

You don't have to look hard to find artist Tom Palmerton's inspiration. It's right there in front of you.

"Getting up every morning inspires me," Palmerton says. "I don't have to look anywhere for subject matter. It's just always there, everywhere."

Palmerton's subject matter is diverse for his show, which will open today at Noyes Art Gallery, 119 S. Ninth St. His bronze sculptures (cast in his own Brownville foundry) and paintings reflect the famous Nebraska artist's wide-ranging interest — from a statue of Christ to a mermaid combing her hair to a hawk battling a bear for a prized fish.

And Palmerton's work is only a part of the ambitious show Noyes is putting on for Friday. Among the artists featured in the Focus Gallery will be Lois Meysenberg, who has recently completed several watercolor and mixed-media paintings. "Froot Loops," a painting of a toucan from the Lied Jungle at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, should appeal to the kid in all of us.

Meysenberg didn't have an easy time with her breakfast cereal-inspired piece. Because of the many layers of plant life that surrounded the toucan, the painting took six days to complete instead of the three she expected.

"When I got done with that I thought: OK, I'm never doing foliage again," she says.

And if Palmerton and Meysenberg's work isn't enough, there's still more. Noyes is continuing a tradition begun last year by offering for sale small seed corn bags decorated by its artists. One of Palmerton's framed watercolors of the same size would cost \$200 — but Palmerton corn bag original will set you back just \$20. The bargain shoppers were out in force last year, so get to the gallery early for the best selection of bags by many different artists.

The show at Noyes is tomorrow from 6:30-9:30 p.m.



Right
there in
front of
you

Landscape painter finds simple art commanding



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYDON GALLERY

"EVENTIDE, SECTION 17, Center North Township" by John Preston will be shown tonight at Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.

Life's biggest choices are made on the basis of simple attraction, John Preston believes: a spouse, a career, a place to live.

And in his case, places to paint. The Fairfield, Iowa artist is not a native of the Midwest; he grew up in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area. But he moved to Iowa for its spacious land and skies, four distinct seasons and changeable weather.

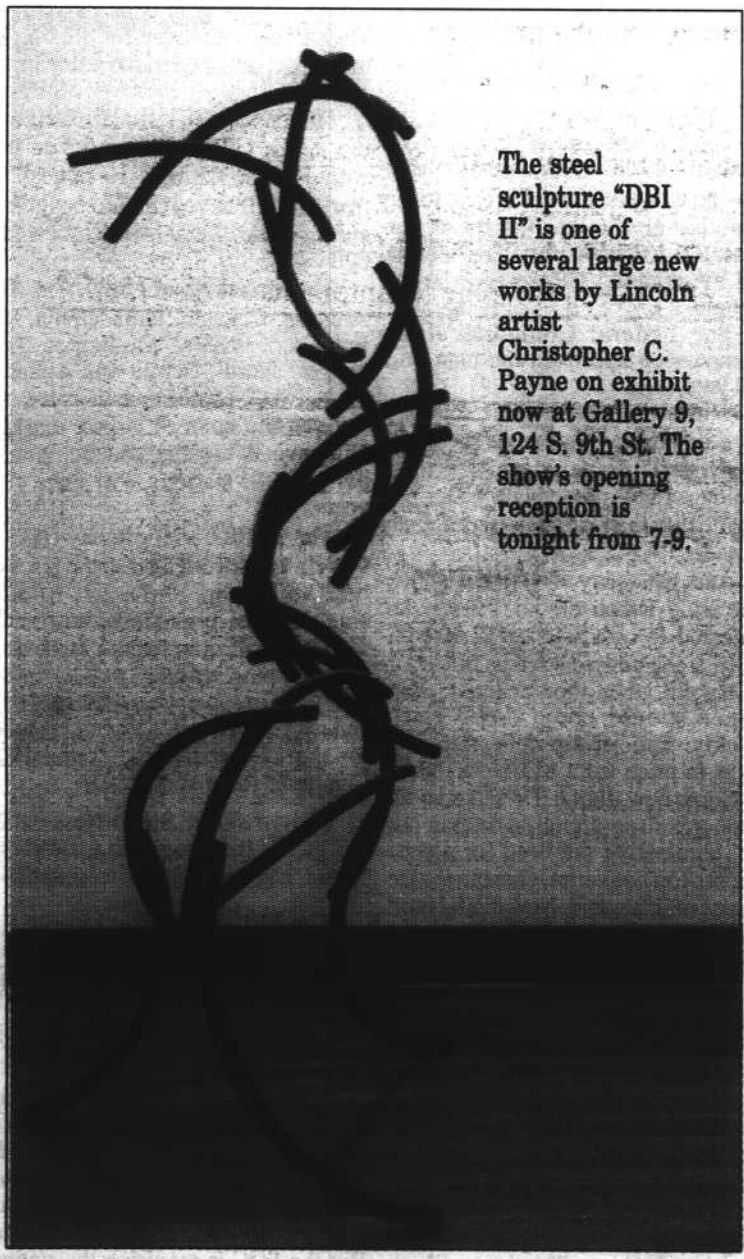
In walking around looking for scenes to paint, Preston rarely ventures far from home — having discovered that in Iowa, the land far away is pretty similar to that in his own county.

