

The body as a canvas, the needle as a brush

by Donna Sammader

"What is Art?" one often asks after being deluged by readings in Art history and Renaissance traditions, or by accounts of "zany" performance artists or those who barf up mashed potatoes in the colours of the American flag. It seems that our society's views on art are so random that anything goes that takes a stand. I don't mean to say that negatively, that anyone with enough gusto to proclaim him/herself an artist is just looking for attention. In this overwhelming variety of art, why do we value certain artworks and not others?

Art encompasses a variety of processes and media. Tattooing, for example, is one art process for which we have a very symbolic value. A tattoo is permanently imbedded in the skin and becomes a physical part of the wearer. We might see it as something that describes the wearer as an individual with certain beliefs. Symbols of fertility and woman/manhood are vogue among tattoo wearers who might have them done in obscure or tucked away places. These symbols have importance

in our everyday lives right now but what about fifty years from now?

"I can't possibly know what I want when I'm fifty but I don't think I'll be that different a person," says Vida Ruiz in regard to the permanence of her dragonfly tattoo. She won a free tattoo in a raffle organized by R.A. of Orange hall, Andrea Cinanni, in order to promote awareness of the dangers of improper tattooing and body piercing. Vida mentioned that sometimes she does not realize that it is a part of her foot. The dragonfly is drawn in navy blue ink on her ankle with "orchid-like" wings and a body described by a wiggly line of dots. She had two hours to decide what she wanted for a tattoo. After conferring with the artist for a while, he produced a sketch that she liked, that was neither cliched nor destined to be outdated.

As a work of art, a tattoo should be skillfully done as well as imaginatively designed. A successful artist should know his/her materials well, especially

a tattoo artist whose "canvas" is very sensitive. The tattoo artist who drew Vida's dragonfly is also a paramedic. He explained to those who watched the process of tattooing how to look for correct and sanitary use of tattoo apparatus. The tattoo is drawn into the upper layers of the epidermis with a needle that rotates at almost one hundred times a second and deep enough so that it will not fade away. A bad tattoo job is one that fades easily or that has runny colors. A bad tattoo job is also one that could cause someone to contract AIDS. Tattoo dyes should be changed after each person who gets a tattoo but some tattoo artists are reluctant to throw out the expensive leftovers from each session. The appreciation given a tattoo should definitely include any effects on the wearer's health.

Whatever Art is, the success of a piece depends on more than one factor. Artwork is not meant to be judged on appearance alone.



Tattoo design by Shaun Pennington

Arts Briefs

The Highland Players, under the direction of Ken Smith, will present Jean-Paul Sartre's classic "No Exit" on November 8, 9, and 10 in the Morris Morgan Auditorium. Sartre's play tells the story of three people condemned to spend an eternity together in Hell. First year student Amber Barbour, who stars with Blake Masters and Mary Heather Blood, says that the production is sure to intrigue even those who have seen it before. "Each person who sees it has a different interpretation of the play, but I guarantee that everyone will be on the edge of their seats the whole time." Barbour said Show times are 8 p.m. for the first two shows and 3 p.m. for the show on Sunday. Admission is \$2.00

Lenard D. Moore's book *Forever Home* will soon be released in its second printing by the St. Andrews Press.

Internationally known pianist Richard Dowling will be giving a free concert at 8:00 on November 2 in the Argyll room of Scotia Village. The public is invited.

Dowling has been praised by the New York Times as an "Especially fine young pianist." He is currently living in Boca Raton, Florida where he is the artist-in-residence at the Harid conservatory.

On Nov. 7, the Marion Cannon Writers' Path will be dedicated at a ceremony on the William Henry Belk College Center terrace.

That evening, Charlene Swansea, poet, novelist, publisher of Red Clay books and director of MINDWORKS, will read from the works of Marion Cannon and talk about 20th century letters at the Former writers forum, which will be held in the Bushoven lounge of Mecklenburg Hall.

The Fall Term student art show will be exhibited November 1-22 in the Vardell gallery. It will feature drawings, sculpture, 3-d design and computer graphics.

Two poems by Ron Bays have been published in the premiere issue of Solo. Bays' poems are "Sylla" and "Dear Girl"

Encore! will present a desert theatre and musical review on Thursday, November 1-3. Students Kate brady, Chris Novello and Linda Lowe are in the cast. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens and children 12 and younger.