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Exhibit focuses on Texas artists

By Chuck Lovejoy

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

Changes are occurring in the artistic world of Texas, a fact that is the basis for "The First Texas Triennial," an exhibit of contemporary art on display in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

Compiled by the Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston, the "Triennial" is a fascinating look into the works of art being produced by new or unknown Texas artists.

Hermona Dayag, director of Texas A&M University Art Exhibits, which is sponsoring the show, said the exhibit shows a great diversity of style.

"It's a stimulating show," Dayag said. "Its variety of expression makes people think. The show contains everything from political and social commentaries to humorous pieces."

"The First Texas Triennial" is the brainchild of Marilyn Zeitlin, curator of the Contemporary Arts Museum. The show opened in Houston to rave reviews in the fall of 1988. After the Houston showing, the exhibit was taken on the road to travel around the state for three years, hence the name "triennial." A&M is the exhibit's first stop.

The compilation of the show was the responsibility of three nationally known art experts: David Ross, director of Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art; Marge Goldwater, curator at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; and Zeitlin.

Artists from across the state sent in photographs of their work, which the judges used to select the artists for inclusion in the exhibit.

The artists had to meet one requirement, however: they could not be established artists. Dayag explains this rule as meaning that the artists could not have had a solo exhibition in a gallery.

She said choosing unknown or little-known artists was the judges' goal.

"They didn't allow established artists into the show," Dayag explained. "They wanted to focus on new and up-and-coming artists."

The opening of the exhibit at A&M was accompanied by a lecture by Marise McDermott of the *San Antonio Light*.

In her talk, McDermott gave a brief history of the evolution of Texas art, saying it has changed from a "regionalistic" style, one which depicted Texan themes and symbols, to a contemporary and more world-conscious style.

According to Dayag, the exhibit reflects that view.

"The show's theme is to explore contemporary Texas visual artists — not Texas themes, but Texans," she said.

If anything, the show is, in Dayag's words, a stimulating look into the kinds of art being produced by new Texas artists.

Evidence of the retreat from the regionalistic is evident in several pieces of art, all of which are interesting to view as well.

Perhaps most visible is the work of Paul Kittelson, whose five monstrous black statues stand guard over Rud-

der Fountain. Titled "Mindless Competition," the figures depict headless bodybuilders posing as though in competition, a possible statement concerning the worth of such pageants and possibly even hinting at human vanity.

Other pieces hint at more pressing matters.

Rick Lowe's untitled work depicts a Ku Klux Klan movement in a southern town. The dark piece is composed of two panels, one featuring a portrait of a Klan member standing in front of a burning cross, the other containing a large cross made of real wood in which a section is missing.

"Break in the O. Layer" by Bill Komodore depicts another important issue. Swirls of thick mudlike paint surround a cheerfully colored still life of flowers, perhaps foreshadowing the possible results of the earth's diminishing ozone layer.

Of course, the only person who knows what any work of art, visual, written or otherwise, actually represents is the artist himself, a fact which is part of the appeal of the "Triennial." Trying to determine what the artist is trying to say is an engaging task.

Difficult as this may be, several artists in the show make this deciphering fun through their use of unconventional and even bizarre materials, which seemingly has become another trend in contemporary Texas art.

Take for example Jean Goehring's "In Dreams," which is made from a stained, tattered piece of mattress covering on which the words "in dreams" are faintly written in pink acrylic paint. There is Jesse Lott's untitled statue formed from common objects such as earrings, brooches and scraps of wire and metal. Stuffed with colored pieces of glass, the figure holds a large shiny bullet in one outstretched hand.

Other unconventional pieces include Bill Lundberg's ninth untitled work, in which a color photograph resembling a scrambled TV signal that has been colorized is inset in a beautiful rectangle of wood.

Tracy Harris painted on an eight-foot-square of masonite, a wood compound commonly used for paneling, to create "The Distance Between Skin and Scar."

Two bizarre pieces seem to have animal themes. George Ely's "Omnicide" is composed of oil, enamel paint and tar applied to a wire screen shaped to resemble a stretched animal pelt. "Yauti in Heaven" by Regina Vater is a mixed media piece consisting of three color photos from outer space and two real animal pelts half in and half out of wooden frames. Into the photos has been added a figure, presumably "Yauti," which looks like a trilobite, an extinct marine arthropod.

