

arts/entertainment

Fun, nonfunctional items help 'Footlights' flourish

By Penelope M. Smith

If you wander into the Lincoln or Old Market branch of Footlights, you're immediately struck by a sense of transplanted exotica with a hint of New York glitter. Ceramic hands like a scene from a Cocteau movie beckon from the walls. There really isn't a functional ordinary item in the shop.

Greg Lindberg is the man responsible for the creation of Footlights card and gift shops in Nebraska. The stores are so called because of the theatrical theme of the shops' ceramics and their dramatic lighting.

Lindberg "wandered" into the idea of Footlights through a job selling ads at UNL for five years.

"I went to UNL for several years with the usual list of journalism and business classes, but I learned a lot more selling ads," he said.

"I finally stopped selling ads because I really didn't like a lot of the businesses I was making money for and I was disgusted making money for other people," he explained.

But Lindberg's ad days came in handy for him, he said, because he was exposed to many of the "pretty outrageous" retail items that he would later use in his shops.

When Lindberg stopped selling ads he really didn't have a clear idea of what he wanted to do.

"I spent a year or two bumming around and as a painting contractor; it was important to my business that I quit running around at a job. I painted to pay for vacations to New York, Dallas and L.A."

Ideas crystallize

In New York and Los Angeles Lindberg came across several stores, such as Fiorucci's, that helped him crystallize ideas for his own shop.

"It has my own particular stamp but I like to see Footlights as a Fiorucci's without the \$5 million budget," Lindberg said. "Fiorucci's in L.A. and New York is the ultimate card and gift shop in the U.S. They use top designers and are crazy with a capital K."

Lindberg said it has been expensive to import things for his shop because many of them are unusual.

"There are a lot of decadent things in the shop, for in-

stance, some skin with whips. We see ourselves as a little more rough, a little less cute. I have a lot of cute things

but decadence is the other side of the coin and it's real nice too," he said.

"I'm really big on things that are fun and not really functional. We're not waiting for the next depression—our store reflects this by selling art deco, punk, avant-garde. We sell the whole idea of having a good time in a very non-traditional manner to provide people with a very different alternative to Hallmark or the jewelry store at Christmas," Lindberg said.

Many people who have a stereotypical image of Nebraskans are surprised that stores like Footlights are surviving.

"In the beginning I was scared that the vice squad was going to shut me down, but too many people liked the cards," Lindberg said.

Open attitudes

According to Lindberg, competitors even have entered his shops with notebooks to list items so they could find them to sell in their own stores. In addition, the clientele, consisting equally of men and women, never ceases to surprise him with their variety and open attitudes.

"Sophistication is here, appreciation is here. Sophistication to me is an open-mindedness to something totally new and a background of understanding for the things I sell. People who don't have it would see no reason for my existence. I was hesitant but people have proven to me that they can support these things," Lindberg said.

"I had thought that I would get complaints on a daily basis; there have obviously been little old ladies who wandered into the wrong store, but it's really surprising," he said. "Some people come in and say, 'This is sick!' and then the next day they'll come in without their friends and buy me out of cards. There's really a much wider cross-section than I thought there would be."

In spite of the open-mindedness there are some people

who just don't fit into Lindberg's shops and he understands their discomfort.

"The shop is just not for super-straight or traditional people," he said.

Another thing that surprises Lindberg is that he has had no complaints from outraged feminists.

Not sexist

"We're not sexist; naked men and naked women run pretty 50/50 on our cards. We've had absolutely zero problems with feminists, in fact, some have come in and bought boxes of cards with naked men by the dozen. I'm not selling Penthouse here; it doesn't fit into my store. We have some sexist cards but there are also cards like the one entitled 'Marilyn' where the guy is laid out like a centerfold of Marilyn Monroe," he said.

Lindberg thinks Footlights provides a useful function beyond being fun or decorative.

"What I find really interesting is that I provide an outlet for a lot of people who don't know how to express themselves," he said. "For instance, if they had a really good time last night or 'gee you were great in bed,' it's a real thing but people don't talk about it. I was lucky. I had parents who were real open but for a lot of the shy people a card is really right for them; it helps them communicate."

If he could, Lindberg said, he would like to expand his shops into other areas.

"I'd like to get into clothing, carry some punk, things like really bizarre Danskins with zebra stripes and polka dots. Also, I'd like to get into some of the nice different porcelain products from different countries by designer names," he said.

Lindberg would like his customers not to stereotype his stores or his clientele.

"I want their minds to be like a chalk board so I can write 'Footlights' across it but I don't want them to walk in and see soft porn. There might be a lot of skin, but there are cards from the Museum of Modern Art, too, and some people buy both," Lindberg said.

Flood of disillusion runs high in new Bowie album

By Casey McCabe

Scary Monsters is, by David Bowie's own admission, "a 1980 nursery rhyme." This, he says, is a return to the 1880's nursery rhyme where little boys were getting their ears cut off and the like. In other words, the "Sesame Street" ideal was that being pushed in the 70's has given way to a flood of disillusionment.

album review

It is engaging, too, because 10 years ago Bowie was a mondo-bizarro, British glitter-rock star, an asexual space creature the likes of which had never been wrought upon the unsuspecting masses. Now he is a recognized superstar who was somehow able to share a stage with the late Bing Crosby. Yet Bowie has never sold out, and with this latest effort it becomes increasingly apparent that he has learned much from "being ahead of his time."

