

'What I'm really getting involved with is line structure and illusion of space. . . . The arch is simply a symbol.'

— Ray Frost Fleming

Staff photos by Mindy Saunders



Arch opens new vistas for Fleming's work

By Corinne Abelt
staff writer

Ray Frost Fleming's conversations about art are almost as strong and captivating as his new paintings.

He's the kind of guy who could sell contemporary paintings to the aborigines — and make them glad they blew their last couch shell or blue bead. It's always pleasant to be with an artist who can express himself in more than one medium.

Fleming is pleased with his new show which opened at Birmingham's Robert L. Kidd Galleries where he is director last Saturday. It may be new work, but it still has the familiar Ray Fleming touch, the carefully designed random structures, the well planned lines which appear so casual and the somewhat horizontal division of the canvases.

The theme running through the watercolors and acrylics of the new show is "arches," in varying degrees of visibility.

"What I'm really getting involved in is line structure and illusion of space," said Fleming in his studio just before

the opening. "The arch is simply a symbol."

WITHIN the body of these large paintings, some almost 6-by-5 feet, many things happen. There may be only three basic colors showing with several hues of each, but there actually seems to be more — which, indeed, there is. That's because each canvas is underpainted and the traces of the undercolor, visible close up, still remain around the edges of the forms.

Fleming repeats the same color across the canvases showing it each time in a different spatial level. The blue, black, mauve or red, which dominates one corner of the canvases on one side recedes into the background on the other. The links and balances from one part of the canvases to another are always there, sometimes with drawing like lines, at others with a wide, stroke that could be the top of an arch.

WHILE all of Fleming's recent work has been abstract, his use of shadow in these new paintings ties him loosely to the realists. And shading and shadow-

ing give the paintings an added dimension as does the use of perspective in certain areas.

Don't expect Fleming to become a

realist in his next show, however, he's just successfully incorporating some of the basics to lessen the flatness of his picture plane.

Fleming tends to gallery business during the day and likes to paint late into the night when he's least likely to be disturbed.

The exhibition will continue through Nov. 12. Gallery hours are 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 107 Townsend, Birmingham.

OU establishes Center for the Arts

Carl F. Barnes Jr. has been appointed the first director of the Oakland University Center for the Arts.

The appointment was made by Dean Brian P. Copenhaver, College of Arts and Sciences.

In his new half-time position, the art history professor coordinates campus arts activities and promotes the center itself. The center replaces the School of Performing Arts and encompasses the art and art history, theater and dance and music departments. Student music and theater productions are also promoted by Barnes.

This new administrative structure provides a central agency for promoting campus arts activities. The restructuring doesn't affect students directly

— the center isn't an academic unit — nor does the relationship between the department chairs and the dean change.

The OU board of trustees created the center in accordance with the committee on academic mission and priorities recommendations. All of the former school of performing arts programs are incorporated into the College of Arts and Sciences under the Center for the Arts in Varner Hall.

BARNES SAID that the university's support of education in the arts hasn't been reduced. The changes were made after the university took stock of its needs and resources.

*Oakland is not prepared to make

the staff commitment, the budget commitment or the space commitment that is implied by the title of a separate entity — the school of performing arts," he said. "The university, however, is not getting out of the arts business."

"We're recognizing our limitations and being realistic about what we can and cannot do and recognizing the fact that the academic arts programs are different from, and have a different purpose from, the Meadow Brook enterprises."

Goals for Barnes include strengthening the relationship between the university student arts programs and the separate professional productions of the Meadow Brooks. He will also develop an interdisciplinary program to ac-

quaint more non-art students with the center's offerings.

Barnes' interest in the arts started by chance while he was a Washington & Lee University student in the 1950s. A visit to Europe and tours of cathedrals sparked his interest in art and he pursued an education in the field.

He later received his master's and doctorate from Columbia University and taught at Penn State and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

He came to OU in 1971 and has taught art history, archaeology and now a course about prints. He has served as assistant to the dean and written numerous articles and a book about medieval art.



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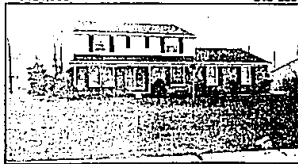
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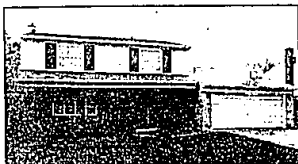
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