

Art Commentary

Sheldon art show lacks firm context

BY SARAH BAKER

It's nearly impossible to chronicle the progression of art since the 1960s.

For any museum to attempt it is laudable, but then again it depends on what works the show includes and what works the museum holds in its coffers.

The Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery's "Contemporary Prints and Photography" provides a small but healthy look at what art has offered during the past 40 years.

But what the show, which runs through April 29, doesn't offer is a context within which to pull out any meaning.

The show opens with early icons of the present era: Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol.

These works, though, aren't there to be enjoyed for their artistic merit; rather, they are there to provide the idea of the past. They are the history that this show builds upon.

The historical sampling is incredibly small, only consisting of four works, and is bordered on both sides by works completed roughly 35 years later.

When the past and the present hang so close within the same gallery, connections become difficult to foster and meaning nearly impossible to attain.

The show continues with a boom of 1980s, David Salle and Julian Schnabel (the director of current Ross film "Before Night Falls"). From there, it makes an abstract attempt to capture the diverse nature of art in the 1990s through mediums such as photography and forms such as the human body.

None of the artists in this section would be recognizable to the public by name alone.

The final thrust of the show consists of a work by Robert Gober, one of the most difficult and challenging artists of the present. It seems to be there only to throw in one more bit of confusion for the viewer to chew on during the walk out the door.

Granted, this show, co-curated by the Sheldon's Curator Dan Siedell and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Art History Professor Christina Mamiya has one goal: to supplement Mamiya's spring 2001 contemporary art history class.

The show, to be sure, probably does a fine job of supplementing art history coursework and is probably more than adequate for the students in the class.

But anyone else who happens to stroll through the gallery without the requisite art historical studies under his or her belt isn't likely to leave with anything other than frustration.

That's what a show like this one, unfortunately, fosters. The 25 works in the softly-lit space should enlighten, but instead they only disappoint.

It becomes too much of a challenge to figure out the connections, which are certainly of an abstract nature to begin with, when there isn't a professor on hand for curation consultation.

The Sheldon certainly has a body of works to provide the student and normal visitor alike with a fleshier view of art since the 60s.

But in this case a group of strong artists are left to flounder without firm context.

Those who don't speak art should still give this show a look, but they would be well-advised to bring a companion who does talk the talk to fill in the blanks.

Students like Hanks, 'Tiger'

Most agree that Julia Roberts is shoo-in for Best Actress award

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

Movie lovers will get their own dose of March madness come Sunday when the Oscars are handed out.

And like the NCAA tournament, passions run from obsession (dress-up Oscar parties) to indifference for students and faculty members.

For many, what should get Best Picture and what will win are two separate things.

Hong Jiang, an associate professor in the department of computer science and engineering, said "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" was the best film of the year.

However, he said he thought that "Gladiator" came in a close second.

"When I stepped out of the theater, I thought (Gladiator) would at least be nominated," Jiang said. "I have a good sense about that."

Brad Buffum, production manager for University Nebraska-Lincoln's Theatre Arts program, said he thought "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," would win, although he wasn't particularly impressed with the film.

As far as acting awards, Buffum said Geoffrey Rush was great in "Quills." He also liked Frances McDormand's performance in "Almost Famous."

Rush is nominated for Best Actor and McDormand is nominated for Best Supporting Actress.

He said he thought Ellen Burstyn should get the Best Actress award for "Requiem for a Dream."

"Ellen Burstyn was incredible," he said.

Buffum has hosted Oscar parties since he was in college. However, he had to cancel his party this year to do work on a play in Poland, he said.

Matt Curtis, a junior elementary education major, said Tom Hanks deserved the Best Actor nomination for "Cast Away" because he was the only actor in the movie for almost an hour.

