

## Albers' work teaches through colors

By Josh Nichols

Staff writer

Very few people can develop and create beautiful art.

Even fewer have the ability to teach their skill to others and inspire them to create unique pieces of their own.

This is why Josef Albers, a German artist and instructor, is considered one of the most influential people in 20th-century art.

Twenty prints from Albers' portfolio "Formulation: Articulation" are on display through May 7 in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dan Siedell, curator and interim director of the gallery, said this collection of prints is a retrospective look at Albers' development as an artist.

"It's an attempt to encompass and give shape to his entire career," he said.

"Formulation: Articulation" was put together in 1972, four years before Albers' death in 1976.

The folio was done to demonstrate

Albers' research into line and color.

The exhibit displays numerous prints from his famous "Homage to Square" series that began in the 1950s and continued until his death.

These particular prints show a square that encompasses a square that encompasses another square.

Each has a variety of colors, which serves as the main role of the pieces.

"He's interested in trying to attain the purity of visual art in variations and juxtapositions of color and shape," Siedell said.

The combination and use of color are deceptive in these pieces, which cause different interpretations and ways of viewing each piece.

Albers had a fascination with the idea of interpretation, which is why he continued to experiment with color.

Quotes from his portfolio are posted throughout the exhibition.

One quote about his "Homage to Square" pieces reads, "Seeing several of these paintings next to each other makes it obvious that each painting is an instrument in its own.

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Dan Siedell

curator and interim director of the Sheldon

"This means that they all are of different palettes, and therefore, so to speak, of different climates. Choice of colors used, as well as their order, is aimed at an interaction - influencing and changing each other forth and back."

Before Albers' fascinations with shapes and colors spurred his artistic career, he was an elementary art teacher for 12 years in the early 1900s.

In 1920, he enrolled at the progressive Bauhaus school in Weimar, Germany.

The Bauhaus was a newly formed workshop and place of study focused on merging the separate disciplines of fine and applied arts.

Josef Alber's  
"Formulation:  
Articulation"

WHERE: Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th & R streets  
WHEN: on display through May 7

COST: free

THE SKINNY: Artist's work explores theories of color and formal relations.

who were influential in classroom and studio as well as in his own work," Siedell said. "His influence as a teacher is perhaps greater than his influence as an artist."

Albers did not necessarily teach his students how to develop art, but instead encouraged them to open their minds and develop their own ideas.

"He didn't create clones but instead ascribed goals and allowed his students to achieve these goals," Siedell said. "He encouraged them to develop in their own way."

## Faraway galaxies come alive in show

Howlooseanation will play jazz, show virtual reality and give laser light pointers to audience in "Inspace."

By Jason Hardy

Staff writer

The science fiction TV series "Star Trek" boldly proclaimed space as the final frontier.

The program explored the future and space travel's endless possibilities. It showed American society's wonderment toward the exploration of space and the emerging technologies of mankind.

Despite being decidedly grounded, at least in the physical sense, Howlooseanation, a local avant garde performance group, is preparing to take Lincoln audiences for a similar journey.

"Inspace," an original performance piece written by Paul Pearson, isn't designed as an exploration of the final frontier itself, but rather an interactive romp celebrating pop culture's entertaining reactions to space travel.

"Basically, it's a homage to bad '40s, '50s and '60s sci-fi horror movies," Pearson said. "There's sort of a plot to this thing, but it's not important, and that's the point. Holes in the plot don't matter. I always liked the look of the movies better than the stories."

Loosely speaking, the story is about a futuristic trip into the galaxy, where the audience encounters everything from drag queen robots to the dreaded Vel-Braxx.

"He destroys a planet and kills people, and at the end the audience gets to destroy him with lasers, and parts of him will actually explode on stage," said Mark Baldrige, co-director and a member of Howlooseanation. "It will be a mess."

While campy sci-fi films were known for their simplicity, the technological elements of "Inspace" are far from simplistic. The hour and a half show will incorporate about an hour's worth of original music, with a virtual set projected on screens behind the actors, a levitation act and Lincoln's first and only audience-directed laser light show.

"We're going to pass out laser light pointers to the audience," Baldrige said. Pearson said creating how "Inspace"

Howlooseanation  
"Inspace"

WHERE: 7th Street Loft,  
504 S. Seventh St.

WHEN: March 24 & 25

COST: \$10

THE SKINNY: Multimedia performance takes audience into the next dimension.

looked and operated was about as challenging as it was fun.

"It's just giving us all a real sense of play because we don't have to take it too seriously," he said. "It was an opportunity to build little, itty-bitty sets and videotape them with spaceships on strings, and then seeing our hands in the video, that sort of attracted me to it."

"It's that Ed Wood sort of stuff that always had its own charm. But we really carried it to the nth degree," Pearson said.

With such an elaborately abstract set, Baldrige and Howlooseanation chose to improvise much of the music. The other portion is previously composed songs Baldrige classifies as "jazz noise."

