

IN APPRECIATION OF LOCAL ART

STORY BY JANE K. HARRIS

Adding color to the hustle and bustle of daily life in Lincoln is a network of artists, galleries and art lovers who alone are just flecks of color, but who together paint a beautiful picture.

Considering the location and population of Lincoln, supporting an art scene is quite an achievement. The city boasts numerous galleries, exhibitions and local artists who continually work together to provide a setting conducive to art creation and appreciation.

George Neubert, director of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, said Lincoln's art scene offered many opportunities for people to experience locally made visual art.

"There's a variety of galleries in which you see a full range of expression and ideas," Neubert said. "For a city our size, we're lucky."

Anne Burkholder, a local artist and owner of the Burkholder Project, 719 P St., agreed with Neubert.

"I think Lincoln is very well blessed with a lot of really good visual artists," Burkholder said. "That's pretty good for a town the size of Lincoln."

Part of the reason for the success of Lincoln's art scene is the cooperation between galleries and artists to promote shows and events, Burkholder said.

Margaret Berry, executive director of the Lincoln Arts Council, said the art scene in Lincoln was very unified in its attempts to promote the arts.

"I think there is a lot of collaboration and cooperation," Berry said. "That's great to see because there's a lot of competition for people's leisure time."

She said there were six galleries in the Haymarket area that coordinated show openings on the first Friday of every month so people could walk through the Haymarket and see a number of new works on display. She said that kind of cooperation was very effective.

Another key ingredient in the Lincoln art scene is the Lincoln Arts Council, which promotes local arts and art organizations among other things.

Berry said the Arts Council acted as a point of contact between the arts and the public.

"We play that centralizing role," Berry said.

While Lincoln artists are currently enjoying a bit of success, Carol Hartman Devall, an artist who works out of Gallery 9, 124 S. Ninth St., said the art scene wasn't always productive, but recently things were getting better.

"I think it's improving," Devall said. "I think it's been a long time coming, but I think we're heading in the right direction."

She said the arts would benefit from more community involvement because the art scene was often overlooked and unappreciated.

"I think it's important, but sometimes it's taken for granted," Devall said. "Sometimes a lot of people don't know it's

there."

She said more people were promoting the arts but, ultimately, it was up to the community to come out and take part in Lincoln's art scene.

"We're working to get more people to notice galleries," Devall said.

As far as artists having places to show their work, she said through galleries and coops, places that rent out space for artists to work, local artists are finding opportunities to create and display their art.

"It appears to me that there are a lot of opportunities," Devall said. "I think you just have to know where they are and go in and talk to people."

Neubert said Lincoln was very conducive to artists who were willing to work hard to have their art shown.

"Most galleries are open to looking at new, young talent," Neubert said.

He said coffee houses and other places were giving artists more outlets to put their creations on display.

Burkholder said display space was readily available if the artist was willing to take it.

"You always have a chance to show if you want," Burkholder said.

She said while it was nearly impossible to make a living selling original art in Lincoln, there were some opportunities for artists to gain regional and national attention.

Neubert said the Sheldon's collections usually promoted local art and in some instances, like the current Carol Haerer exhibition, the artist was from Nebraska but nationally known. He said that was important because it gave aspiring artists confidence to continue creating and promoting their art.

Ultimately, he said, the success of the local art scene was invaluable because the art itself was an important aspect of learning.

"Art plays an important role in society," Neubert said. "I think the experience of art provides a self-learning device because it enables you to encounter new ideas."

He said embracing new ideas was another way to learn about oneself and viewing art was a great way to do that.

"When you look at a painting and respond to that, you're really bringing yourself to that knowledge," Neubert said. "It's fundamental to living, and it can be fun at the same time, which is wonderful."

