

# Spotlight

## Newly relocated gallery showcases N.C. artists' work



The pastel decomposing wall at the Somerhill Gallery in Eastgate Mall

Picture in your mind a blank wall. In the center of the wall, imagine a famous work by Picasso. Now try an Andy Warhol. Next conjure up a Jackson Pollock.

Think you're pretty cultured, huh? If so, try visualizing a work by a local artist. Uh oh. Is there a little snag in the slide projector?

Before you commit yourself to an asylum for the culturally inane, check out what might be Chapel Hill's hottest new addition to local culture, the new Somerhill Gallery in Eastgate Plaza.

The gallery, which has just expanded and relocated to Chapel Hill this week after 18 years in Durham, claims to be the largest commercial exhibit in the state. To validate this claim, it will begin a month-long exhibit on Sept. 29, of the works of more than 100 North Carolina painters, sculptors, photographers and glass-blowers.

The featured artist, Victor Huggins, is about as local as they get. If the name Huggins even sounds a little provincial, you're on the right track. Huggins' father was the founder of Huggins Hardware, donor of the first UNC official Ram mascot and author of the Tar Heel fight song.

Huggins, Jr., the artist, moved to the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia in 1969, after teaching at UNC for seven years. His works in the upcoming exhibition will consist largely of landscapes

### D'Ann Pletcher Gallery

inspired by the Appalachians.

Though only a few works are currently on display due to continuing construction on the interior of the gallery, what is there shows great promise.

In the foyer are a pair of chairs by Chapel Hill artist and former UNC faculty member Al Frega. Frega's medium is discarded-machine parts, which produce an interesting, if not comfortable, pair of chairs.

Another room contains recent works by North Carolina watercolor artists Debbie Arnold and A.F. Stewman. Both women use vivid colors for O'Keefe-like portrayals of nature and landscapes.

In the glass gallery, works — titled "Goblets with Body Parts" — by Chapel Hill artist William Bernstein entice the eye. His design is so fluid, one can hardly resist reaching out and touching the goblets to see if they are hardened or still malleable.

Not only is the gallery loaded with local talent, it is also, in the words of owner and director Joseph Rowand, "an oasis from the surrounding concrete." Giant peach-colored columns, picture windows bordered in purple, and a trellis, which will soon be cov-

ered with yellow jasmine, are refreshing standouts in an otherwise anonymous-looking mall.

The interior also claims more of the urbane than the urban. "We try to make the visitor feel as if he is entering another world," explains Rowand. He accomplishes this effect most immediately by obstructing the path of the visitor with a crumbling-pastel wall reminiscent of the ruins of Athens.

The initial delight with the unexpected remains undaunted throughout a tour of the gallery. The floors, which Rowand said came from his childhood memories of growing up on an Illinois farm, are made of fat, whitewashed wood planks painted lightly to reflect the pastels of the crumbling wall. Likewise, the burlap-covered walls at once contrast and harmonize with the more abstract effects and work to steer the imagination into a feeling of other-worldliness.

The track lighting, overlooking gallery and outdoor sculpture garden all help to create what Rowand envisions as a "sense of adventure from one gallery to the next."

Though the purpose of the gallery is ultimately to find paying patrons for the artists, the gallery staff welcomes the visual patron and hopes that students will make use of the opportunity to expand their artistic knowledge.

## Private world emerges in student's art

By DIANA FLORENCE

Staff Writer

Layers of thick, textured opaque colors subtly take hold and draw you into the private two-dimensional world that is David Solow's art.

The almost mystical quality of Solow's paintings makes them seem as if they are works of an experienced artist, but in fact, Solow, a senior studio art major, started painting and sculpting only three years ago at the age of 25.

"In a sense, my art was inevitable," Solow said. "I've always liked working with my hands. Before coming to UNC, I worked as a craftsman making boxes out of bamboo, a flower arranger and a carpenter. It's like my art was a natural progression."

He came to UNC after a friend raved about the art classes he was taking there. "At the time, I was interested in photography, but after learning that there was no photography program in the art department, I took a bunch of art classes and got hooked on painting and sculpting," Solow said.

The works of contemporary artists John Walker, Joeseeph Beuys and Anselm Kiefer have influenced his artistic style.

