

Regional Ramblings

Everson Biennial *showcases diverse array of upstate art*

By Carl Mellor

One strength of a show such as the 1998 *Everson Biennial* is its presentation of artists who work in various media and whose pieces reflect varied ideas and influences. Since the primary link among the 27 artists represented in this show is geographic—all of them live in an area bordered by Genesee, Montgomery, St. Lawrence and Delaware counties—it's not surprising to find such diversity as "Tender Chicken," Zoe Sheehan Saldana's piece using six sheaths of dried chicken breasts, and "Last Stand," Bill Hastings' piece in which ceramic

vegetables are stored in wooden crates labeled "fresh, local" and "organic."

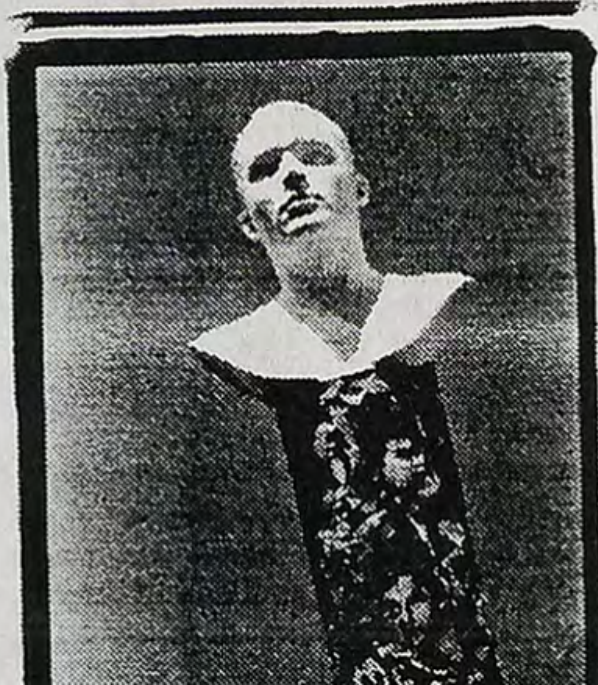
Even in a show like this, which juror Bill Arning selected without any regard for the kinds of media used

curiosity because they are so different from each other. "Urban Upheaval," a pencil-on-paper work, presents a small section of a map of Syracuse; in the middle, Forbes' drawing shows downtown buildings crumbling. In "Hovering on the Edge," meanwhile, the artist has constructed a plastic Hovercraft reminiscent of *Star Wars*. The piece has an interactive feature in the form of a trip wire, which, when stepped on, turns on a light within the ship and sets a mechanical arm into motion.

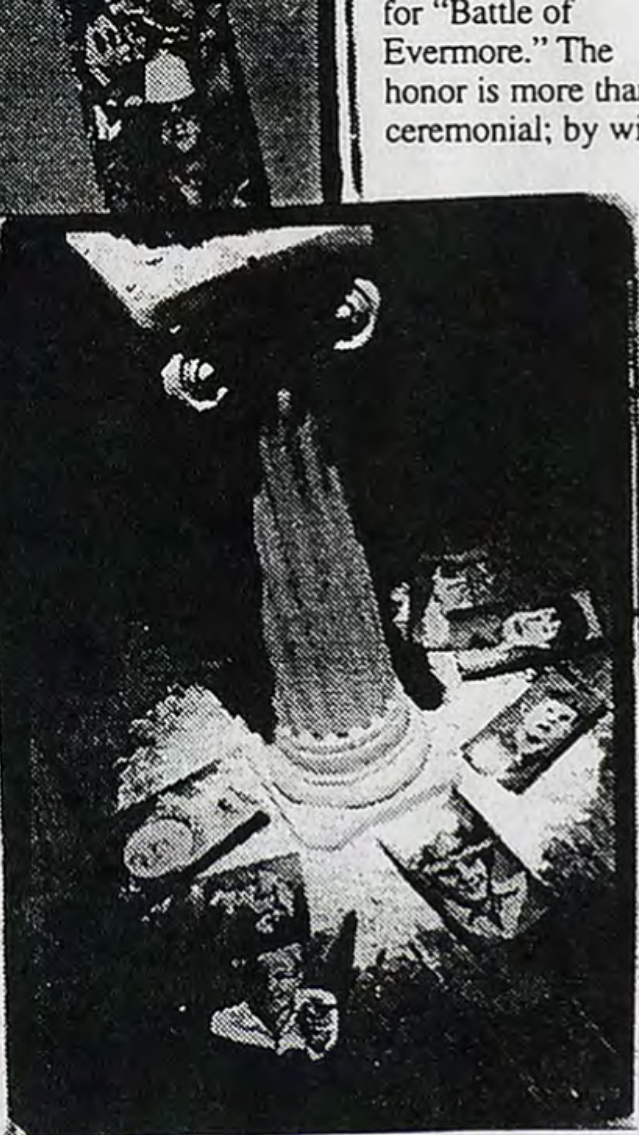
A group exhibition can't be expected to answer all questions about the work of each artist, of course. By definition, such a show is a sampler: The Everson exhibit also includes single

distinctive works by Judy Russell (the acrylic piece "MJQ and You") and Mark Stockton, whose mixed-media piece "Classical Culture" wraps images of Ro Reagan, Fred Flintstone and other mass-culture icons around a statue and positions similar images at its feet.

Mark Alice Durant won the best-of-show award for "Battle of



media used by artists, some pieces do play off each other to a certain degree. The murky video scenes and interruptive text of Guillermo Cifuentes' "Falling Bridge," a 10-minute video dealing with political oppression in Latin America, contrasts with Dan Mills' "(Native) American Story Quilt—A Patchwork Comforter," which focuses on seizure of Native American lands and attempts to diminish cultural identity. Mills combines slices of a map showing native peoples' territories with excerpts from old children's books. Some of the passages are uninformed, and some are insulting. There is, for example, a reference to the Pawnees as having "weak and childlike natures."



for "Battle of Evermore." The honor is more than ceremonial; by wit

The exhibit also gives viewers a chance to consider various photographic styles. Linn Underhill's photos of a flashlight and toy cars, Steven Skopic's "Untitled No. 3," which sets off a single portrait shot with 12 black squares, and Kurt Gohde's two-image piece, "Leda," employ vastly different techniques. Some pieces, however, aren't as easily interpreted within the format of this group show. Underhill's images, for example, are part of a series entitled *Tomboy Suite*, and it certainly isn't possible to get a sense of that series by viewing only two of its images.

From another perspective, Peter Forbes' two pieces arouse a certain

"Classical Culture" by Mark Stockton: Everson biennial includes mixed-media take on mass culture.

ning it, Durant will get a solo exhibition of his work in the Everson's Members Council Gallery sometime during 1999. For the other upstate artists, the 1998 *Everson Biennial* again provides exposure and a forum for diverse artworks.

The exhibit continues through Aug. 30 during museum hours: Tuesdays through Fridays and Sundays, noon to 5 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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