bend down passionate past, blood-red and still wet at the time of the exhibition opening. In both cases, the meaning of the familiar image we take for granted has been eliminated, since the artist feels, "When you take the meaning out of

things, that's when they become fun, enjoyable" for the observer.

Veenema's work encourages us to develop an artistic literacy and to develop our own interpretive faculties. You may not be able to comprehend his work immediately, but you can certainly read a lot into it.



Stephen Moses

Artist Hilda Oomen's exhibition ends its run on October 23. Her works have been on display at Zacks Gallery since October 4.

Excalibur is now accepting submissions for a creative writing page. Please deposit your poetry and prose (500 words max.) in the manilla envelope in the editors' office at Excalibur, 111 Central Square.

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