

# Arts

## Pharaoh Closes Mint

By Phil Busher  
Special To The Post

The addition of a 28 foot, 47 ton colossus of Ramesses II to augment the exhibition "Ramesses the Great: The Pharaoh and His Time" appearing October 1-January 31, 1989 at the Mint Museum will alter the current schedule. The entire museum, including galleries, library, gift shop and meeting rooms will close to the public May 1st to accommodate the additional construction needed to house the statue.

"J. Pierpont Morgan, Collector: European Decorative Arts from the Wadsworth Atheneum" scheduled to open April 15th has been cancelled. The International Creamware Symposium to be held in conjunction with the Morgan exhibition will be re-scheduled for the spring of 1989.

Among the tasks required to replace the colossal statue are

special cement footings to hold the 47 ton Ramesses statue and the steel girders that will frame the three story building immediately contiguous to the existing atrium. The finished interior will resemble a temple with columns flanking the monolith image of Ramesses the Great.

A clerestory emitting light from under the eaves of the roof will top the temporary structure.

Sections will be left open so a giant crane can lift the statue in three segments into the building. The three

parts interlock and key together. The building, designed by Clark, Tibble, Harris and Li is then completed days before the exhibition opens.

Trustees firmly believe the impact of the colossus is well worth the extra efforts.

The Mint Museum Biennial, which is extended to May 1, is the last changing exhibition prior to the shutdown period.



PAUL ROUSSO  
NEW ART

## Paul Rousso's Odyssey

By William James Brock  
Post Entertainment Editor

After an 11-year odyssey that included work as a movie set designer and art director for a major New York advertising agency, artist Paul Rousso has returned to Charlotte. He opens a one-man show at the 119 E. Seventh St. building on Friday, March 4.

For the 29-year-old artist, son of mayor pro tem Al Rousso and wife Doris. It's a time of rebirth. "It's the classic thing of the young man on a journey, I guess," smiled the dark-eyed Rousso. "At some point he returns home to begin again."

Rousso began the journey as a student at the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1977, where he promptly chopped off his thumb with a table saw. Wearing a cast up to his elbow, he was sent by his parents to an art school in Atlanta. Bored with the curriculum, he preferred working as a magician in a local club.

Then began the combination of impulses, coincidences and chutzpah that already have led Rousso through a varied career he calls "a fairy tale."

On a whim, he moved to Oakland, Calif., at the invitation of Charlotte friend Robert Zimmerman, and enrolled in the California College of Arts and Crafts, where he earned a B.F.A. degree in 1981.

Meanwhile, visiting another friend in New York, he happened to meet the interior designer who was renovating a loft for actor Robert De Niro. "He showed me his drawings for the place, and I laughed at them," Rousso said. "I had just finished a design course, and I could tell he didn't know what he was doing. So he hired me. I stayed four months, we did the loft, and I had a great time seeing New York."

The day after graduation, he moved to Los Angeles. "I wanted to work in the movies--like nine billion other people," he said. "It was hard to find a job, and I was getting depressed. One night I was wandering down a back alley when I heard the sound of an air compressor. I followed it and met this artist who was working on something obviously due the next morning. His airbrush was clogged, so I loaned him mine, and we became friends. Turned out he was a scenic artist, and a few days later, he got me an interview that led to a job at Burbank Studios, the old Warner Brothers lot."

There Rousso designed and

Painted movie sets, dated starlets and worked on his own paintings--mostly stylized, decorative pastels of beautiful women. It's a fascination that grew out of the paintings of theatrical clowns that were his boyhood trademark. "Back in high school, whenever my friends were going to the beach, I'd do a clown to make some money. When I was about 18 or 19, the clowns started turning into women," he said.

"In California, people kept telling me that my style was more New York than California. So I put together 30 of these paintings and left for New York." After illustrating Bloomingdale's ads and greeting cards, he soon landed a position as art director for the Revlon account at Grey Advertising. For two years, he created product concepts, cast talent, and handled layout, design and execution of print and television ads and packaging for Revlon, as well as Gordon's Gin, Clairol, Coty, General Foods and others.

But as quickly as it began, the fairy tale was over. Revlon was bought out, and its new managers moved the account to another agency. On his own again, Rousso built a successful freelance career and spent more time on his art. New techniques, born of his advertising experience, already had found their way into the paintings of women.

"I started painting with oils over chromes I'd find in the garbage at the agency--rejects from photo sessions, or I'd find some on the street outside a photographer's studio," he said. "I'd blow the slides up into four-by-five-foot color prints, then paint over them. Or I'd xerox an image 100 times, blow it up and paint over that. Recently I've been doing videotapes, futzing around with the color, then shooting Polaroid photos off the monitor and blowing them up." Many of the paintings include a series of the letters "x" and "o," symbolizing hugs and kisses.

Rousso's women will be featured at his show, along with some whimsical pastel landscapes that he does "like a kid at kindergarten--just for fun." The show opens with a reception from 6-8 p.m. and runs through April 3. Gallery hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays and 1-7 p.m. weekends.



Stone Colossus of Ramesses II



Afro-American Cultural Center

## Big Apple Play

In celebration of the 2nd Anniversary in our new facility, the Afro-American Cultural Center will bring to Charlotte's Owens Auditorium the off-Broadway musical "No Where Fast" by LAW Productions of New York at 8 p.m., March 19th.

The play is a gospel comedy with a message of universal appeal. Young and old alike will enjoy melodious gospel music as it serves as the basis for an accurate story about the struggles of life. Eustace A. Johnson, a young, talented composer is responsible for this wonderful music. Johnson's original gospel compositions mixed with several traditional tunes totally capture gospel's rich culture. Playwright, actor, director, and producer Larry A. Woods makes "No Where Fast" a successful theatrical production that deals accurately and comprehensively with religious roots and life in

general. Mr. Woods, a veteran actor of fifteen years with such credits as the film, "Blowout", and daytime dramas, "Another World," and "One Life to Live" states, "I wanted to present a play with a positive theme, a theme that everyone can relate to... 'No Where Fast' fills that need...it's a form of entertainment the whole family can enjoy."

Come out and enjoy a fun-filled evening of "No Where Fast", March 19, 8 p.m. at Owens Auditorium, while at the same time supporting the Afro-American Cultural Center, a non-profit cultural and arts organization, as we celebrate the 2nd year in our new facility. Tickets available at the Coliseum Box Office. Patron tickets and more information available at the Afro-American Cultural Center, (704) 374-1565.

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