

Biographer probes photographer's tragic life

"Diane Arbus, A Biography," Patricia Bosworth, Alfred A. Knopf, \$17.95
By Chuck Moses
Special writer

up the work of photographer Diane Arbus, this is it.
Arbus relentlessly captured the freaks, the outcasts, the lonely and the grotesque in our society. Her most famous pictures, "Jewish Giant with His Parents," the nudist series, the shots of wealthy children, all find a common

humility in the strangest and loneliest of forms.
Yet the life of this artist was a maelstrom of contradiction, insanity, sexual politics, and finally a deep despair that ended in her 1971 suicide. Now Patricia Bosworth probes this strange and fertile life in "Diane Arbus, A Biography."

"I DON'T PRETEND to have the answers. Diane was extremely contradictory. She would make a statement one minute, then totally contradict herself the next, and be completely unconcerned. She deliberately threw up smokescreens and enjoyed creating an air of mystery around her," said Bosworth, an experienced and professional journalist who candidly admits this was a difficult subject.

THIS BOOK is fascinating, yet disturbing as it explores the roots of this sad and seductive person. Rejected person by the Arbus estate to use any of Diane's pictures, Bosworth nonetheless paints a vivid and wide canvas of not only the lives but the times surrounding the artist.
By the late 1950s both Arbus and her husband yearned for other creative outlets. She finally quit the studio to take classes and work on creative images.

um of Modern Art, curators had to come in every morning to wipe off spit from the Arbus pictures.
But as her fame grew, so did her loneliness and despair.
Raised from childhood to live dependent on a man, she was desperate and lost when her husband divorced her, and moved to California for an acting career.
Her growing fame brought unwelcome pressures and money became a constant worry to the woman who had grown up wealthy.

Orchids & Onions awards rate local architecture

By Tom Panzenhagen
staff writer

gave them an onion — although we hope that will happen — but I read an article in the paper the other day that said the Renaissance Center is taking steps to improve its traffic flow and graphic signage, and that's what we cited them for," Baba said.

Eastland and Fairlane, Meadow Brook, New Center Frameworks, the Southfield Civic Center, Campbell-Lewis Inc., and the Science Center in Troy.

Ballooning is under way for the third annual Orchids & Onions awards.
The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) again is sponsoring the program that's designed to increase public awareness of the environment.
An orchid is awarded for a project that exemplifies quality, good taste and design excellence. An onion might be given due to lack of landscaping or insensitive use of natural resources.
Last year the Cranbrook Educational Community received an orchid award for its living heritage. Special mention was made of its efforts to research, maintain and return the landscape to its original design.
The Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham and Bingham Center, a three-building office complex in Bingham Farms, received onion awards last year.
The library was cited for its new, modern addition that's in sharp contrast with the original, Tudor-style structure. Bingham Center was singled out for its lack of landscaping and incompatibility with its surroundings.

THE JURY consists of chairman Robert Benson, architectural critic for the Detroit News and associate professor of architecture at Lawrence Institute of Technology; Louis Cook, retired editorial writer for the Detroit Free Press; Lee Hanson, vice president and general manager of radio station WQRS; Bernie Moray, president of Gorman's furniture; Nickie McWhirter, Detroit Free Press columnist; Robert Searlen Swanson of the American Institute of Architects, and Brian Collins and Caroline Torley of the ASID.
This year's awards ceremony, which will be a public affair for the first time, will honor Cook.

Or letters of nomination may be sent to Orchids & Onions, 29145 Telegraph, Southfield 48034.

Previous Orchids & Onions winners are not eligible. They are:

Cranbrook, Baldwin Library, Bingham Center, Renaissance Center, Corktown Historical Society home, Detroit Receiving Hospital, downtown Northville, MacKenzie House, Michigan National Bank of Detroit (Sibley Branch), Mill Itaco Village, New Center Commons, New Center One, St. John's Armenian Apostolic Church, Woodbridge Carriage House, Silver's Inc. National headquarters, and Washington Boulevard.

"Anyone who read his column (in the Free Press) knows that he's into historical preservation, so when we formed the program we decided to ask him to be a juror," Baba said. "He has served us well and constantly come up with ideas to improve the program, and we are proud to have this opportunity to honor him."

The awards are sponsored by ASID with the assistance of the Michigan Council for the Arts, the Design Lighting Program, and the Designers Lighting Forum.
For more information, call 353-9880

JULIE BABA, ASID program chairwoman, called the awards "people's awards."
"No technical expertise or special knowledge is required," she said. "This is the public's opportunity to react and be heard. We're hoping people will become more aware by having to think about what they would give an orchid or an onion to."

Winners will be announced at a brunch on Saturday, Sept. 29, at the Detroit Golf Club. Cost and time of the brunch have yet to be determined.

Deadline for submitting ballots is Monday, Aug. 27.

Nominations for Orchids & Onions awards are made by the public and submitted to a jury of professionals. Every nomination is considered but total votes for a particular structure is not a determining factor. About 250 ballots were submitted last year.
"One former onion winner is doing something about what they were cited for," Baba said.
"We're not taking credit because we

VOTING CATEGORIES include historical preservation, graphic design and signage, landscape design, environmental design, architectural design in public buildings, and interior design in public buildings.

Ballots are available at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, Birmingham Community House, Cranbrook, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Public Library, Hudson's at Northland,

BORN INTO a wealthy Jewish merchant family (they owned the Ruseck's Fifth Avenue store in New York), Arbus grew up insulated from the harsh world of the Depression. This separation from life affected her profoundly.

"She thought the world she grew up in wasn't the real world. Nothing was real to her until she experienced it," Bosworth said. "Arbus constantly felt what she called 'the pain of being immune.'"

At 14 she fell in love with Allan Arbus and married him at 18. The two opened a studio and became high-fashion photographers during the 1950s, a golden age for commercial photography. Ironically, author Bosworth once posed for the Arbuses during a stint as a model.

DRIVEN BY a compulsion to seek the dark, strange world forbidden by her parents, Arbus dove into the lives of freaks and the inhabitants of the demimonde.
"She was constantly frightened, and needed to overcome that fear daily," Bosworth said.

"Those places carried real danger. In researching the book, I approached 42nd Street and the other places very carefully, very timidly. I found some of the same people she had photographed. I came away with a great appreciation for her courage."

Arbus' photos expanded the range of the permissible in the growing discipline of photojournalism. Her confrontational, controversial images evoked intense reactions. When exhibited at the Muse-

"DIANE ARBUS was one of the significant creative personalities of the '60s. I was fascinated both by her as a person and the world of photography in those years. In some way I can understand her. She was an obsessive person and I am too," said Bosworth. "But I don't want to get into analyzing or judgments. Tell the story. Just tell the story."

"She showed the frankness in the normal and normally in the freaks."
The tragedy lay in her inability to see these qualities in herself.

The story of Diane Arbus is well told in this book. Intense and strange, Arbus nonetheless found that human qualities transcend society's idea of "normal."



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