

Iowa Arts Council,  
Capitol Complex,  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
515/281-4451

Vol. 1 Number 3  
(1988)

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This is the second edition of  
**ARTalk for Creative  
Artists/Visual Arts Programs,**  
Bruce Williams, Editor.

**CRITICISMS BY N.Y. ART  
JUDGE BRUSH SOME THE  
WRONG WAY**

If Holly Solomon could have, she said, she would not have chosen any of the 1,098 entries for the 20th Joslyn Biennial that opened Saturday at Joslyn Art Museum.

"What I saw is a lot of talent and what I call hotel art," said Ms. Solomon, owner of an art gallery in New York and the show's juror. "There's good talent there, but that's not making world leadership art, let's not fool ourselves."

Ms. Solomon discussed the 73 works she chose for the show, during an interview Saturday. She also joined a panel of four other art experts during a symposium at Joslyn to discuss the role of Great Plains art in the national and international art world.

Ms. Solomon argued that the 388 artists from 12 Midwestern states who submitted works had not developed unique vocabularies that respond to current trends in contemporary art or advance it.

"I wanted to see things that somehow I had never seen before," she said. "I've seen a lot. And some kind of activity that would be original to this community or a new inspiration. What is the voice of the Middle West?"

While agreeing generally with Ms. Solomon, Walter Hopps, director of the Menil Collection in Houston, said, "In my case, it's not always novelty that I look for and enjoy." He said he enjoyed juried shows because they contain pieces of "great, innocent interest" without necessarily being inventive.

He also said he liked the plurality of styles in the biennial,

**WRITERS WANTED**

Beginning in the next issue of ARTalk, I will feature articles of art criticism and art commentary written by Iowa writers. It's my hope that these articles will be thought-provoking and serve to stimulate discourse between artists and the arts community.

Contributors will be paid for short reviews and articles of criticism and commentary that are 500-600 words in length; and 1,500-2,000 words for major articles of art criticism and commentary. Articles not to submit would be those written by the organizer, sponsor, artist, or agent of the featured exhibition, performance, publication, or event.

Writers interested in contributing articles for the next four issues are to send me the following: 1) samples of published art criticism and commentary; 2) proposed exhibits, performances, etc. to review, or other topics or ideas for ARTalk; 3) resume. Selected writers will be contacted, advised of fees, and invited to submit articles.

No materials will be returned to contributors. Letters to the Editor will always be accepted.

**FEATURE ARTICLE**

For this issue, I am featuring an article by Kyle MacMillan, that was published in the April 3, 1988 edition of the *Sunday World-Herald*. I would welcome any comments from artists regarding issues discussed in the article. *Reprinted with permission from Sunday World Herald:*

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DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

remembering a show he had juried, titled "36 Hours," where any piece that could fit through the door was accepted. Ellen Simak, Joslyn's curator of American art, disagreed with Ms. Solomon, saying that the biennial did show that Midlands artists were active in national and world art movements.

She showed slides of leading practitioners in several current art movements and slides of works in the show that fit into those movements - abstract expressionism, neo-expressionism and the Chicago school.

Peter Hill, professor of art at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, also showed how several of the works fit into several broader trends - use of nontraditional materials, the comic imagery of the Chicago school and the importance of crafts.

During the emotional question-and-answer period after the panelists' initial presentations, a number of questioners seemed to resent Ms. Solomon's judgements. Several questioners said they detected an underlying philosophy that if the art wasn't from New York, it wasn't valid.

Ms. Solomon fought back.

People here have to know that that's sour grapes. It's not true. We dealers in New York are really not against anybody when they do work that we recognize as being compelling."

She pointed out that few New York artists are native New Yorkers. She also said that she represents an artist who works in Normal, Ill., and one from Austin, Texas.

Steve Mannheimer, visual arts writer for the Indianapolis Star, said 99 percent of art is made

for people who live within 100 miles of the artist.

"What works in New York doesn't have anything to do with what works in Omaha," he said.

Another questioner said that Ms. Solomon's criticisms of Great Plains art hurt art in the Midlands rather than help it grow. Her statements validate what he sees as the mistaken belief by Midlands collectors that they have to go to New York to buy good art, he said.

He said that high quality, valid art is being created in the Midlands.

