

Ackland hosts unique photography exhibit

By BOB ROYALTY

MASTERS of Photography: Recent Acquisitions I, currently on exhibit at the Ackland Art Museum, will please both the novice and the expert. This striking exhibition of the works of 12 photographers can be enjoyed in a quick perusal or studied in-depth for several hours.

Including more than 100 photographs, the exhibition is the largest in the Southeast and represents almost all the photographs acquired through purchase or gift by Ackland during the past 18 months. Ackland's method in acquiring these works has been to place emphasis on a certain major master and then pursue as complete a collection of his works as possible.

The periods of the photographs range from Alvin Langdon Coburn's photogravures of 1908 to several from the '60s. A spectator can walk from the earliest examples of a fledgling art form to modern experimental works.

No real theme unifies the exhibition other than these are recent acquisitions. Several of the works are American ex-patriots' photographs of European scenes. There are a few scenes of life in the United States. And other photographs are of art forms that occur in nature.

An introductory plaque for the exhibit notes the recent rise in the popularity of artistic photographic collections and the rise in prices that has accompanied the new interest. Keeping this in mind, the value of the Ackland exhibition is intensified beyond the power and beauty of the photographs.

One of the most famous pictures on exhibit is "The Steerage," Alfred Steiglitz's turn-of-the-century portrayal of immigrants. This bold genre scene has made its way into most high school history texts. We are all familiar with the crowd ship, the bewildered faces, the angle from the catwalk which makes us both participants and observers.

Lewis Hine's portrayals of the evils of the Industrial Revolution from his book *Child Labor* retain the power from an earlier age. The young girl dwarfed by massive machinery in "Child Worker in Cotton Mill, Lancaster, N.C." invokes pity yet carries an almost prideful, enduring attitude.

Hine's other photographic social statements on display show deep concern for the plight of labor. He values these people—overworked and underpaid—far beyond the "wonderful" technology they use or the greatness of the country they live in.

Gallery

Robert Frank, a Swiss-born American, received a Guggenheim grant in the 1950s to travel the country and take photographs of the people. The result, "The Americans," was highly praised by Jack Kerouac. Frank's technique matches the content of this work: the pictures are bold, loud and open for a bold people.

Frank shows people as one has never seen them but as one has always known them. Tremendous variety, satire, irony, and the wistful, hard beauty of a washed-out but great country of individuals are his hallmarks.

A cafe in Beaufort, S.C., is juxtaposed with the city fathers of Hoboken, N.J. Frank encompasses the entire country with his piercing vision of America. He uses angles to promote movement even in still photographs.

Alvin Langdon Coburn's photographs dating from 1908 provide a fine contrast to the more modern works. He has an artistic touch that is as moving as any of the other photographers in the Recent Acquisitions show. There is a marvelous hazy shot of St. Paul's in London. Coburn's view of the landscape is like a romantic painting.



Eugene Atget's 'Bagnoux-Vieille Rue' one of unique photographs on display

William Klein, an American living in Paris, is represented with some genre portraits of Europeans. Klein gives the sense that people in his photographs are the places they live in, more important than the geography of architecture.

Masters of Photography, with more than 100 excellent photographs, offers one of the most thought-provoking artistic events to be found in Chapel Hill.

Bob Royalty is assistant arts editor for The Daily Tar Heel.

'Beat Crazy' mixes new rhythms with intelligible lyrics and sounds

By ROB MONATH

The Joe Jackson Band

Beat Crazy

ON their new LP, *Beat Crazy*, the Joe Jackson Band attempts to couple innovative new wave rock 'n' roll with pointed lyrics.

The Joe Jackson Band on *Beat Crazy* makes music with diverse beats, intelligible lyrics and extraordinarily prominent and creative bass lines. A breath of fresh air in an era governed by

bands with blaring guitars, screeching vocals and cliché rhythms and riffs.

Joe Jackson, who wrote all the songs on the album, sings lead vocals on all the tunes but the title track, supplementing his vocals with assorted keyboards. For the most part, Jackson's lyrics critically address societal prejudices and stereotypes.

Whether emphatic almost to the point of agony as on "In Every Dream House," or rumbling in a spoken monotone on "Battleground," Jackson blunts the impact of his vocals through an excessive

use of echo and other special effects that make him seem too distant and impersonal to the listener.

Records

Musically, the band explores a number of exotic rhythmic combinations that often follow Jackson's vocals like incidental music and thus sacrifice continuity.

Drummer Dave Houghton, guitarist Gary Sanford and bassist Graham Maby meld reggae, African and Latin rhythms with a straight rock 'n' roll beats to produce some of the most progressive new wave tunes to date. Sanford and Maby frequently offset each other rhythmically and give the music a full but not cluttered sound.

But, unfortunately, these very rhythmic innovations and the often prevalent musical discordance actually have an adverse effect. By never really coming together for any significant period of time, the music perpetually seems to be lost in transition and cacaphony. None of the songs really clicks or kicks.



Graham Maby's often melodic and brilliant bass lines, as on "Pretty Boys," are a welcome exception, but even his contributions are not enough.

Beat Crazy is not the kind of album that promotes dancing, mirth or fantasy but analysis. Since other bands will inevitably lift ideas from this album, it is worth listening to if you are interested in learning the origin of these ideas.

Otherwise, the band asks the right question on the album sleeve:

"This album represents a desperate attempt to make some sense of rock 'n' roll. Deep in our hearts, we knew it was doomed to failure. The question remains: why did we try?"

Rob Monath is Weekender record critic.

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