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Display shows male viewpoint

By Martha Murdock

With women facing draft registration, and many still eagerly awaiting the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, the nation is once again questioning the role of women in society. Is the woman to be a mother, a worker, an executive, a soldier or all these roles at once?

The Sheldon Art Gallery is showing "Feminine Images," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures featuring women as its subject matter. The pieces from the gallery's own collection range from a 15th-century Madonna by Antonello de Saliba to a 1979 portrait of "Mary Black Horse, Cheyenne" by James Bama.

Viewing the works in their chronological order gives one insight as to how women have been perceived and stereotyped through the years. All but a handful of the pieces were done by men. For the most part, these are not the views of women by women, but the interpretations of the female psyche and form by men.

Traditional Madonna figure

Antonello de Saliba's "Madonna and Child with the Infant St. John" presents the traditional Madonna figure, her eyes cast down in a modest, contemplative expression. She has a child at either knee.

Next to this 15th-century oil painting is "Maternity," a painting done by Gari Melchers, an artist who lived from 1860 to 1932. Although his figure is a Dutch woman of a later era, he represents maternity in the same manner. The woman's eyes are cast down. On one side she nurses the baby. On the other, she watches a small child who has a halo around his crown.

The view of the woman as a childbearing saint has not altered. The only real change might be the more realistic, less plastic representation of the woman. She has a bit more personality.

Through the years, women often have been portrayed as vapid, idealized objects. Many of the portraits show women with empty eyes and superficial gazes. "Lady in Pink," a 1923 oil painting by Frederick Carl Frieseke, pictures a soft image of a stilted figure, dressed in an elaborate pink gown, standing before a dressing table mirror. Her arms have the rounded form once so coveted as a sign of beauty. Her pastel figure appears to be made of porcelain.

Thoughtful faces

But amidst these portrayals of women as dull artifacts hang images of women with intense, thoughtful faces. "Woman with Hat and Veil" by Alfred H. Maurer shows a dark-haired woman with deep brown eyes that reflect real thought. This 1912 oil allows the woman's intelligence to shine through her eyes.

"Maria Y Consuelo," a portrait of a Mexican woman with a child perched on her hip, was painted by Robert Henri in 1906. This woman looks directly at the viewer with a look of defiance. The strength of her character is emphasized by the bright, intense colors of her patterned clothes.

It is interesting to compare women's own perceptions of their identities. "Zeffy in Bed" by Lillian Hale, who lived from 1881 to 1963, is an indistinct image of a girl turning to look out from the picture plain from her lying position in bed.

Mary Cassatt and Helen Torr show more emotion in their portraits. Cassatt's 1897 portrait of "Mary Say Lawrence" shows a face reflecting temperament. The girl looks as if she is angry or about to cry. Torr, who lived from 1866 to 1967, painted a worn, drawn face with tired eyes as her self-portrait.

Captures pain

Perhaps the painting that best captures a woman's pain is "Woman of the Crucifixion," created by Rico Lebrun between 1948 and 1950. This futuristic figure, composed of planes and sharp, jutting angles shows the intensity of pain a woman can feel. This woman is not soft like so



Photo by Colin Hackley

Charlotte Deurscher discusses Edwin Dickenson's "Girl on a Tennis Court," a surrealistic work in the "Feminine Images" exhibit, with students from West Lincoln Elementary School.

many of the others but is ghostly with her hollow cheeks. Her figure appears to loom out of a dark, empty night devoid of any comfort.

A few of the works show a realization of how women have been used. "Della Monti," a 1972 lithograph by Mel Ramos, pictures a naked woman standing behind a large catsup bottle. This woman is the image of commercial beauty with her blonde, windswept hair and ample bosom.

