

NoNeo is post-modernist subversion

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George Bush is in. Conservatism is in.

The things that our mothers thought were pretty, are almost invariably what we think is pretty. We like when people express themselves and try to illustrate that expression with lines, colors and form. But certain things have changed. . .

In the exhibit at Zoller Gallery *NoNeo: Neopunkedelic and Psychotronic Art*, many artists attempt to express what they have observed, which they take to be the-honest-to-God-truth. But, at the same time, many charge these artists are trying to capitalize on empty weirdness or expression without emotion or intelligence, which is a terrible thing to do for several reasons: people don't like it and it detracts from art in general.

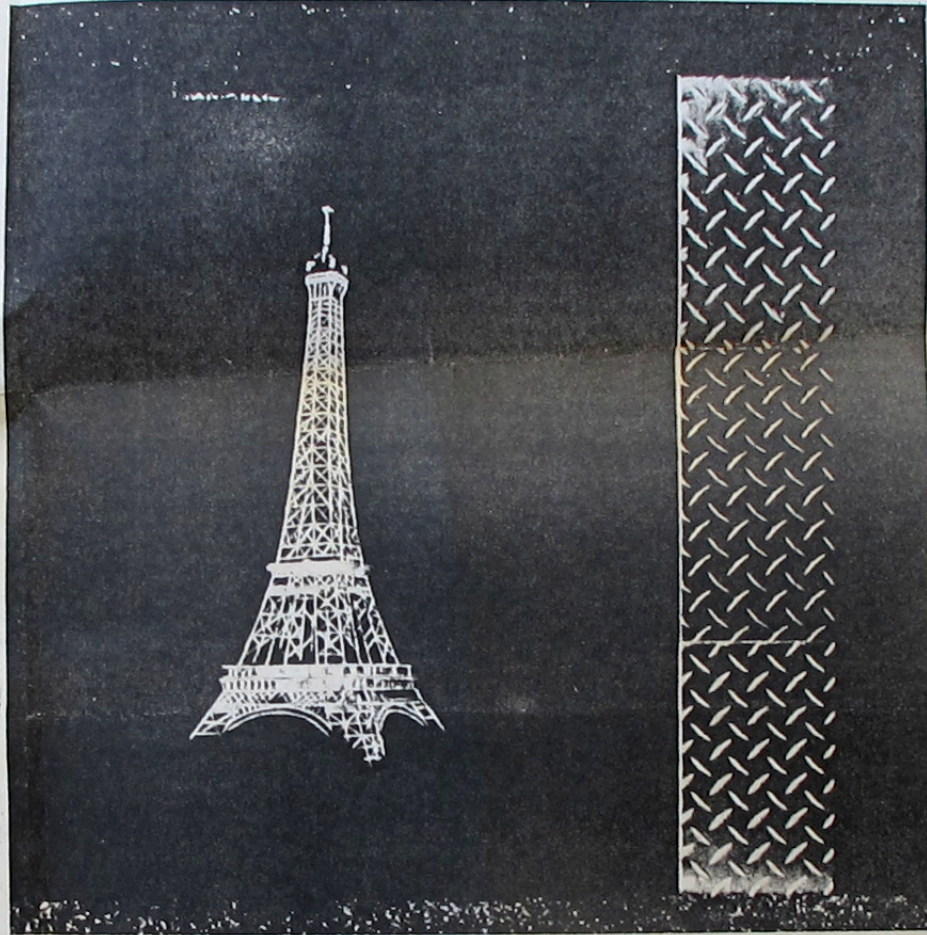
Much of the current work is not even representative of pop culture — it seems that it is a sad look at a subculture that represents the torments of society, but rarely documents the conflict of man's life in the 20th century. Of course, there are some that tackle social issues and conflicts in everyday life, but even these are hard to relate to, and many are difficult to understand even for the most educated eyes.

GALLERY REVIEW

One of the reasons that the paintings are not incredibly effective is the lack of good technique on the part of the artists. Even though some of their ideas go under the guise of innovative or perhaps the mixing of form and theme, it is still for the most part poor quality draftsmanship. Some of the pictures look like drawings done by disturbed five-year-olds.

The neopunkedelic and psychotronic painters and sculptors of today have, according to the exhibition book, followed a theme that innovators such as Jackson Pollack, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and Jasper Johns (currently America's highest paid artist) started. It first surfaced in 1951, when Rauschenberg presented a drawing by Willem de Kooning which he had erased. What Rauschenberg was actually doing was subverting what he comprehended to be an entrenched institution, that is to say the American artist as an avant-garde, connoisseurs of the "new."

Rauschenberg, Johns and Warhol reimagined the function of the modern artists. These artists were the subverters and the validators at the same time. They ridiculed and made important everything that popular culture came to believe as reality. Today's younger artists try to gain the truth of what today's pop culture represents, no matter how violent,



Courtesy of Zoller Galleries

Janet Biggs multi-material work, "City of Grow Lights," presents the Eiffel Tower in distance and detail.

how sad, or how unmeaningful it is. For the artist it is a search for the truth.

These young artists are the first generation of creators to come from a television background, which could have something to do with their innovation of ideas, or lack of ideas, or even their technique.

They are looking for a direction or trend in which to take their art and they fall into the post-modernist category. The fact that they have history behind them, and perhaps have even glanced through the newspapers and noticed the outrageous prices art works are now commanding, might have inspired many of them.

Even through the muck, however, there are still some good pieces that onlookers enjoyed.

"I like the colors. It's alive, they're not flowers in pots, they are not still lifes. They're moving, not standing still," Francine Leiphart (junior-liberal arts) said.

Though many viewers had opinions ranging from utter hate to inspirational enthusiasm, most appreciated being exposed to this radical movement.

"It's good to see a contemporary

show because it goes a little further than a traditional show and in a lot of ways it reflects our times in the post-modern world," University professor Mark Messenger said.

"I honestly don't know if I liked it or not. It's very strange but it didn't strike me one way or another," Rob Brott (graduate-physics) said.

According to the book, *NoNeo*, a neopunkedelic artist wants to stand out from the crowd, be different; the psychotronics, on the other hand, tend to want to merge with nature — grayness and boredom are their turfs. Either way both are outrageous and susceptible to many interpretations. In the midst of all the themes and questions raised by this exhibit, there is one question that the viewer finds himself asking — what is art?

In the exhibit book, Richard F. Dennis attempts to answer: "The markings of an individual whose purpose is to convey a message to the viewer, whether it be poetry of beauty or of destruction, is the capability that separates us from the rest of the animals and makes us unique on this Earth. Artists have always had the role of being the forerunners of idea and the conscience of mankind. . ."



Collegian Photo/Christopher Jarvis

"The Artist as Art" by Sybil Erden is an oil on canvas work.



Lee Forrest's acrylic on canvas painting is on display.