

ARTWEEK

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PROJECTS FOR THE 80'S

By Jean Jaszi

BERKELEY

First of all, let nobody think that the Projects for the Eighties show has anything to do with the future. This show is, now, period. It couldn't relate to any other time except the present moment in Barrow Lane, the University of California at Berkeley, the Art Gallery.

But if a thing fully exists in the present, it is fulfilled. I would go so far as to say that this little show does exactly that, and for this very reason is successful. I would add that it is a youthful show: that it has its pranks, that it is sometimes muddled, that there is yearning in it, that there are attempts to stir thought, that it contains both the pleasures and the annoyances of sound, that it has color, that it has simplicity, and that it even has silence and privacy.

The game is to find all these things; for it is also a youthful game.

So maybe at first, I thought the show was nothing more than a few jokes such as Duskin's bra for a cow, a row of wax anvils, a neon sign on a wall spelling Free. And that everyone was simply to be amused by all the other people looking at these things.

Then I began to discover the attempts to express the problems of our society, issues such as over-population, pollution of the environment, the problem of bureaucracy, the literal presentation via the typewriter-computer experiment of many urban problems, the hopes of the artist-designers to draw the viewer into active participation with them through the situation or work presented. At this point, I decided the show was brilliant, because I could catch on to many of the ideas.

But then I rebounded and said that no, it is so purely conceptual that it races across reality without ever touching the life of anybody, either artist or viewer. And that its ideas are superficial and journalistic.

And I felt a longing to contemplate a great and true work of art such as a vase from the Sung period and to turn off the TV set.

Now I would like to mention seriously three or four presentations which I found somewhat comparable to the lyric as a poetical form in that they allowed the unexpected to happen.

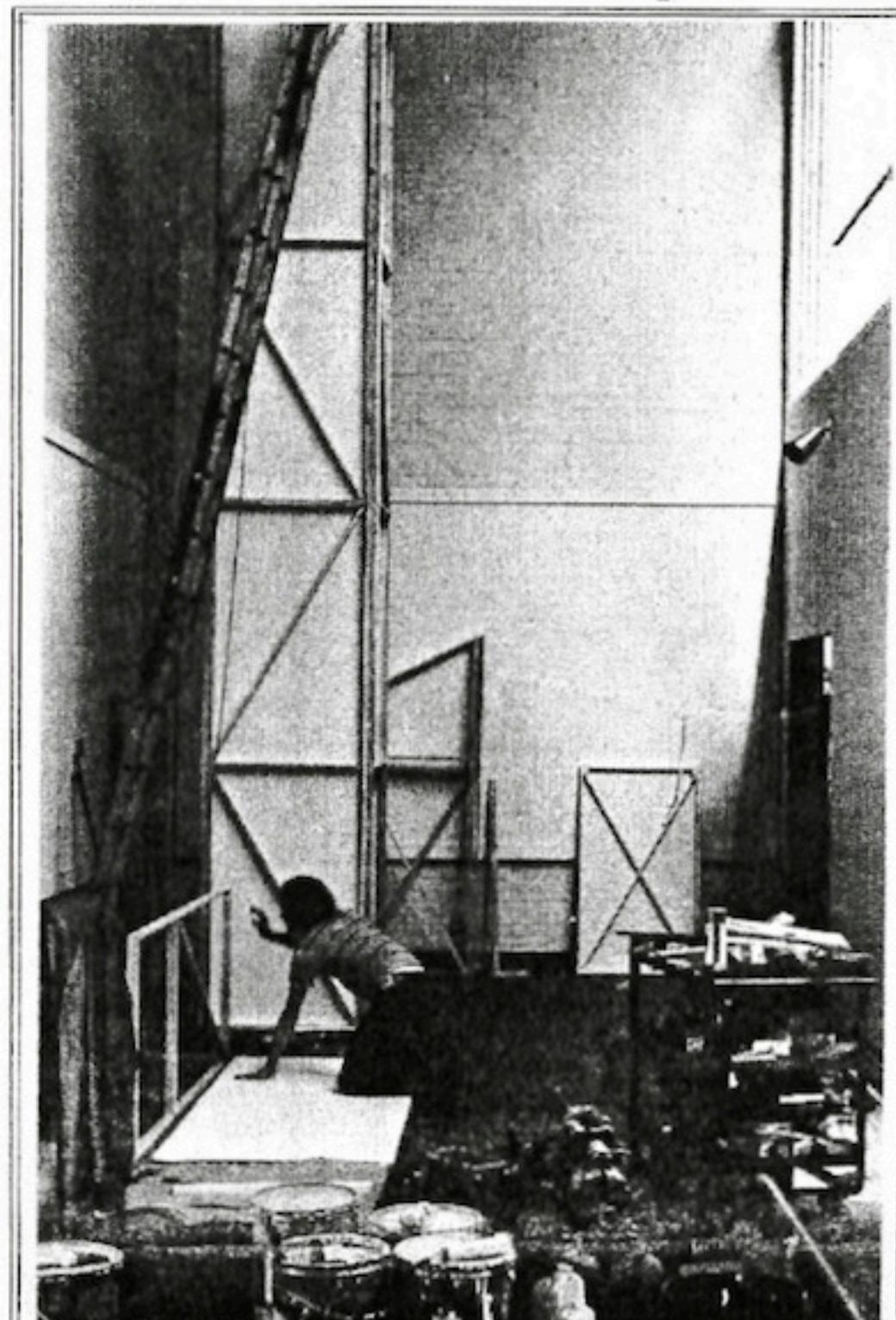
In this is the point at which one can leave behind all titles printed on the wall and all intellectual reactions and forget who made the thing, as well.

