Dan Mills stakes out new territory

By Alan G. Artner
Tribune Art Critic

When Dan Mills last exhibited at the Deson-Saunders Gallery in 1991, his work was of found objects that had a strong architectural connection.

The pieces he shows now still are, in a sense, of found objects, though the connection with architecture is gone, having been replaced by collage that explores mapping systems.

Mills is one of the artists in "Art on the Map," the big group show at the Chicago Cultural Center. His pieces at Deson-Saunders are more modestly scaled works in the same, generally playful, vein.

The content of some of them is slight, achieving little more than visual one-liners. But the series titled "Territory Game" uses sports and chess paraphernalia to deepen the discourse, and the chess piece is the sharpest of the works on view, applying a light touch to the issue of imperialism.

Two larger pieces on musical themes take off in another direction, with the same light touch that there—alas!—looks more like superficiality. (At 230 W. Superior St., through Saturday.)

For the first time in its more than 200-year history, the art collections of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, will have a state-of-the-art system controlling temperature, humidity, lighting and security. The project will be installed by the Minneapolis-based Honeywell Inc. It will protect 3 million artworks spread over 1,200 rooms in five buildings.

Eight Chicago area artists have received awards in the 1994 Evanston & Vicinity 12th Biennial exhibition continuing through July 20 at the Evanston Art Center. The artists are: Mary Burke, Ben Dallas, Meyer Dwass, Carolyn Giles, Russell Gordon, Holly Greenberg, Mark Rowland and Frankie F. Wollf. They have shared cash prizes totaling $2,500.

"Craft Events in Illinois," a free guide to fairs, exhibitions, workshops and seminars held through August, is now available through the state's convention and visitors centers. A copy also may be received by calling 312-814-1952.

"Art You Can Read," the oldest auction of original comic art in America, will be held during the "Chicago Comicon" beginning at 6 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at the Rosemont Convention Center, 5555 N. River Rd., Rosemont. All proceeds will benefit Literacy Chicago. Free admission. For details and advance bids, call George Hagenauer at 606-948-9651.

Fred Lerman, chief curator of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, will give a free talk on "The Aura of Odilon Redon" at 6 p.m. Tuesday in Fullerton Auditorium of the Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street. The event complements the large Redon exhibition opening Saturday at the institute.