Perhaps the most unconventional work of all is Celia Alvarez Munoz's "Ella El." The work is a two-doored wooden cabinet telling the tale of two mismatched lovers, "Ella" and "El." The doors open to reveal the couple's belongings attached to



Photo Courtesy of Contemporary Arts Museum

"Channel," by Mark Perlman is one of more than 25 paintings by contemporary Texas artists on display at Texas A&M.

the inside of the doors, belongings which reflect the personalities of the lovers as described by cards inside the cabinet. "Ella" is described in the cards as a sweet girl "in love with life," and "El" as a bad boy "with a respect for death."

Present throughout the Triennial are works containing intense color. Jack Hanley's "Death of Absalom," depicting the Biblical death of the son of David, is striped with large green and yellow bands.

Deborah Maverick Kelley's "Tea" is a colorful look at two friends preparing to drink tea. This painting also contains interesting perspective; it gives the viewer the sense that he or she is hovering in the corner of the room looking down on the scene.

One piece is notable not for its color, but rather for its absence of it. Randy Twaddle's "Less Bridge, More Traffic" is stark black and white, showing in three panels a

bridge, a telephone pole with transformer and a television antenna.

The most emotional work in the exhibit is Wendy Watriss' "Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington D.C.," a series of black and white photographs of the landmark. Watriss shows scenes of sadness, such as a fatigued-clad man kneeling in tears against the wall, as well as happier ones, such as scenes of reunions at the wall of men who fought the war.

According to Dayag, these photos are among the most popular works in the exhibit.

"These photos seem to touch all Americans, possibly because the war is still so close in our memories," she said. "I think they will have an immediate impact, by their beauty as well as their actual meaning."

There are still plenty of works of art not described here on display in the Triennial. The collection will be on display through Feb. 18.

Organizing time, studying notes key to successful test-taking

By T. Kelley Boylan

ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

Do tests make you nervous? Are Ban Roll-On ads outright lies during finals week? Are you unable to raise your hand because you *don't* feel sure? These are the symptoms of a test-anxious student, a much-studied and all-too-common phenomenon in the university setting.

Practically everyone, if not everyone, has walked in to take a test feeling nervous and tense, worried about doing well. Occasionally, the test-taker may be so nervous that the test is a flop no matter how much he or she prepared for it.

The simple fear of tests, whether or not they're difficult, whether or not the taker has prepared for them, is common.

Perhaps more common, however, is anxiety caused by ill-preparedness or, more specifically, inefficient time management. There simply didn't seem to be time to prepare, to absorb the information, and the inevitable lament is, "If only I had more time!" But there are ways to study more efficiently, to have more time.

The Texas A&M Student Counseling Center provides a study skills workshop once a week covering time management, motivation, text reading and test taking. The workshop falls on a different day each week — Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday — to accommodate almost anyone's schedule.

For help in a specific area, counselors will arrange a special class, if four or more students make the

same request. To request a special class, go to the Student Counseling office on the third floor of the YMCA Building. To sign up for one of the regular workshops, students can leave their names and phone numbers at the office.

Most students don't consider studying very convenient because it takes up what would otherwise be free time; the biggest obstacle to study time is undoubtedly social time. E. Glenn Griffis, professor emeritus at Purdue University says in a U.S. News and World Report article on "Advice that Can Help You Succeed on Campus,": "Man is first a social animal, then a rational one."

Peer pressure can destroy academic excellence, but it doesn't have to, and A&M's Counseling Services promises not to take away all of a student's free time. Dr. Maggie Olona, counselor at the Student Counseling Services, said that by scheduling study, work and social times into blocks and allocating each activity a specific amount of time, many students have been surprised to find that they have more free time than before. For students who work and go to school, those extra hours may be essential.

According to the U.S. News & World Report article, college courses require more study time because they involve more reading and thinking and less memorization than high school classes. It's a different situation, so even if you made good grades in high school, you may need to study differently now. When you study, don't do anything else, and be organized about it.