I shall only mention this data so that you will know what I am talking about.

"If you don't have it, make it--if you can remember it," is a structure by Warner Jepson only a little larger than a phone booth but full of charm. Instead of doors there are colored plastic loops filled with liquid. Visu-

ally as bright as a carnival booth, the inside is mostly blue, there is a circular foam object on the ceiling, there is a low bench or step to sit on, and there are ear-phones to put on your head. All around you loudly a sound tape is playing and when you wear the ear-phones you can hear the very same thing only, as Warner Jepson remarks, "privately." You could be riding on a train or accompanying the flight of insects. This is a pleasure trip, and as many people as can get in at once are welcome to come along.

There is a whole room not just a small booth, by Howard Fried. I could not find a title card for this presentation. There is,



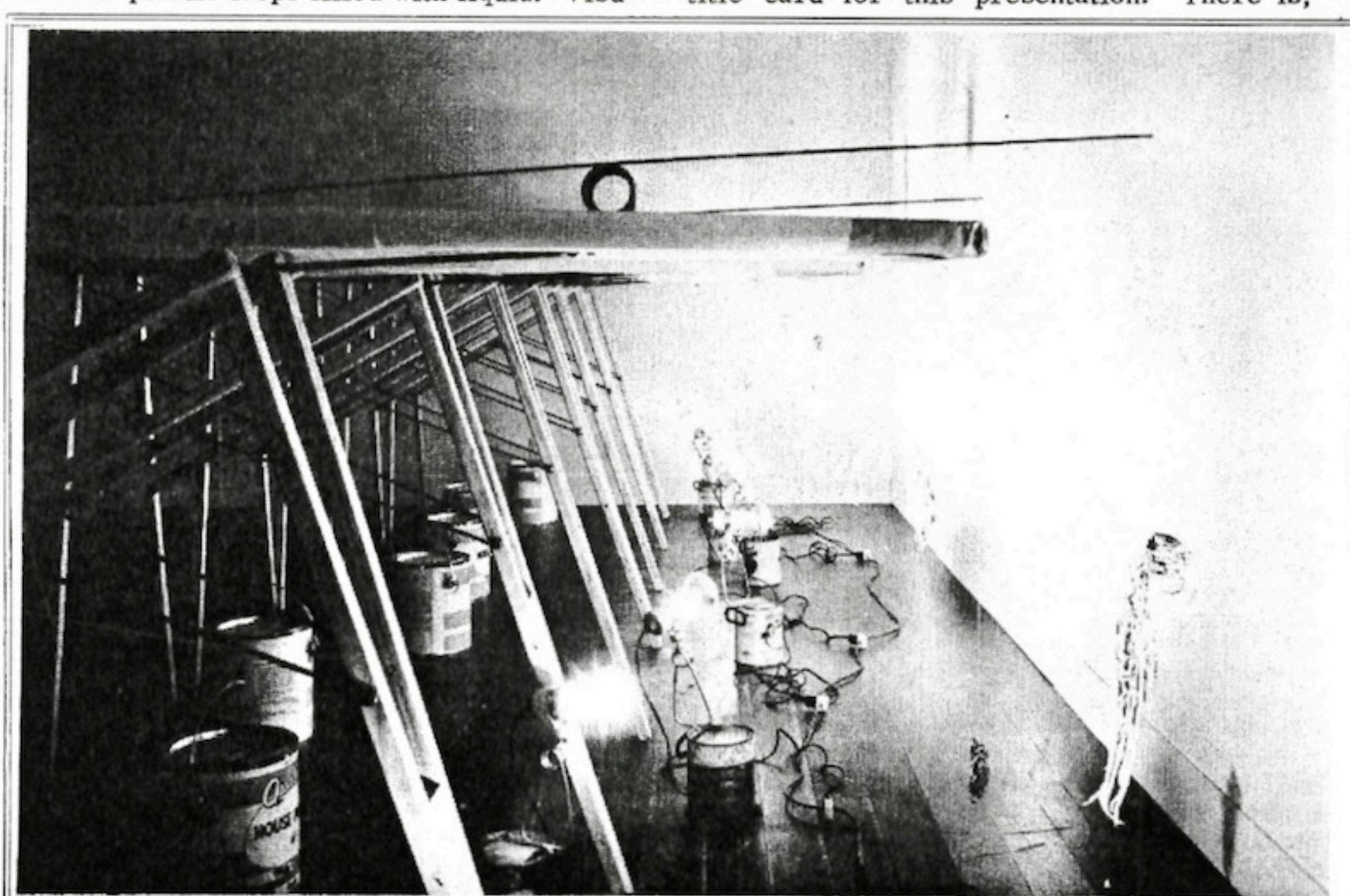
STEPHEN LAUB: CANVAS TOWER (INSTALLATION)

however, all across one wall, a very beautiful story told in the first person which concludes, "an ironing board is no place to eat, it's a place to cross." You will see perhaps six ironing-boards parallel and equi-distant from each other upon each of which there is an iron and underneath each of which there is a can of house paint. There is also a string anchored to each ironing surface which goes down over the small end of the board to hold a withered vegetable or something like that. The shadows of these ambiguous objects are cast upon the wall opposite the printed pages of the story. One