



T W I S T E D M E T A L

Sculpture explores artist's ideas about stereotypes, abstraction

By Emily Pyeatt

Staff writer

Club 1427, 1427 O Street, is known for supporting local artists

by giving them a unique atmosphere to display their creations.

Although Club 1427 primarily has featured paintings and photography, tonight the club offers something different.

UNL graduate Jason C. Meyer will display three of his sculptures titled "Speciation" and creations he terms "wax prints" at the club. The different media forms are juxtaposed to present Meyer's interpretations of Western society.

"This is the first time sculpture will be shown in the club," said Jake Balcom, a 1427 Club bartender who is responsible for the artwork show.

The oversized sculptures will be spread down the center of the 1427 Club, commanding much of the club's space, while Meyer's wax prints will adorn the walls.

Meyer's wax prints are thematically

similar and will remain at Club 1427 until April 18. The collection of wax prints titled, "Ghosts of Western Men," is composed of magazine images of cowboys painted and then covered in wax.

"The wax over the images somewhat distorts the painting," Balcom said.

Meyer's wax gives the images a haunting quality, yet the repeated icon of the cowboy truly is intriguing. Meyer said he had a reason for choosing the cowboy as his repeated image.

"It's a loaded image that's culturally romanticized," he said.

The cultural influence upon Meyer's sculptures is less obvious, although the sculptures' size can force viewers to think about the sculptures' meaning immediately. Confrontation seems vital to Meyer's artistic intention.

Meyer's sculptures all are made from intertwined steel wire and are fueled by his interest in science's influence on culture.

"Speciation is a term used in biology and essentially concerns the evolutionary development of a new biological species," Meyer said.

His three works, "Ganglia," "Duster," and "Nova" are similar because their concept is based on biology and organic science, Meyer said.

"The wires resemble nerve, root-like and tree forms, and all are metaphorical for existence and a human experience in a science-based world," he said.

The sculptures' confrontational

style shows Meyer's own emotional intensities.

"They reflect dark silhouettes of something existing and eventually dying that are based on my own personal anxiety about Western culture and science," he said. "They are really dark and creepy pieces that demonstrate an abstract interest."

Meyer has shown some of the pieces separately before.

"Ganglia" was shown in the Rotunda Gallery in the Union, and "Duster" was shown at the first Local Lincoln show. This is "Nova's" first time to be shown.

Club 1427 has proven to be a great opportunity and a great space for artists such as Meyer, Balcom said.

"We don't charge or do advertising but any artist is encouraged to bring work in and show," he said.

Sculptor Jason Meyer works with steel wire and is inspired by science. His show "Speciation" at Club 1427, 1427 O St., opens tonight with a reception at 7:30 p.m.

Documentary shamelessly exposes pro wrestling

■ 'Beyond the Mat' has nice moments but doesn't answer questions it raises.

By Samuel McKewon

Senior editor

Critics have chided the general cheeriness of Barry W. Blaustein's three-year documentary "Beyond The Mat," an unapologetically thumbs-up look at professional wrestling.

Blaustein, a screenwriter whose best credit is probably "The Nutty Professor," makes his love of grappling entertainment quite clear.

The documentary chronicles both the World Wrestling Federation and more decidedly violent underground minor-league associations. The film is a bit shameless, and even though WWF President Vince McMahon disowns the picture, the movie does little more than paint him in his true colors: a buffed-up ver-

sion of Gordon Gekko, so to speak.

The WWF comes across as a collection of nice guys and the minor-league associations as nice guys trying to get into the WWF. Curiously, the movie has a categorical ignorance of World Championship Wrestling, possibly reflecting Blaustein's taste in wrestling leagues.

Still, the documentary has its moments, mostly toward the end of the film, as the director ends his journey across wrestling America.

The cast is large, but three main protagonists emerge: Mankind, a masked psycho in the ring and a family man out of it; Terry Funk, a 50-year-old whose knees handle wrestling better than walking; and Jake "The Snake" Roberts, the WWF star who washed out of wrestling and into small Nebraska towns and a crack addiction.

If anyone comes across as haunting, it's Roberts, who babbles on incoherently at times; he waxes philosophical like a dime-store col-

lege grad at others. His daughter enjoys his company so little she brings friends along as a buffer during visits.

Funk, another WWF stalwart, fared better, with a horse ranch and a name in his hometown as good as gold.

He cannot give up the sport, even though he's had several temporary retirements. Funk's best friend is Mankind (Mick Foley), who's about to realize his sport has a greater impact on his children than he ever thought it did.

Blaustein makes pains to show wrestling is not all show (we knew that) and injuries are involved (we knew that, too). He doesn't illuminate what also seems obvious: If the WWF weren't such a carnival of lights, smoke and overstuffed, fake violence, a lot of those injuries would disappear.

Yet the wrestlers are happy to put themselves through it, and none too few quit the league because of the violence. But not many of them

come off as highly intelligent.

Is Blaustein's point of view a problem? Defenders of "Beyond the Mat" will point to the portrayal of Roberts, a miserable man getting more miserable. But Roberts does that to himself; one gets the feeling Blaustein possibly cut some of the worst stuff out to soften the blows.

Blaustein knows the camera well enough; a shot of Roberts outside a North Platte motel has power, as does a series of cuts of Mankind's children as they watch him in person for the first time. These are moments of tense drama, and they come out of nowhere, out of place in a film that generally wants to celebrate the colorful characters of the wrestling business.

And yet "Beyond The Mat" is intriguing, if only for those fine moments described above that Blaustein caught on film by accident.

An early scene reveals McMahon's true stripes as he eggs a prospective WWF wrestler to throw

REVIEW Beyond the Mat

STARRING: Various wrestlers
DIRECTOR: Barry Blaustein
RATING: R
GRADE: C+
FIVE WORDS: "Mat" flawed but interesting enough

up on command. Is anything more made of this scene? Not at all. So does Blaustein think the material speaks for itself?

I'd guess not. Blaustein is like a faulty parent: He catches his children in a bad act, but he doesn't much care why or, for that matter, whether they choose to change.

One wrestler freely admits his past includes numerous gang murders. He then becomes a friend of Blaustein's, even asking the screenwriter to drop his name in Hollywood.

Blaustein happily obliges. At times, he seems not like a filmmaker, but an enabler.