

Art; from John Wayne cut outs to dead birds

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All of the artists were at one time members of the shortlived Coalition of Regional Artists, which began last summer. The group worked together on "Birds: From Heaven or Near It," a few exhibits, and some film projects.

CORA dissolved in the fall and donated leftover funds and such to other art organizations. Shanks and Lewis cite the amount of work, monetary difficulties and the lack of volunteer time as reasons for disbanding CORA.

"Most of us wanted to do more things on our own. Why not make profit for an artist instead of an organization?" Lewis said.

The form of "Birds," which was performed last June at the 11th Street Gallery, was developed by the artists just sitting around a tape recorder talking. The group hit on birds for some reason and discovered that each one of them had an anecdote or an idea on the subject. During the most informal part of the performance the artists just relate personal experiences with birds.

"One of us had been to a wedding where the bride's family was very wealthy. They had purchased hundreds of white birds and contained them under a sheet next to the ceiling above the altar. The birds were supposed to be released when the couple were finally married," Lewis said.

"The area next to the ceiling got very warm and when the sheet was pulled away hundreds of dead, heat-stricken birds fell onto the couple."

While the bartender at the Drumstick read C.S. Lewis' "Perelandria," Mark Harper and his performance group "God" are playing to a nearly empty house.

The show begins with the showing of a film called "Waves" by Patrick Carey. While the images of waves, sand and sea creatures rattle through a 16 mm projector onto a white sheet, Harper hands out balloons and introduces his mother, who is wearing roller skates, to the audience.

Using the rock 'n' roll format that made Laurie Anderson one of the most popular performance artists, Harper incorporates film, evangelical screaming poetry, tape loops, the shrill cries of dolls, belly dancing lessons, lots of odd percussion, a lifesize cut-out of John Wayne and a catchy bunch of original songs into his performance.

This particular night, Harper puts his hands through the Wayne cut out and plays guitar while singing "Honky Tonk Woman" through a mouth hole.

The attitude of the audience is one of stunned appreciation. The bartender continues to read "Perelandria."

On the other end of the spectrum there is John Moran, whose main interest is opera.

Moran's work room reflects the nature of his work. His obsessions with religious iconography, gothicism, mysticism and modern art are all apparent in the "decor." Crucifixes adorn the walls, an expensive synthesizer stands in the center of the room and Moran hunches over a parchment-colored staff sheet meticulously drawing note after note

like a monk illuminating script.

A child prodigy trumpet player, the 20-year-old Moran learned keyboard, the main instrument he uses when composing, by ear.

Moran has written one full-scale opera called "Changing of the Season," which was performed at the Nebraska Directors Theater last semester. The opera begins with sparse piano arrangements reminiscent of George Winston and, at times, Keith Jarrett, adds Moran's Bowie-esque vocals and culminates in experimental chamber

music.

Moran is currently working on a 4-hour opera with parts arranged for a 60-piece orchestra.

"I'm not creating one aspect, but the total environment, an entire world," Moran said. "If you can interpret the idea through one medium, why not 10?"

Dreams are an important part of Moran's work. He constantly refers to the unconscious and his personal visions of hell in his work and general conversation.

"You've got to get out of the uncon-

scious' way, you can't try to identify with it, or make friends with it," Moran said.

"The unconscious doesn't give a fuck about you."

Last fall at a benefit at the Zoo Bar, Moran opened for Cockey Monroe. He calls his poetry reading that night "completely confrontation." The audience taunted and jeered while Moran raved like a possessed evangelist.

"Buddha, if you're so perfect, why can't you control your own weight prob-

lem!" he hollers.

"I'm going unconscious!" he screams again and again.

The audience hollers and screams back. There is laughter from the back of the room.

In his studio, Moran smokes the dregs from his pipe while he listens to a tape of the performance. The more the crowd tries to ignore him, the more he confronts them.

"All work is self-flagellation," he says.



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