

Better Living

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It ain't just landscapes

Hudson River Contemporary Artists show works at Lehman Gallery with a wide range of viewpoints

By LESLIE GAGLIA

A small boy clutches a gun in a black-and-white photograph, on guard against whatever evils might lurk just beyond the camera's range.

A wooden sculpture depicts pointed stakes stretching menacingly up towards a little girl on a swing.

Floats, balloons and marchers combine in shades of brown in an oil painting that immortalizes a traditional Thanksgiving Day parade.

All of these works and more—photography, paintings and sculpture—are included in the wide-ranging Hudson River Contemporary Artists exhibit. The exhibit runs through July 31 at the Lehman College Art Gallery, which is just inside gate 4, off Goulden Avenue, on the Lehman campus.

Four Riverdalians are among the bevy of talented artists who exhibit works in all sorts of different media.

Local talent

Michael Schwartz shows two riveting black-and-white photographs, *Divis Houses* (1994) and *Unity Flats Patrol* (1992). In the first photo, an innocent-looking, freckle-faced, tow-headed boy stands on a balcony wielding a gun and looking past the camera.

The boy, said the photographer, is 10 years old at the most. Mr. Schwartz took the photograph shortly before a truce went into effect in Northern Ireland.

The building in the background is the last of five buildings still standing in a housing project, described as "the worst slum in Belfast."

The second photo reveals soldiers in battle gear carrying guns on patrol in a housing development. Behind them, in stark contrast, four little girls play and mug for the camera.

The photo was very hard to get because of press censorship, said Mr. Schwartz. He added that "there are no civil rights for the people" in the British-ruled province.

Mr. Schwartz spent many years capturing the harsh life in North Ireland.

"I got exhausted but the pictures were worth the effort. This is the tail's end of seven years' work," Schwartz said.

Mr. Schwartz works as a freelance photographer for the *Daily News*. He was formerly on staff at the *New York Post*.

Riverdalian Charles Orden never worked as a professional artist. He earned a living pulling people's teeth.

It was only upon his retirement a decade ago that he yielded the dentist's drill and took up the artist's paintbrush. The self-taught painter never even took a lesson.

"I paint as inspiration occurs," said Mr. Orden.

His giant oil painting *Quo Vadis* takes up an entire wall at the gallery.

The painting took Mr. Orden about a



Photographer Michael Schwartz captured this chilling portrait in a Belfast slum.

week to complete. He wasn't sure when he started how the painting would look when it was finished.

The title of the work asks, "Where are you going?" explained Mr. Orden. That is because the painting appears to lead somewhere.

Painted in brown and yellow with a dab of red in the middle, it what seems to be the entrance way of an old temple, possibly from Roman times, with a window in the background.

"I'm basically an abstract impressionist," said Mr. Orden, describing the painting as "quasi-realistic."

'Personal pleasure'

Larry Davis exhibits two tiny photos known as "Polaroid transfers."

One work, *Cape Cod I* (1995), captures the exterior of a country house. The sec-

ond, *Watch Hill I* (1995), shows an easy chair next to a floor lamp. Although snapped only last year, the transfer process gives the finished products a grainy, old-fashioned look.

Mr. Davis takes slides and transfers them onto Polaroid film. Before the film finishes developing, he separates it and lets the development continue on another type of paper—such as watercolor paper. Although the photos are small to begin with, he crops them down in order to achieve a more intimate look.

"I do it just for personal pleasure. I love doing this," said Mr. Davis.

Stephanie Bruker fashioned her *Reclining Nude* bronze sculpture in the late 1980s. The sculpture has no arms, a broad chest and torso, and slightly raised legs. The figure looks comfortable and relaxed.

Ms. Bruker doesn't actually sculpt in

bronze. She fashions a wax figure and then has it cast in bronze. "You start with the wax and you let your hand go," she explained. Ms. Bruker is also a painter and an interior designer.

Many media

We went through hundreds of slides" to choose the 54 creations on display by 39 artists,

said Susan Hoeltzel, director of the Lehman Art Gallery. She served as the judge for the juried exhibit.

The show includes paintings, sculpture, prints, mixed media—"a little bit of everything," said Ms. Hoeltzel.

Hudson River Contemporary Artists is an independent organization that booked the Lehman space. The group formerly exhibited at the Hudson River Museum.

Despite the group's name, most of the artists do not use the fabled river as their subject.

The group was founded in 1915 as the Yonkers Art Association, in order to "foster a taste for art." The organization changed its name to the Hudson River Contemporary Artists in 1977.