For example, if you study in the library, don't do it in the section where your major's books are held, Philadelphia education consultant Richard Gallagher suggests in an article in the Phi Kappa Phi Journal. Math majors should go to the literature section. Chemistry majors, find a seat in education and engineering majors, try liberal arts areas. That way you won't be interrupted by people you know. Studying means concentrating.

Another tip is to use notebooks that come apart, like looseleaf binders, Olona said. Take your notes and spread them out on a table or on the floor so that you can see the last two or three weeks' work at once. The material will be much less confusing, and you'll know just how much ground you have to cover, she said.

There are hundreds of tips on how to get more out of study time. Olona suggests the following ways to study more efficiently (all of which are covered in detail in the weekly workshop):

•**Set priorities.** Decide what is and what is not important before starting the semester. Some classes, events and jobs take more time and effort than others.

•**Use a calendar.** Put all your assignments on a monthly calendar so you can see what's coming up and when.

•**Set study times and places.** Once you decide on a time and place to study each day or week, stick to it. The object is to train your mind to fall into study mode on demand, on time.

•**Keep up on assignments.** It sounds obvious, but it may be the single most violated rule of academia.

•**Review your notes.** Don't wait any longer than necessary to go over your notes each day, certainly no more than 24 hours.

•**Turn waiting time into study time.** While you wait for your teacher to get to class, skim the previous day's notes again. Your mind will be ready for new material, and if you have a question, you'll be prepared to ask.

To add to Olona's list, following are some hints from Gallagher, who presented the following ideas in an article in the Phi Kappa Phi Journal:

•**Write down the teacher's questions.** If he or she took the time and effort to ask them in class, you can bet they'll be on the test.

•**Read the introduction and conclusion** of every chapter. They will tell you the important points of the chapter plus provide an overview of the material.

•**Study index cards.** Write down relevant points on index cards (the perfect way to review your notes as suggested by Olona). Read the notes aloud, and if possible, make an audio tape of them to listen to later.

•**Write down everything you know** just to prove you know it. It isn't time consuming if you keep up with it each day.

•**Combine assignments if your instructors will allow it.** If you have a political science and a history paper due in the same week, see if they can be tied together into a single project.

•**Use loose leaf paper** and write on only one side. Again, that way you can spread your notes out for an overall view.

According to Gallagher, the difference between an A and a D is only ten minutes a day, the ten minutes it takes to jot your notes down on index cards and then write down everything you know to prove you know it. Studying and reviewing is a daily affair, one that need not take up much time.

Reviewing your notes is absolutely vital, however you do it, according to researchers Linda J. Knight and Stuart J. McKelvie, whose study ideas were presented in *Psychology Today*.

Of all the things you can do to study more effectively, reviewing is the one item that will most likely improve your score. Students who take notes but don't review them do not do much better than students who take the test cold, Knight and McKelvie claim. In other words, if you took the notes and didn't look at them, you probably wasted the paper and ink.

Olona recommends reviewing notes no more than 24 hours after taking them, and making a final review of everything no more than four days before the test, preferably one or two.

Study and review sessions are another excellent way to organize study time. In his article "A Closer Look at the Study Session" in the journal *Teaching of Psychology*, Dr. A.G. Aamodt found that students who attended a teacher's study session prior to the exam did signifi-

cantly better than those who didn't.

Furthermore, an organized overview was much more effective than just a question and answer session, which didn't seem to be very effective at all, Aamodt found.

Finding appropriate help is not difficult, and using it may be more important than you think. Half of the students who come to college, eager to study and expecting to earn a bachelor's degree, don't do it, according to U.S. News & World Report statistics in the article "Advice that Can Help You Succeed on Campus."

They drop out. They leave for a variety of reasons, and one of those is simply distaste — they don't enjoy what they're doing.

Perhaps the best way to utilize your time in school is to study something you want to learn, a subject you're interested in, according to Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation of Teaching, who was cited in the same article. If analyzing business transactions and accounting really makes your day, go for it. Arthur Anderson and other business companies are always coming to campus. However, if you find yourself spending more time with Nietzsche or Hemingway than credits and debits, don't force yourself into business. Take time to find out what really interests and excites you, and you'll spend a lot more time doing it, Boyer says.

Having to plod through every assignment, ready for it to be over before it's even begun, is not a good

See Organize/Page 14