somehow explains the other, but I don't think I can tell you how or even assure you with any certainty that the whole is autobiographical. Perhaps Howard Fried is really William Saroyan? This room is a world, another world than your own, and you may if you wish enter it. These presentations which I am describing are metaphors. That is why I compare them to poems, and that is almost the only guidance I can give you.

I would like to mention the canvas tower by Stephen Laub as being especially spare and perfect for its purpose. There is a door, also of canvas, so that you can step inside the tower at the bottom. Only at the top is there anything to see. In this whole structure there is not a single distracting note. There is only one thing to see in the quiet and privacy of this cloth enclosure and that is the sky, through a moon-sized circle cut out of the top. By night it is black, of course, and may look painted. By day it is blue, and the disc of the sun is cast upon the upper canvas wall to move, I presume, during the course of the day, like a slowly changing abstraction from nature itself.

Now I think one can forget about the seventies and the eighties and over-population too and simply appreciate the wonderful fact that there you are and there is a piece of the sky. The canvas tower surrounds you, saying, "look UP."

(CONT'D. See back page)



HOWARD FRIED: THE RETURN OF THE AGRARIAN SOCIETY

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS

PHIL PALMER

IN FRANCISCO

Documentary photography by Alma Lavenson, Charles Sanders and George Tice occupies San Francisco's Focus Gallery through March 28.