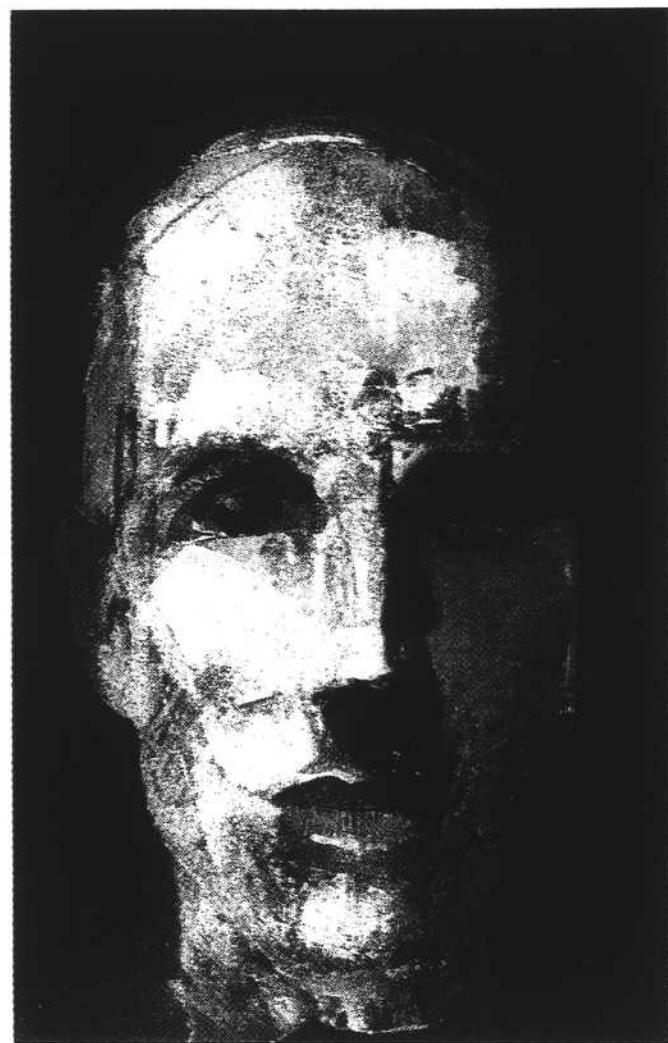


PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYDON GALLERY
THE HAYDON GALLERY, located at 335 N. Eighth St., features the work of several local artists. This month, the gallery is exhibiting recent paintings by Dan Boylan, including "Greek Youth," a 1997 mixed-media work.

PRINTED MATTER

Art fans who want more than a local perspective can turn to a number of magazines for news, reviews, stories and photos concerning the visual arts. Here are some of the more reputable magazines, which are all available to read at the Sheldon.

Flash Art International Magazine: This magazine covers a wide spectrum of visual arts. It features global coverage, news, reviews of exhibitions and feature stories about artists and their works. The magazine has plenty of photos with great color.

Art News: As the name suggests, this magazine covers mostly news events that pertain to the art world. It includes some reviews and feature stories, but is mostly a news-oriented magazine. It's packed with information from front to back.

Art In America: This magazine includes a lot of stories and reviews about new art exhibitions in America. It also features stories about new mediums that are affecting the art world, as well as book reviews.

Sculpture: Eye-catching layouts and dynamic photos are characteristics of this publication. It focuses on sculptures and includes feature stories as well as news angles and contemporary art issues.

Art Forum: Includes lots of information on current exhibitions and show reviews. It also features artist interviews and columns.

American Art Review: This publication is packed with stories and photos that deal with contemporary art as well as American art of the past. It covers many different aspects of American visual arts.

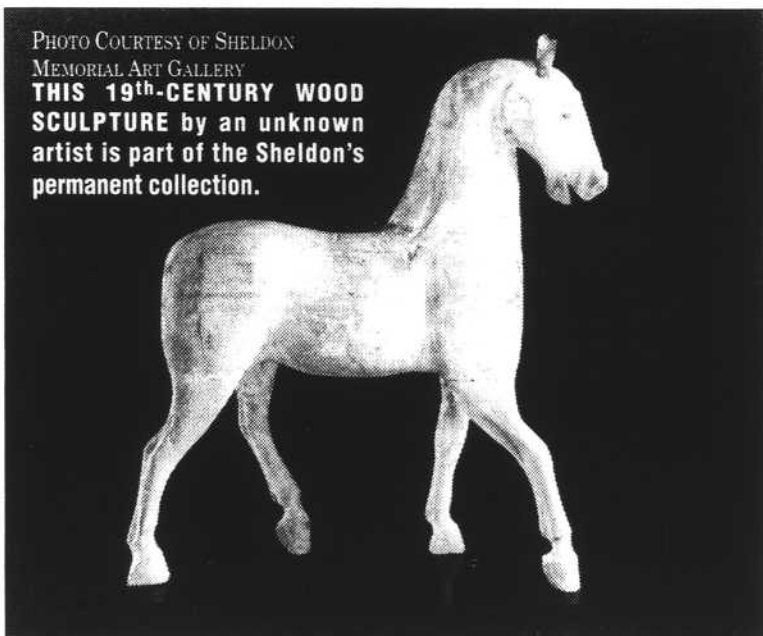


PHOTO COURTESY OF SHELDON MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
THIS 19th-CENTURY WOOD SCULPTURE by an unknown artist is part of the Sheldon's permanent collection.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHELDON MEMORIAL ART GALLERY
EDWARD HOPPER'S "Room in New York" is one of the best-known paintings in the Sheldon's permanent collection. The Sheldon has earned a national reputation for its collection of works by 20th-century American artists.

GALLERIES

Anyone remotely interested in art really can't complain, considering all of the local galleries and other places that are free and open to the public. Here is a listing of some of Lincoln's best art hot spots, and what's currently showing.

Burkholder Project, 719 P St., features works by John Nollendorfs and Kite/Garden Group Shows.

Gallery 9, Mission Arts Building, 124 S. Ninth St., features "Recent Paintings" by Leora Platte through April 26.

Great Plains Art Collection, located in 215 Love Library, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, features "Drawings" by Elizabeth Layton through April 30.

Haydon Gallery, 335 N. 8th St., features paintings by Dan Boylan through April 25.

Metro Underground Gallery, 1316 N St., currently features pieces by artists who work in studios at the gallery.

Noyes Art Gallery and Studios, 119 S. Ninth St., features "Painting and Pins" by Janna Harsch, "Silver Jewelry" by Lonna Keller and works by Keith Lowry, Ray Schultze, Jo Brown and Sheila Downey through April 30.

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden, 12th & R streets, features "The White Paintings" by Carol Haerer.

University Gallery of Art and Art History, 102 Richards Hall, UNL, is featuring MFA exhibitions.

University Place Art Center, 2601 N. 48th St., features "Monoprints" by Cynthia Nartonis and "Glass" by Tom Kreager through April 29.