"If they feel that way, then show me," Ms. Solomon said. "It's not enough to just sit there and say nobody from New York, nobody from Europe understands or likes what I'm doing. What does that mean?" Mannheimer decried the whole idea of a juried art show, calling it "meaningless." He said several "myths" surround such a show, including the "Cinderella myth" that an artist is going to be discovered and the myth that a museum somehow "validates" an artist's work.

He said a museum's curators should visit artists' studios and put together shows that allow more works of each artist to be seen. He also suggested that it might make more sense to build a show around a theme, such as abstract expressionism or fine art crafts.

Ms. Solomon said that an essential ingredient in a healthy environment for artists is the availability of good art-both old and new-for artists to relate to and confront.

Artist James Rosenquist came from Minnesota, she said, attributing much of his success to such Minnesota art museums

as the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

Ms. Solomon criticized the Joslyn Art Museum for not more fervently pursuing the display of contemporary American art.

A Joslyn spokesman said about 250 people attended the symposium...

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

The news from the legislative front is both good and bad. The good news is that the Iowa Legislature supported several funding requests initiated by the arts council. The Iowa Artists' Endowment Program received \$70,000 and Iowa Town Squares received \$70,000. The bad news is that we had originally requested \$450,000 for both programs. The Governor recommended \$250,000 and we received \$140,000.

Funding of the endowment program by the Legislature is a major milestone in state support for artists in Iowa. We still need an additional \$430,000 from the state to realize our goal of creating a \$1 million dollar artist endowment before we can begin awarding fellowships so keep talking with legislators.

## ENDOWMENT PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was held on March 22 to obtain testimony on the proposed endowment program. A total of 33 artists made written and oral testimony, with six attending the hearing to make oral comments. By far, the 25 artists from Fairfield represented the largest group of artists voicing support for the endowment program. Each of the following communities had one artist comment on the endowment: Des Moines, Iowa City, Dubuque, Middle Amana, Mount Vernon, Davenport, and Ogden.

One artist did not identify their town.

Some of the comments made in written and oral testimony included:

- *increase the amount of each fellowship to a minimum of \$10,000;*
- *allow all discipline categories to apply each year;*
- *increase the endowment from \$1 million to \$2 million so \$100,000 can be awarded each year;*
- *teachers at public schools and colleges and universities be ineligible for fellowships;*
- *allow performing artists who interpret works to be eligible for fellowships;*
- *Iowa artists raise \$50,000 for the endowment principal;*
- *artists eligible for sabbaticals and other funds through faculty grants be ineligible for fellowships;*
- *appoint artists to the planning committee and endowment trustees.*

The council and staff will meet this Summer and Fall to review testimony prior to finalizing endowment plans.

## CAPP UPDATE

The *Creative Artists Planning Project* taskforce (CAPP) met April 22 for the second and final time to continue working on ways the IAC can encourage, assist and support artists in Iowa. Natalie Hala appointed Sara Grant Hutchison and Greg Neuman to represent the taskforce and to prepare a written report for the council. The complete report will be featured in the next issue of ARTalk.

## AISB NEWS

Several Art-in-State-Building (AiSB) committees at Iowa State University have approved designs for the following artists': John Beckelman (Cedar

Rapids) is creating a ceramic mural for Friley Hall; Chuck Evans (Ames) is creating a metal wall relief for The Hub; and Keith Achepohl's design for a 6' x 18' painting mural for the Black Engineering Building. All committees used the IAC's Artist/Slide Registry as one way to identify artists for the projects.

The AiSB Committee for Natural Resources is presently reviewing the Registry to select artists to interview for a \$9,000 project at Pleasant Creek State Park near Cedar Rapids. Committee members include Lea Rosson Delong-Drake University, M. Jessica Rowe-Des Moines Art Center, Angela Corrio and Mike Carrier-Natural Resources, and myself.

A number of new AiSB projects are being planned at all three universities and should be announced later this year. The arts council will continue to encourage AiSB committees to use the Registry and the Slide Bank, which will replace the Registry this Winter.

## SLIDE BANK UPDATE

No comments were received regarding our plans to revise the Artist/Slide Registry into the Slide Bank. We are, however, making some changes. There will be one deadline instead of two; materials submitted to the juried categories will be returned only if a self addressed and stamped return envelope, large enough for the material, is enclosed with the application. The Slide Bank brochure and application form will be mailed this Fall to those in the Registry and to those who have indicated an interest on our mailing list questionnaire.