Alma Lavenson has lived and exhibited in the Bay Area since the days of the F64 group. Her current show consists of photographs made during a two-months trip to Africa last summer.

She photographs in a simple and direct manner, portraying what appear to be a charming, happy and dignified people. I was struck by the luminous, lovely light which revealed many of the subjects.

George Tice is known to most of us through his delightful photographs of the Amish people in Pennsylvania done some years ago. In this exhibit he turns to Paterson, New Jersey in an attempt to document the city in depth.

Eastern industrial cities are not the most attractive spots in the world, and Tice's photographs of Paterson will not start a rush of immigrants from California to New Jersey.

There are old factory exteriors, weed-grown vacant lots, depressing city streets and an overall somberness in this work. Tice does not overdramatize, but responds to his subject in a quiet and thoughtful manner. In these prints Paterson appears to be a tired, grey, somewhat depressing area. Nature, when it has a chance to survive, is displayed as tree trunks and roots protruding from eroded rock slopes, sumac bushes against an ancient rock slope, patches of weeds and grass.

Charles Sanders' exhibit is somewhat uneven and has its curious aspects. The intent of these photographs, we are told, was to record the condition of the decaying mission chain in Baja California.

The peculiar, soft color prints remind one of old, faded magazine reproductions. He mounts his prints in several ways, some of which are quaint and arty. Paul Strand, working in black and white rather than color, has photographed sometimes similar subjects but with a strength and dignity that are usually lacking here.

MEDIEVAL EXHIBITION EXTENDED

LOS ANGELES

At the Los Angeles County Museum of Art a special loan exhibition of superb examples of medieval art from the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Cloisters has been extended through Sunday, April 12.

Art Director Keith Donahue also announced that Thomas P.F. Hoving, Director of The Metropolitan, undertook a recent flight to Los Angeles to record a tour of the exhibition. The tape is now available to gallery visitors. Hoving's remarks include personal comments on objects including the celebrated Chalice of Antioch, the large and dramatic Flemish Gothic "eagle lectern," and other treasures from an age of faith that covered a 1,200 year period of the history of art, from the Emperor Constantine to the Renaissance. Director Hoving was at one time Curator of The Cloisters collection and is a medieval scholar in his own right.

The Los Angles exhibition is installed in a specially-constructed cathedral-like environment on the main level of The Frances and Armand Hammer Wing. In a two-month period it has attracted some 60,000 viewers, not including additional large groups of students who are bussed to the Museum from County and City schools.