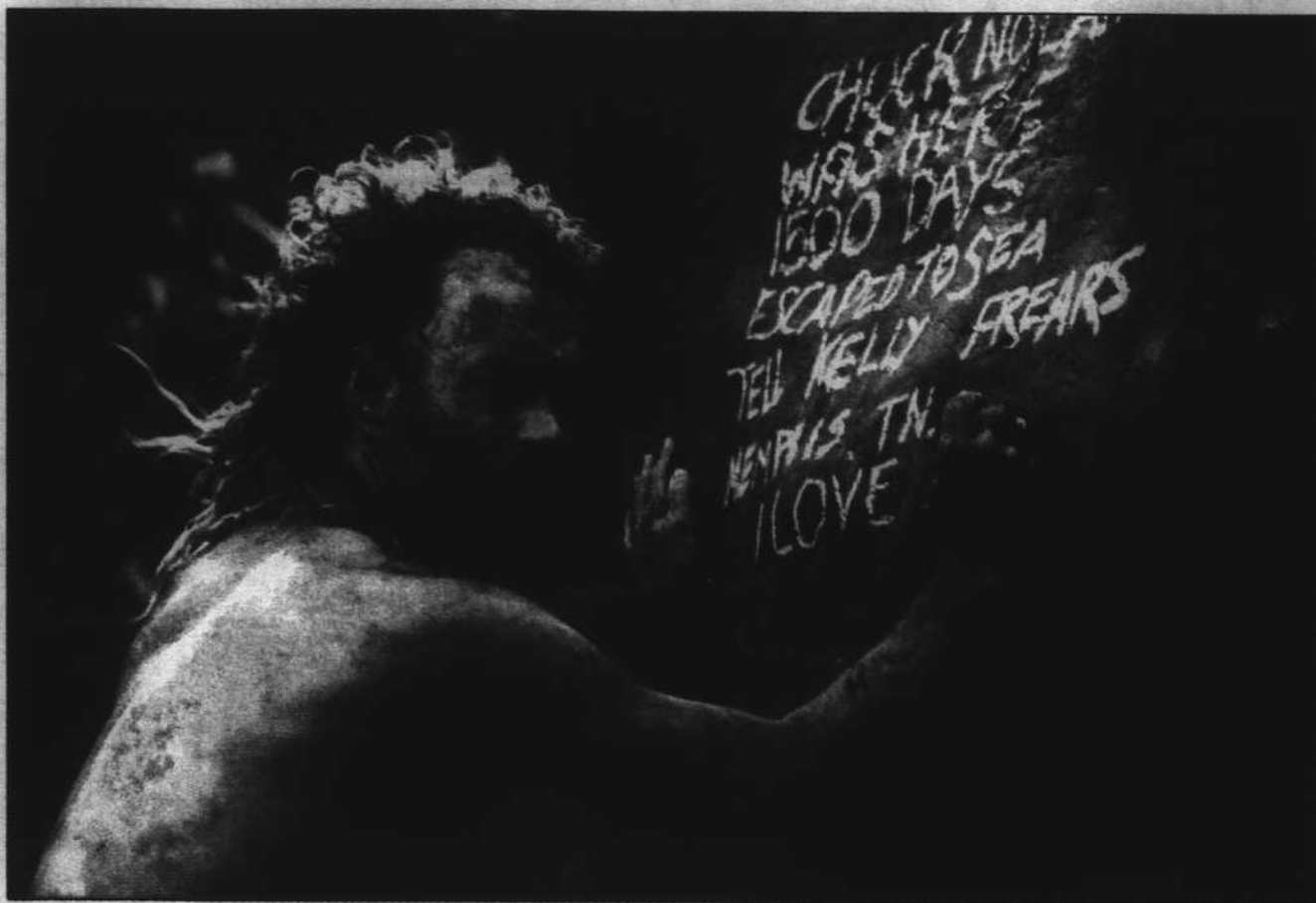
"Hanks did an awesome job," Curtis said. "I don't think anyone else could have pulled it off."

If there are any sure bets for the Oscars, it is likely to be Julia Roberts winning the Best Actress award.

Darcy Neely, a junior elementary education major, said she thought "Erin Brockovich" would win for Best Picture and Julia Roberts would win the award for Best Actress.

"I like Julia Roberts," Neely said. "She's a good actress and she played the role really well."

Claire Covert, a senior English and film studies



"Julia Roberts has got enough awards. Julia Roberts has tight skirts and tits that go up to her neck."

Claire Covert
UNL student

major, disagreed, although she thought Roberts would win the award.

"Julia Roberts has got enough awards," Covert said. "Julia Roberts has tight skirts and tits that go up to her neck."

Covert said she thought Ellen Burstyn was a more deserving candidate for the award.

She said she planned on watching the ceremonies to

see the new Britney Spears commercial and to critique what everyone is wearing.

"I'm a total Joan Rivers slut," Covert laughed.

Barring a rolling blackout that cancels the ceremony, Covert said she thought "Gladiator" would win Best Picture. However, she said she was not impressed with the movie.