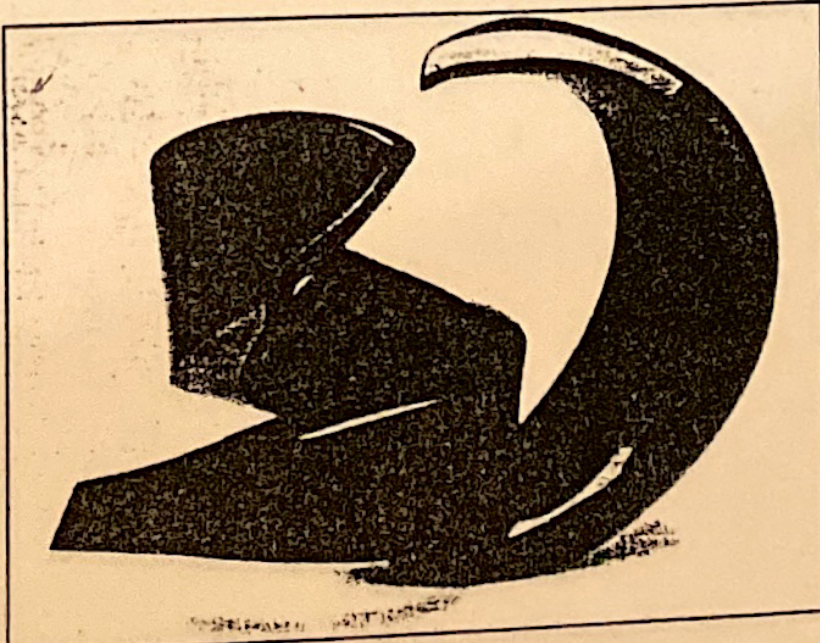
"A lot of our members are really quite professional. We try to keep a high standard," said Martin Silverman, the group's treasurer.

Lehman Art Gallery will use the organization's fee to support its educational programs. These include visits by more than 7,000 schoolchildren each year and training programs to teach teachers how to incorporate art into basic subjects such as social studies.

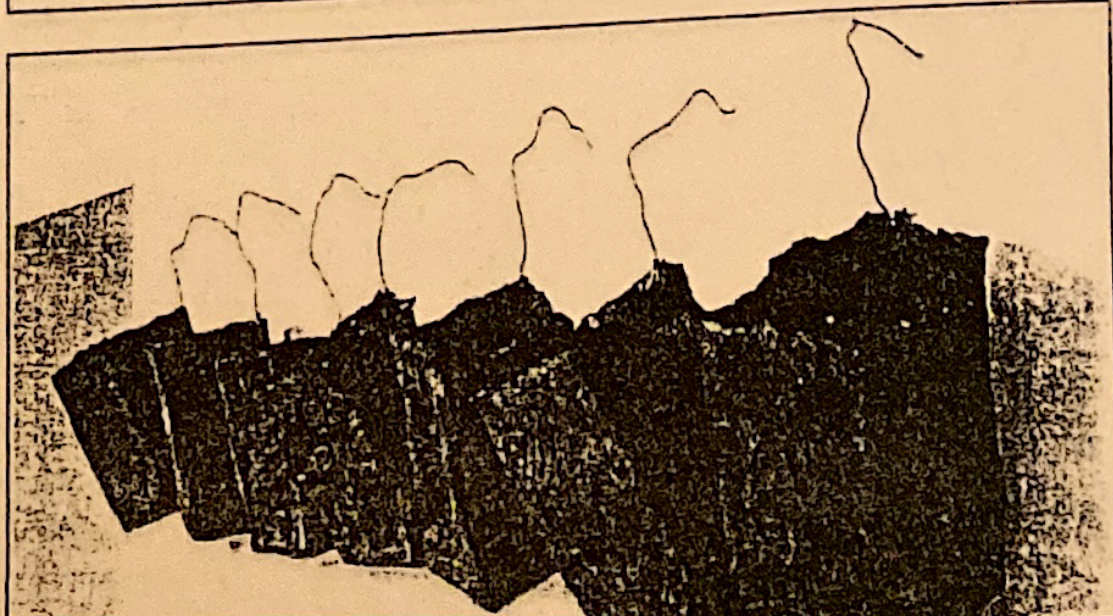
Gallery hours are Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 960-8731 for more information.



"Clouds"



"Double Entendre"
Black marplex and white marble sculpture by Nan Walsh



"Suspended Vessels"
Paper and wire sculpture by Ziva Kronzon