

Photography exhibit shows artistic eye of lens

By Diane Wanek

Someone commented the other evening at photographer Roger Rejda's opening at Sheldon, that photography is not art. I had thought this was no longer a question, but further consideration leads me to conclude this man could be right.

No one would deny that photography is certainly a craft, hobby, profession; so, too, are painting, poetry, and many other media we consider art forms. Further, we do not discount writing simply because a typewriter is used, or metal sculpture because an acetylene torch is used. Neither should we discount photography because of the mechanics.

It seems that this type of equipment enables the artist to create more freely. And freedom in creation seems to be a very important element.

A question now is raised: Why may one piece of work be art and another not? The question is a philosophical abyss wherein may be found too many theories. Plato said true artists were possessed by a "divine madness." Aristotle was more mundane, describing art as a means of inducing psychological reactions in the beholder. It has been described in terms of "beauty," "ideal form," "aesthetic harmony," "intensified reality" and any other number of vague concepts which would drive a person into utter confusion.

I believe many people would agree that not all photography is art, just as not all painting, sculpture, music or dance is art. Each medium contains a large number of areas the artist must work with. If he doesn't consider them all, he is creating without playing with a full deck.

For example, a painter considering a still life must take into account shape, texture, form, color, light, brushes, paints, the canvas itself and his technique of application. All these must be utilized while considering every square inch of the canvas in this creative process.

The same analogy holds true in photography. The photographer certainly has options: type, quality, color and texture both of film and paper, lenses, filters, developers, varying exposures for both paper and film, techniques such as burning, dodging, multiple printing, masking and solarizing. The photographer, too, must be concerned with these things in combination. He must approach each photograph with what could be called a painterly approach.

Ansel Adams said, "We must remember that a photograph can hold just as much as we put into it, and no one has ever approached the full possibilities of the medium."

The more people realize the possibilities of the medium, the more they may realize its possibilities as an art form. Roger Rejda said that learning truth in one art form allows him to understand it better in another.

Rejda may not consider all possibilities of the photographic medium, but he succeeds often in what he has set out to do. He says he is not concerned with abstractions in his Sheldon show.

"In this show I am always working in reaction to exterior realities," he said.

His approach is straightforward, clean, with attention to texture, form, composition, tonality, and light. It sometimes works well, as in his photograph entitled "Penny Weeds." Sometimes it doesn't quite come off.

By and large, however, it's a pleasing exhibition. His portrait of his father is well done technically and gives the beholder a good feeling; a bit of the photographer's feeling for his father is transmitted. His "Poodle Reflection" and "Michaelangelo's Dome, Rome" show his sense of humor.

The exhibit is an anthology of what Rejda considers his best work since 1966, when he began this hobby. The exhibit will continue through May 26.

Golden age movies habit for Americans

The movies, as everyone knows, are composed of many dependent, creative factors that contribute to the finished product. But to the American public, for many years the movies have never needed to be anything more than the faces and actions of the actors and actresses they saw on the screen; the faces of those glamorous, often idolized, people they simply called the "stars".

Unlike today, when we tend to be more selective, the movies in an earlier, golden age were a habit for millions of American families. During the '30s and '40s they usually chose the films they saw because of the stars they knew they would find once inside the theater door. Today, pictures like *The Exorcist*, *American Graffiti* and *The Great Gatsby* are all bigger than any of the stars in them, and there are other big-name films that would be as popular even if their casts were changed.

greg lukow key grip

But what other reason was there for going to a Betty Grable movie in the '40s if not simply for Grable herself? Shirley Temple films were so popular only because America fell in love with their dimpled, curly haired little star; and for millions of wishful thinking young women, for over two decades, Clark Gable was reason enough for any movie's existence.

Looking over the annual motion picture Money Making Stars Poll, first conducted in 1932, reveals a lot about what people went to see in their movies. It has nothing to do with art or even good filmmaking, but it shows who was drawing in the dollars for movie makers, and some of the names on it are surprising.

For instance, the biggest movie star attraction in 1933 and 1934 was the large, domineering, 64-year-old, leading lady, Marie Dressler. A lot of people today have never heard of her but in the early '30s her co-starring efforts with Wallace Beery in pics like *Min and Bill* and *Tugboat Annie* were huge successes.

Will Rogers took over her No. 1 ranking the next year, and then came 1935. For the next seven years the roost was ruled by child stars Shirley Temple (until 1938) and Mickey Rooney (from 1939-41). Clark Gable was the most consistent box office attraction of the '30s. He held the number two or three positions on the top 10 poll eight times from 1934 to 1942.

Betty Grable ruled for one year during the war, as did (believe it or not) Abbot and Costello. Then, in 1944, another dynasty of sorts was established as Bing Crosby became the No. 1 movie attraction for the next five years. Since then, the top spots have shuffled regularly with John Wayne and Doris Day leading the most times with four each.

There were other surprise names that hit the top. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis led in 1952, William Holden in 1956, and, for some reason, Glenn Ford in 1958. 1957 was a year for male singers as Pat Boone, Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra were numbers three, four, and five respectively. By 1960, it was apparent that light hearted sex comedies were taking over as Doris Day, Rock Hudson, Cary Grant, Debbie Reynolds, Tony Curtis, Sandra Dee and Jack Lemmon all made the top 10.

Currently, Robert Redford is having one of the biggest "starring" years in a long time. With Clint Eastwood and John Wayne, his name is one of the few left that will consistently bring out movie fans simply because a certain "star" is in the film.

Sheldon Trio to present chamber music program

The Sheldon Trio will perform chamber music by Johannes Brahms, Samuel Adler, Beethoven and Ernst Bloch at 8 p.m. Friday at the Sheldon Art Gallery.

The trio, artists in residence at Sheldon, is composed of UNL Professor of Music Arnold Schatz, pianist Cary Lewis and cellist Dorothy Lewis. The Lewises are on the faculty at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Admission is \$1 for students and \$2 for regular seats.

UNL faculty musicians in recital

UNL School of Music faculty members Robert O'Boyle and Gary Echols will give a recital tonight at 8 p.m. at Kimball Recital Hall.

Echols will play Sonata No. 1 for Bassoon and Piano by Alec Wilder. O'Boyle will play a Camille Saint-Saens sonata for oboe and piano. Both will join their accompanist Thomas Fritz in the Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon by Francis Poulenc.

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