David Dunlap (Kalona) and Jane Gilmore (Cedar Rapids), artists;

## ARTISTS' NEWS & INFORMATION

Daniel Stetson, director of the Davenport Museum of Art; and Julia Brown Turrell, director of the Des Moines Art Center - represented Iowa's visual arts community at a Arts Midwest's Regional Focus Group Retreat. The retreats are designed to discuss current issues of mutual concern to visual artists and art presenters and were held in Chicago, Cleveland and Des Moines.

Pianist and Iowa native Bruce Brubaker made his critically-acclaimed New York debut at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center on eleven days notice. Brubaker was asked to step in at the last moment when another artist cancelled. Distinguished critic Andrew Porter wrote about the concert in *The New Yorker*, "A splendid performance..."

Jean Sampel opened a studio/gallery at 3111 Ingersoll in Des Moines which features the work of selected designers and jewelers and metalsmiths from around the U.S. and Europe, as well as her own work and that of associates Sheena Thomas and Martha Jones. Their phone number is 515-255-0981.

Rhonda Taggart, assistant professor of art at Drake University received a \$1,000 Faculty Achievement Award sponsored by the Burlington Northern Foundation.

Bertrand Adams, Lee Allen, John Bloom and Williams Bunn, four Iowa artists who worked under the New Deal art programs with Grant Wood, discussed their experiences at "A Conversation With Iowa's Depression Era Artists", on June 12th at the ISU Library. The project was sponsored by Drake University and supported by a grant from the Iowa Humanities Board. The conversation will be videotaped

and stored at the ISU archives and the state Historical Library.

Bob Mould, Rush City, IA musician and sonic artist served on a panel of three artists to select artists for the Intermedia Arts 1988 Jerome Media Arts Installations Commission awards.

Thomas P. Johnson, producing director for the Old Creamery Theatre Company was appointed to the National Endowment for the Arts Expansion Arts/Theatre Panel.

Margaret Carney Xie is the new director of the Blanden Memorial Art Museum, Fort Dodge; Mary Kujawski is the new director of the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City; Julie D. Nelson is the acting director of the Sioux City Art Center.

A one-artist exhibition of sculptures by Brenda Brown (Fairfield), at the Henri Gallery in Washington, DC ; Nancy Purington (Iowa City) exhibited a series of pastel drawings in an exhibition titled New American

Art, held at the Mall Galleries, London, in April.

Artists are encouraged to contact the *United Arts, Resources and Counseling*, 416 Landmark Center, 75 West 5th Street, St. Paul Minnesota, MN 55102, 612-292-3222 for their current workshop schedule for artists and non-profit organizations.

Locally, artists should contact the Better Business Bureau for a list of workshops they conduct.

### TAX UPDATE

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies updated us on the Tax Reform Act of 1986 in a memorandum dated May 31 that "Soon after legislation was introduced in Congress to provide relief for artists from the uniform capitalization rules enacted in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the IRS announced a compromise offering artists a 3-year write-off for expenses.

The IRS said that creative artists were granted the special treatment because the 1986 tax provisions were unduly complex. The change would allow artists to deduct expenses

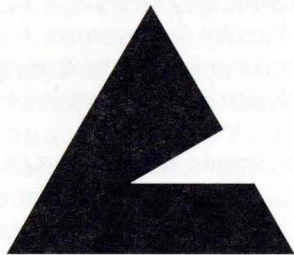
without complying with the complicated paperwork required under the capitalization rules to document and attribute all expenses to the creation of a specific project.

Under the changed rule, artists can deduct 50% of all expenses in the first year, 25% in the second year and the remainder in the third year.

Despite the concession, Rep. Tom Downey (D-NY), who introduced H.R. 4473, the artists' tax relief bill, is continuing to press the legislation on Capitol Hill because the IRS revision does not go far enough as ordinary business deductions taken in the year incurred regardless of whether income was realized from a particular project.

The House Ways and Means Committee is looking toward a mid-June meeting to draft a tax code technical corrections bill to which Downey will offer his measure as an amendment."

Next ARTalk deadline:  
**September 26, 1988.**



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