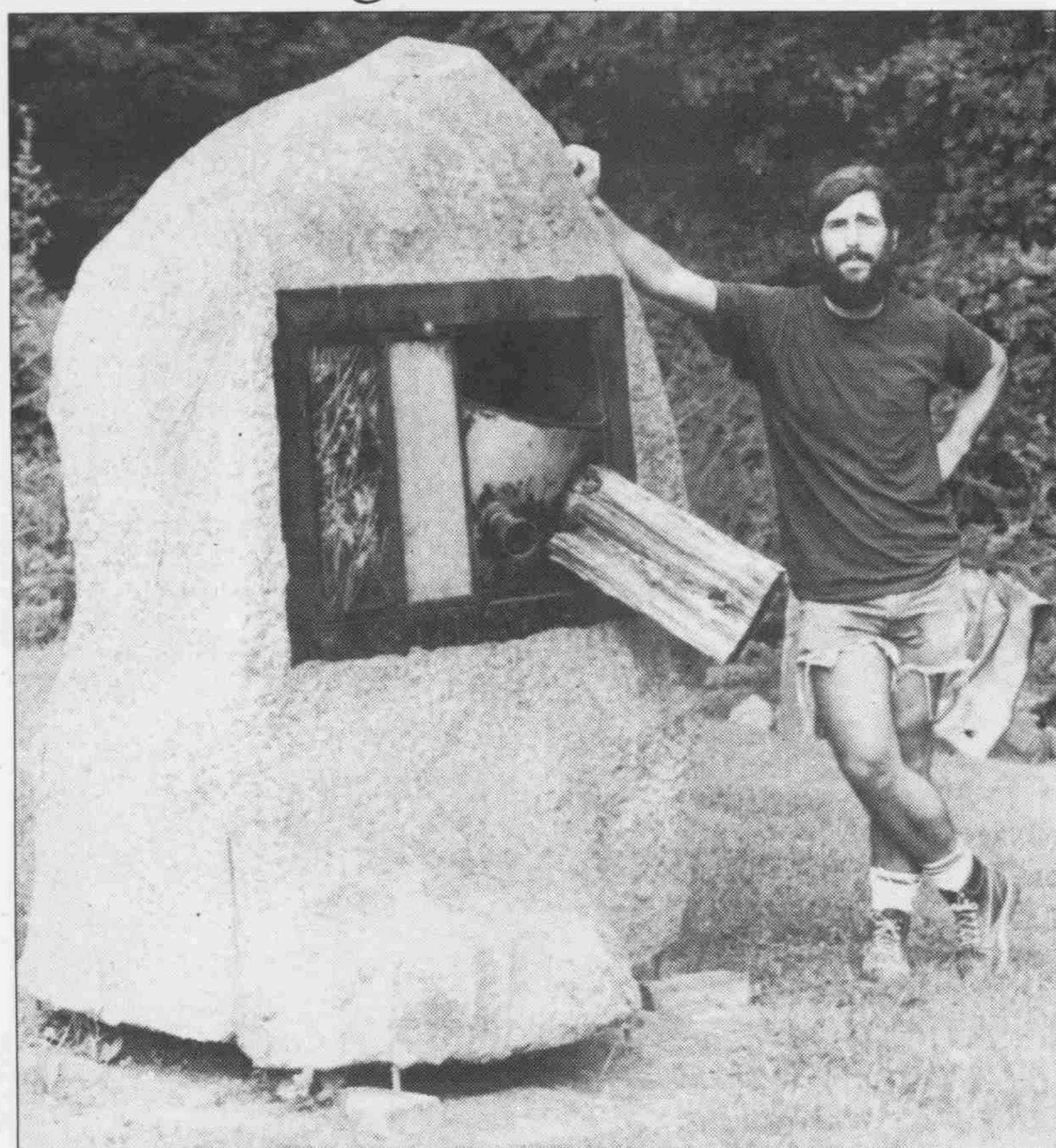
Over the past three years, Solow has created varied types of paintings and sculptures. He described his most recent paintings as "layered works which depict a record of the labor and time involved in the physical act of painting." His main purpose in these works, he said, is to illustrate the sometimes difficult probing the artist goes through in creating and the joy felt when the creation is complete.

"It is a passionate, physical process of search and discover," he said.

Although he enjoys both painting and sculpting, Solow finds one drawback to painting. "Painting has its own two-dimensional world that is at odds with the world around it. Sculpture interacts with the surrounding world, changing its meaning according to its context," he said.