One of the most intriguing works is "Water Carrier," a bronze sculpture done by Hugo Robus in 1956. The sculpture is a walking woman carrying a water pot. Her belly slightly protrudes, suggesting her fertility. She has no head but carries her pot, balanced by her one arm and hand, on the back of her neck. The pot is her head. The figure embodies women's traditional roles, childbearing and domestic chores. However, one gets the feeling that Robus is not promoting this image but making one aware of it.

A man's animosity

A man's animosity toward a woman is evident in R. Allen Jensen's 1964 collage, "X-Wife." The work includes defaced photographs of the former wife. The main figure in the work is the woman's cold figure. A sharp stone juts

out of one shoulder. Rivets and staples cover the canvas. The top of the woman's head is missing, outlined only by staples.

But the dignity of a woman is also portrayed. James Bama's oil, "Mary Black Horse, Cheyenne," is a super-realist image of an old Indian woman. The lines of her face and the light in her eyes express the pride this woman has earned.

In several paintings, women are used as models which enable the artists to explore new art styles and techniques and experiment with form. For example, in his study of a nude curled on a piano stool, Philip Pearlstein does not idealize his figure but uses its faults and unappealing traits to study form and line. He exaggerates the details of the nude, enlarging the veins of the hands and feet.

The exhibit includes works from many different movements—among them impressionism, surrealism, abstract expressionism, super-realism. Some very famous images of women are in the show. One of William De Kooning's wild, painterly portrayals of a woman is on display. Andy Warhol's color serigraph of Jacqueline Kennedy shows two identical images of the President's widow, black against a lavender background.

"Feminine Images" will remain in the gallery through Feb. 17.

NETV to present King Arthur tale

Once Upon A Classic presents the romance, courage and heroic endeavors of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table when "The Legend of King Arthur" premieres this Saturday at 6 p.m. on the Nebraska Educational Television Network.

While most versions of the legend of Camelot have been set in medieval times, this eight-part series unfolds in a prior era—The Dark Ages.

It was an age in which man's desire to perform good acts was countered by those who only desired power and wealth. Such a man is Uther Pendragon, a barbarian king

with an avaricious nature and lust for power.

"King Arthur" begins with Uther vying for Igrayne, wife of the Duke of Gorlois. Uther kills Gorlois in battle in order to win Igrayne's hand, and she bears him an heir to the throne—a son named Arthur.

Merlin, wizard in Uther's court, is weary of the barbaric nature pervading in the kingdom and with his magical knowledge conjures a new age and kingdom in which justice and chivalry are supreme. He decides that Arthur will reign over this new kingdom, carrying the torch of enlightenment.

'Fantasia' tests interests with week of attractions

By Brian McManus

The Lincoln Community Playhouse currently is featuring a week filled with activities for spectators and participants, *Fantasia 1980*.

Designed primarily for younger audiences, it features jugglers, a washboard band, face painting, mime, dance, a Valentine's Day party and movies.

The project is headed by LeFette Nelson Schwinn, who also teaches acting classes and directs plays for the playhouse.

"This is the second year for Fantasia," Schwinn said. "It's a pretty difficult job. You have to second guess the

audience, trying to decide what will appeal to the largest number of people."

Schwinn went on to say that this is less of a problem in Lincoln because there are so many talented artists in the city.

"This is an attempt to try new things to see where people's interests are," Schwinn said. "You might call this a test week. We are always looking for new ideas to give the people in Lincoln a greater variety of things to do and see."

Fantasia is having events at 3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. through Friday.

On Saturday, a film festival, co-sponsored by Theatre Arts for Youth, will include *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, a

Laurel and Hardy film and Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

There will also be lunch available for an extra fee.

The events will be in the playhouse's new Children's Theater Wing. Fantasia is one of the few events to take place since the wing has been open.

"There is still some completion work to be done in the children's wing," Schwinn said. "In addition to Fantasia, we'll be doing a couple of projects there this spring. By next fall, the wing will be totally completed."

Schwinn said some future projects for the new wing include a puppet show by the Old Market Puppet Theater in March and performances of *The Pied Piper* in the spring.