

8/00

Montage

January 30, 1981

New Mexico Holds Artistic Inspiration

By: Michelle Chargois

The sense of spirits past roam through the deserts and hills of New Mexico. The sun is intense, vibrant and proud of its ability to saturate the mind's thought processes with scorching data waves. But it is the wind that is almighty. The wind is the all-knowing force, understood only by those with a certain depth and perception, impressed only by those who interpret and utilize its conversations. Thus does the artist search for inspiration in New Mexico and other western regions.

The exhibit housed by the UH Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery is an extraordinary collection of pieces either done by local artists of New Mexico, or the art pieces themselves are here courtesy of various galleries in New Mexico. Works displayed vary from paintings, drawings and photographs to video cassette pieces, sculptures and pottery.

One of the most interesting works of art is a pastel on paper titled, *Hounds of Hell*. In the picture there are two hounds, gracefully, playfully posed which are colored an intensely hot orange-red. The color of the dogs is quite reminiscent of the red skies at morning New Mexico is famous for. Another interesting piece is a sculpture of leather and mixed media, and is called *Sacrifice of a Poet*. Its demonic mask-like shape contains many little gadgets, designs and encrustments that are religiously and literally symbolic.

Among the works is a pencil on paper drawing of an overpopulated, slum-like city neighborhood called "Santa Fe No. 8." There is one striking thing about the picture, however. Of all of the eyes of each person in the picture, there is not one pair of happy or content eyes, not even among the children. Each pair of eyes is distorted or they contain passions of evil, hate, disillusionment, disgust, or madness.

But by far, the most interesting item is a three-part videotape by Steina. The tape is an exquisite work of montage, juxtaposed images. The first is *Flux*, a black and white account of a twisting and turning river. Each view is one blink (or one second) long, giving the same effect as a strobe light. The second is "Urban Episodes" in which Steina uses mirrors, cameras and other reflectives to view city scenes. It's in color, and the buildings, cars and people are misshapen almost to a hideous point. One scene in this piece is the way a city bus is viewed through some type of reflective lens. The distorted view portrays the bus to be almost animated. The lens strokes the bus like one would stroke a cat, thus giving it a look of multi-arched vertebrae. The third and final video is called *Selected Tree Cuts*. It utilizes color and black and white techniques. The strobe effect is used again. It begins with a color view of trees during the autumn season. But between color views are the black and white mosaic infra images. In places where the color is richer, hotter, the grays are darker. This quadri-motified piece is outstanding.

The exhibit is one of the best to ever be seen at the Blaffer Gallery. It is a mind expanding, thought provoking experience for anyone. The gallery's hours are: Tuesday-Saturday, 10-6 and Sunday, 1-6, closed Monday.

End