Preston's show, "Midwestern Landscapes," has its opening reception tonight from 7-9 at Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.

LINCOLN GALLERY PREVIEW

Stories by John Fulwider

Steel to the sky



The steel sculpture "DBI II" is one of several large new works by Lincoln artist Christopher C. Payne on exhibit now at Gallery 9, 124 S. 9th St. The show's opening reception is tonight from 7-9.

Artist exploring 'Dark Side' of expression

Put away the fabric swatches — this isn't sofa art.

Lincoln artist Connie Leavitt's new show at Burkholder Project, "The Dark Side," delights in exploring themes that may be disturbing to some — and almost definitely won't match your average living room furniture.

Take "Lizard Man" for example — a painting of a sharp-featured man/beast with a clawed creature coming out of his head.

"People either really like him or they just can't stand it," Leavitt says.

That's pretty much the point. Leavitt has secretly loved the reactions she gets to her dark acrylics, a rather marked departure from the farm scenes she painted for a show last year.

"The most fun about this is people who would come in and say, 'Well, this is really interesting,' and then couldn't get out fast enough," she says.

Leavitt started her "Dark Side" paintings at an art class in Halsey.

"Everybody was doing this white pastel fluff," she says. "I felt a need to balance it."

Balance it she did — so much so that her fellow artists couldn't even look at her work.

"I was so thrilled at the reactions I got from those ladies," she says. "When you make people uncomfortable, you accomplish something as an artist."

The images start as random globs of acrylic paint. Leavitt sprays the slick side of lithography paper with water, smears on paint and then sandwiches the paint under another sheet of paper.

When that second sheet of paper is lifted, little rivulets of color form and Leavitt sees shapes and images (like

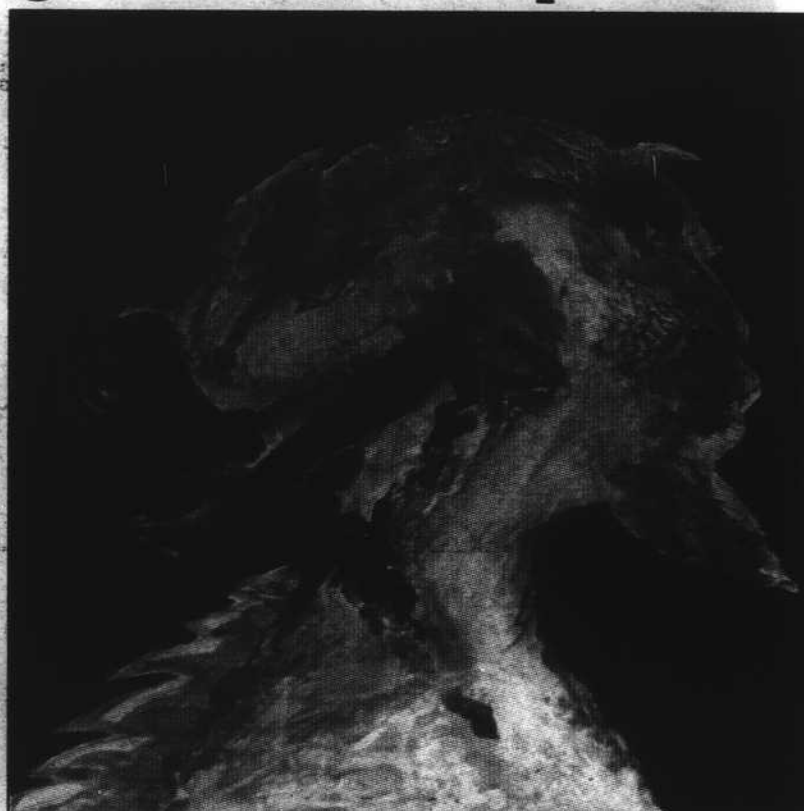


PHOTO COURTESY OF CONNIE LEAVITT

"LIZARD MAN" by Connie Leavitt is one of the paintings in "The Dark Side," her show opening today at Burkholder Project, 719 P St.

in ink blots). Later she goes in with more paint, markers and other tools and accentuates the images she sees.

"When you paint like this, you paint like a child paints," she says. "You paint whatever comes in your head."

Leavitt's show has its opening reception today from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Burkholder Project, 719 P St.

Also opening today at Burkholder in the Main Gallery is "Cleaning House," selected works from "A Furniture Show" by the Nebraska Women's Caucus for Art; a mini-show of recent oil paintings by Wendy Bantam; and in the Skylight Gallery, "Somewhere Beyond Our World," abstracted oil and acrylic landscapes by Lebanese artist Roula G. Ayoub.