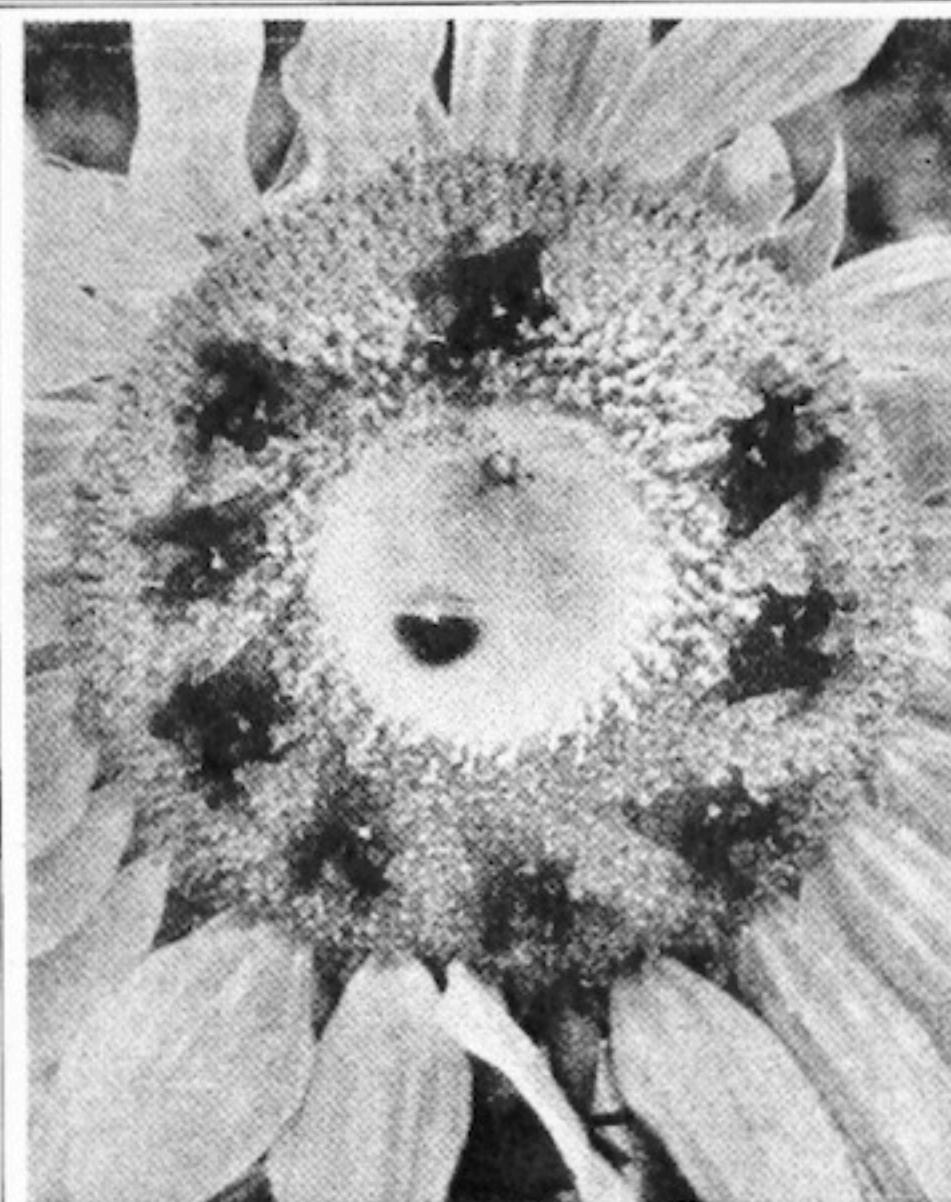
MARCIA JARTUN

TACOMA, WASH.

Prints and Collages by Marcia Jartun are at the Handforth Gallery of the Tacoma Public Library, 1102 South Tacoma Avenue, through March 30.



ALMA LEVISON: TWO WOMEN (N'debele Tribe, So. Africa)



FORT WRIGHT COLLEGE PHOTOGRAPHY

An exhibit titled "Inside the Beginning of Fort Wright College Photography" includes work by Stewart, Mincks, Schwab, St. Onge, Payton and Dauenhauer. It can be seen in Weston Hall at the College, Spokane, Washington, through March 31.

PROJECTS FOR THE 80's (From page 1)

The curious thing about this structure is that if someone is known to be inside, everyone outside will wait until he comes out and will not intrude. Curious. It is completely enclosed. Quite unlike Jepson's trip booth. That one is motion. This one is not.

It is so easy for a show of this type not quite to come off. When it does, as this one does, any feeling of nihilism which comes in, or sarcasm, or despair is quite refuted. Because it is wonder-full.

There is a typewriter in this show, too. It is hooked up to "a distant" computer. If you make a mistake in doing what the printed directions tell you to do, the typewriter will write with dogged persistence, "I don't understand," and it spells worse than anybody. It may be a kind of a teaching machine, for it puts out quite surprising and interesting statistics. But it too represents a kind of wonder, in fact a wonderland, of Oz. Perhaps it is meant to be serious. It is unconscionably funny.

And why not, for this is a youthful show, and you need not be deadly serious, even though there may be a serious vein underneath and an imposing title, Projects for the Eighties, on top.

Open daily from 11 to 5 through April 12. Participants include Wayne E. Campbell, Alvin Duskin, William Duval, John C. Fernie, Terry Fox, Howard Fried, Tyrus Gerlach, Mel Henderson, Jay Heminway, Kent Hodgetts, Henry Jacobs, Werner Jepson, Robert Kinmont, Paul Kos, Stephen Laub, James Melchert, Bruce Montgomery, Manuel Neri, William T. Wiley and Alfred Young.