To create this sound, the group incorporates a number of instruments including congas, big bass drums, moogs, theremins and homemade instruments, as well as saxophones and pianos.

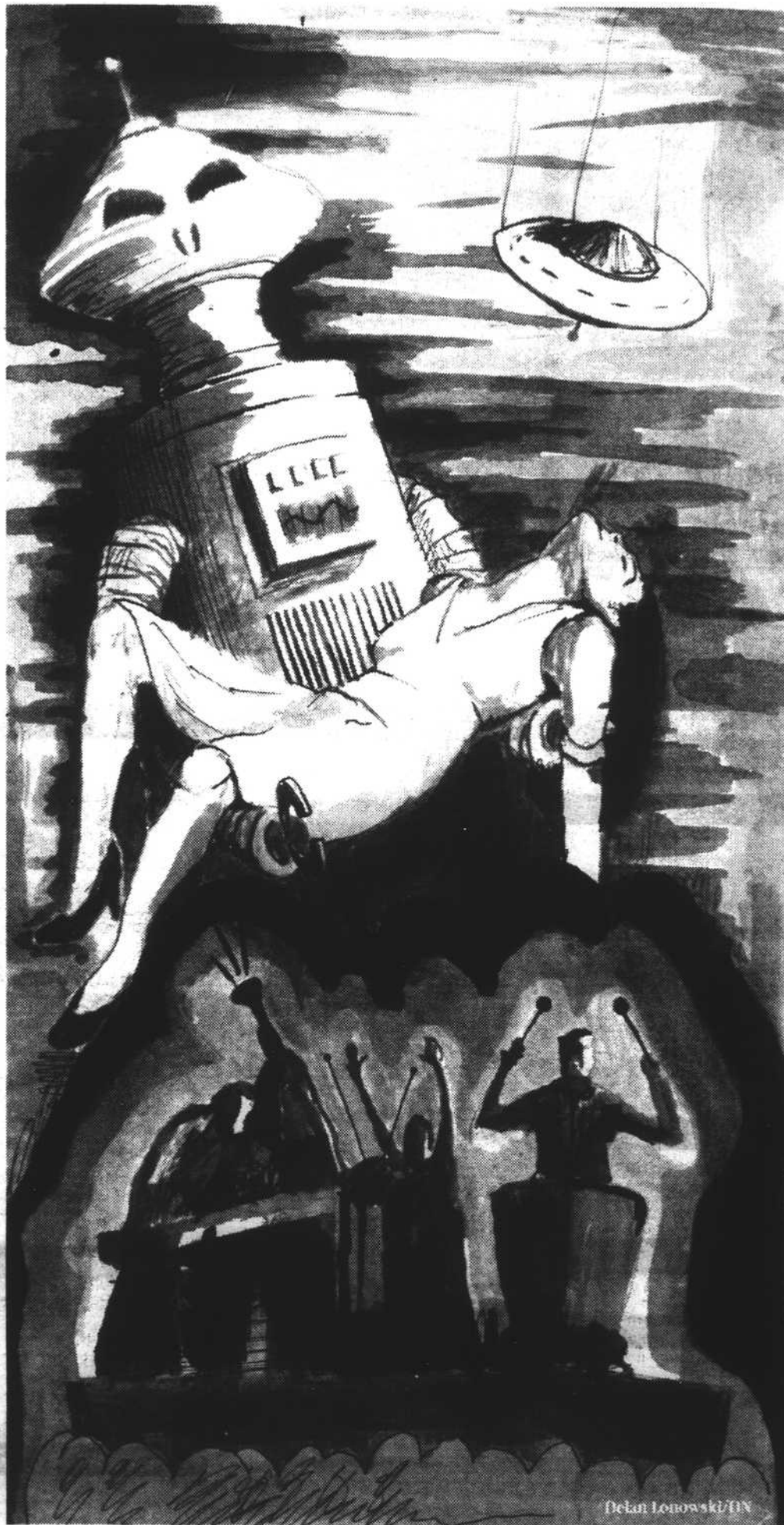
Baldrige said he was confident in Howlooseanation's ability to create an effective body of music despite the pressures of improvised performances.

"We've been together for five years, and we meet once a week for about three hours and tear this stuff out, so we're pretty good at it," he said. "It's a lot about listening to each other, and in many ways, it's like a four-way conversation."

Aside from being an interesting aspect of "Inspace," Baldrige said the improvised portion of the music was essential to the show's energy. All things considered, audiences are in for a treat.

"Sometimes the energy level of our show is hair-raising," he said. "I think people sometimes feel electrified, sometimes by the sheer amount of sound we can produce, but it's not about a wall of noise. We're able to do a lot of subtle things mixed in with a lot of chaos."

"I think audiences will love it. Just the onstage special effects alone will be worth the show."



Delan Jones/DN