"Everyone loved it, and I hated it," Covert said.



Tom Hanks (top, shown in "Cast Away"), Russell Crowe (left, in "Gladiator") and Benicio Del Toro (above, in "Traffic") all have strong chances to win Oscars on Sunday night at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

No slump: Eve's new CD stings

BY ANDREW SHAW

Eve's sophomore album, "Scorpion," has a sting as powerful as its namesake arachnid, and the flow will run through your veins like pure venom.

After years of running the musical gamut in Philadelphia, performing with a five-female singing group, rapping at talent shows and opening for rap acts at local venues, Eve's big break came with an impromptu audition with Dr. Dre, the godfather for a handful of modern rappers.

Eve, then known as Eve of Destruction, moved to Los Angeles and recorded three tunes with Dr. Dre, releasing one on the "Bulworth" soundtrack. But when her year-long contract ran out without releasing a full-length album, she hooked up with DMX of Ruff Ryders fame. Moving back to the East Coast, Eve battled with Ruff Ryders' Drag-On and Infa Red to earn their respect and the sole female seat of the collaborative.

From listening to "Scorpion," there's no doubt that Eve could rhyme down a member of the Ruff Ryders any day. Her abrasive approach to the form comes through loud and clear on all tracks, although the album is more diverse than most rap



albums and by far the best thing a female rapper has offered in years.

Other female hip-hopsters who may think they are in the same category as Eve include Foxy Brown, Lil' Kim and Da Brat, but these artists are more known for their abominable fashion sense than their skill with the mic.

It's obvious that Eve knows that she's got talent; most of the lyrics on "Scorpion" center on how well she does her job. But the musical prowess with which she delivers and the expertise which her producers exhibit, building, texturing and mixing down each track to perfection, covers up any area where the lyrics fall short.

After debuting March 24, Eve sits atop the Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Chart (and fourth in the Billboard Top 200). Yet



"Scorpion's" first single, "Who's that Girl?," the poppiest and quite possibly lamest track on the album, barely rounds out the top 20 in hip-hop air play behind a score of men and female pop sensations.

What do all these statistics boil down to? Eve's not getting the props she deserves. Regardless of the amount of talent that the pint-sized pissed-off princess possesses, she can't overcome the popular power of pop phenomenon Destiny's Child, frat-rock superstars Dave Matthews Band or the burnt-out and talent-drained Aerosmith.

When Lauryn Hill's "Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" came out in 1998, she took home five Grammy Awards, the most any female artist has acquired from one album and opened the door for young female rappers. Eve is the first woman to step through, and although it's nearly impossible to challenge the perfection found on "Miseducation," "Scorpion" is the exhibition of this young rapper's personal skills, ambition and promise.

Eve "Scorpion" Ruff Ryders/Interscope Records 2001

Garageland holds jams back

The New Zealand band plays off plenty of old indie classics and sounds better on a car ride than at a party gig.

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

It is not until the second to the last song on Garageland's sophomore album, "Do What You Want," where the band opens itself up to a gorgeous jam session. Until that point, the band remains dedicated to traditional power-pop structure.



The New Zealand band gained acclaim with 1997's "Last Exit to Garageland." Although "Do What You Want" was in the making for three years, the rhythm section is so tight, it sounds like it could have been recorded in two weeks. Jeremy Eade's guitar work sways from soaring solos to subtle pop structures. Think late-era Pixies with a heavy dose of lyrical irony a la Pavement, and you've got a good indication of what Garageland sounds like.

Most of "Do What You Want" is a document about the band touring. From the percussion of Andrew Gladstone and the tight bass work of Mark Silvey, you can almost see the yellow dashes disappear under your car. This is definitely an album best appreciated in your car.

The best songs on this album, "Kiss it All Goodbye," "Middle of the Evening" and "Love Song," do a great job of straddling between indie experimentation and pop craft. However, Garageland, at times, sounds so much like its



influences that it's hard to distinguish it from other power-pop artists.

It would be easy to pigeonhole Garageland as a 1990s alternative band. However, tracks like "What You Gonna Do?" show the extent of the band's capabilities. Sections of the song could have come straight from late 1960s groups like the Allman Brothers but still sound right at home on college radio.

Given time, "Do What You Want" grows on you. But it will take a couple of listens for the songs to fully reveal themselves to the listener. The band is already tight. If they can open themselves up and allow each player to experiment with their sound more, they could be one of the better exports from Down Under.