Solow prefers to sculpt with wood, metal and non-biodegradable garbage. In his sculptures, he said he likes to bring things that are opposite together.

In a work called "Approaching a Whole," for example, he brings together a shattered window and a large granite rock. "In this work, I wanted to bring together a charged moment with the shattered glass and a quiet moment with the stillness of the granite. I also wanted to explore the im-



Artist David Solow with his sculpture

DTH/Jodi Anderson

probability of a window in a rock," he said.

Solow paints and sculpts what is important to him at that moment and responds to how he feels as he creates, he said. "You don't have to be an art historian to understand my art. No elitism is involved; whatever you think it is, is what it is supposed to be. It really doesn't matter what I think it means. I'm just the guy who made it."

To him, art is wonderfully irrational. "I believe that there are a lot of things — like love, art and religion — that defy language and instead must be

sensed or felt. There is too much of a tendency to label things in today's world," he said.

And art has become a way of life for Solow. "It is sometimes difficult because my time is torn between art, my personal life and my other classes. Sometimes I can get caught up in an inspiration to create and completely forget about that Spanish test the next day," he said.

But his art can become frustrating. "It's hard sometimes because I'm still a student and haven't mastered all the techniques of painting and sculpting,"

Solow said.

While he has been at UNC, Solow's work has been shown in several art shows in Hanes Art Center.

He enjoys having his work shown, because it provides him with valuable response, he said. "I feel that anyone who shuts the rest of the world out to become totally involved with their art, will ultimately run out of inspiration because art is a reaction to the world around us. It is important to me to get feedback from all different sources, faculty, friends and regular guys."

## Union series promises exciting performances

By CRICKET FRENCH

Staff Writer

Dance, drama and live music will set Memorial Hall on fire this year with the 1989-90 Carolina Union Performing Arts Series.

The series will offer something for everyone, according to Julie Wyne, public relations chairwoman for the Union Activities Board. "For some it's a new experience. For those who already have a love of the arts, then it's there for them to enjoy. It's an excellent chance for students to be able to experience a diversity of performances without having to fly to New York to do it."

The Carolina Performing Arts Series committee has been working to provide the best entertainment lineup at the best price for this year's series, said Meredith Simpson, committee head for the series. As a result, ticket prices have been reduced by 50 percent for UNC students.

"I want students to be able to afford the shows and see the shows," Simpson said. "Chapel Hill, being the school that it is, offers students many opportunities to learn, inside and outside the classroom. Some of these outside learning experiences can also be very entertaining. This is why we have such an outstanding program this year."

The program begins Oct. 17 with the Chicago Symphony Chamber Ensemble. The eight-member group will perform classical chamber music by Boccherini, Bolcom and Mozart.

"The Chicago ensemble players represent the best there is," said Ann Woodward, chairwoman of the UNC music department. Tickets for the concert are \$7 for students and \$12 for non-students.

On Nov. 2, the Lar Lubovitch Dance

Company will perform. The 20-year-old company has played Carnegie Hall and was the first modern dance group to have performed at the Mostly Mozart Festival. Tickets are \$8 for students and \$14 for non-students.

Coming directly from London is the Players Theatre on Nov. 30. The traditional music hall revue will feature the comedy, dance, music and vaudeville of turn-of-the-century England. Chapel Hill is among the stops on the theatre's first U.S. tour. The ticket price is \$8 for students, \$14 for non-students.

On Jan. 25, The Chamber Orchestra of Cannes will perform under the direction of world-famous conductor Philippe Bender, featuring a program by Rameau, Devienne, Mozart and Haydn. Tickets are \$7 for students and \$12 for non-students.

"Dreamgirls" appears on Feb. 14. As one of the most popular musicals of the decade, "Dreamgirls" cleaned up the Tony Awards in 1982.

As part of the Union Series, "Dreamgirls" already has outsold every other show, with only half of the tickets left. Remaining student tickets are \$9.50 and non-student tickets are \$17.

"Me and My Girl" opens on March 7. The British musical, which won three Tony awards and the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical, tells the story of a merry Englishman who inherits the position of earldom but doesn't fit the part. Student ticket price is \$9.50; non-student ticket price is \$17.

The Lewitzky Dance Company will conclude the series on March 30. Student tickets are \$8, and non-student tickets are \$14.

All shows will begin at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall.

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