On "Ashes to Ashes" he resurrects Major Tom from his early hit "Space Oddity" to find what the astronaut in limbo would be like 10 years later. Well, we find that Major Tom's a junkie, "strung out in heaven's high, hitting an all time low."

Realizing that the technology involved to launch him into space was merely to bolster the ego of others, the disillusioned Major Tom wants desperately to come back down to earth and crawl off into a womb somewhere, a theme Bowie uses frequently as some unattainable goal in today's social environment.

'There's a brand new dance

But I don't know its name

That people from bad homes

Do again and again

It's big and it's bland

Full of tension and fear

They do it over there

But we don't do it here"

from 'Fashion'

Bowie's "Fashion" points out that Orwellian social ethic, thought so quaintly avant-garde when Bowie was first knocking at the door in the early 70's has now crept slowly into reality. And the voice that is telling us all this has gained as amazing amount of credibility.

Bowie's inspiration for the song he explains as coming from early experiences with discos in the U.S. Where he once saw spontaneity, Bowie now observes "an insidious, grim determination to be fashionable." People clawing the racks for designer jeans, drinking Perrier, and waiting in line to be seen in "the right places" thus re-mains a mass. In Bowie's realistic perception, when everyone seeks to be different, no one is different.

"Technicality it is not unemotional," said Bowie, citing his obvious interests in Orwell's 1984 prophecies. *Scary Monsters* does have its emotions, though they are typically held under control, as Bowie puts his vocal delivery on automatic pilot. But closely scrutinized either on record or on the lyric sheet, Bowie's intelligently laid poetry has inescapable clout.

Musically captivating as well, Bowie indulges the use once again of Robert Fripp on guitar, with appearances by Roy Brittan, a pianist on loan from Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, and Pete Townshend on guitar for "Because You're Young."

The musical moods run from haunting paranoia on "Scary Monsters (and Super

Creeps)" to some straight old British pop-rock ("Kingdom Come") and a nice melodic buildup for "Teenage Wildlife."

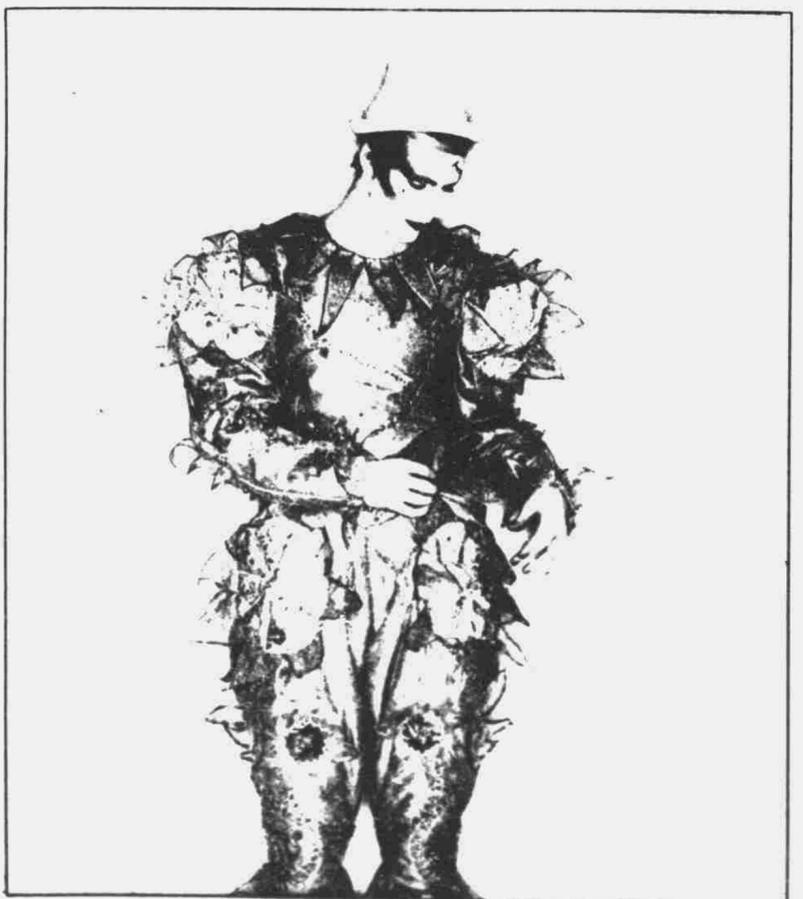
Bowie's ability to keep one step ahead of himself has always confused the critics.

With his soulful, nightclub voice he could compete with Johnny Mathis, and with his

insight and creative twist, he could blow away most of his New Wave counterparts.

Yet on *Scary Monsters* we find an enigmatic creature, a rocker at heart, but convincingly smarter than the rest of the pack.

Continued on Page 9



David Bowie