

McGhee creates world of perfect harmony

By Benita Bornstein
special writer

"Nature is my best teacher," claims native Detroit artist Allie McGhee, whose most recent paintings (1983-84) are at the Sheldon Ross Gallery of Birmingham.

As a close observer of nature, McGhee integrates experience, personal philosophy and materials into his highly textured paintings. By allowing shape, color and textural variation to work together, he creates a statement of natural harmony.

The repetitive use of figurative symbols, such as the triangle (mind-body-spirit) and crescent (moon, horn) vary according to the concept of the work. His palette is subtle and muted to earth tones shot with primary colors.

The materials such as oil, acrylic, joint compound and metallics assume a

variation of surface response — the material itself suggesting dense viscosity.

There is a three-dimensional quality to the paintings as McGhee moves from the flat unpainted masonite to a heavily encaustic, often flaking, bubbled and cracked, but sometimes slick and shiny surface.

THIS IS McGhee's statement that all components must be well orchestrated to achieve a harmonious balance — a metaphor for the balance of nature — in fact, many of the pieces are musically titled.

In "3/4 Time" the tilted triangular shape of a sail rendered in slick shiny electric blue has an upbeat movement and energy as the thick whitened bubbled and cracked-like surf explodes in a spray. The brownish-red of the unpainted masonite suggests a symphony of nature-earth, water, sky.

"Jungle Suite," with the suggestion of a giraffe, bright blue plumage, and foliage, is another example of the world in perfect harmony. Since becoming an avowed vegetarian, McGhee feels freer to observe the beauty of animals — their motion, personality and moods — their oneness with man.

Although McGhee communicates a love and commitment to his work, he also evokes a sense of humor. The two-dimensional beautifully painted painter's stick is McGhee's way of saying that often the tool is as wonderful as the work.

His placement of a protractor, a geometric tool of mathematical balance and proportion, suggests not only the intrusion of science into art, but that the two exist together.

Allie McGhee's commitment to art extends to the larger art community where he has been active for almost 20

years. He has taught at Oakland Community College, Your Heritage House and presently at Northern High School where he is artist in residence.

In addition to teaching and inspiring talented and interested young artists, he also works with inmates at the Wayne County Jail.

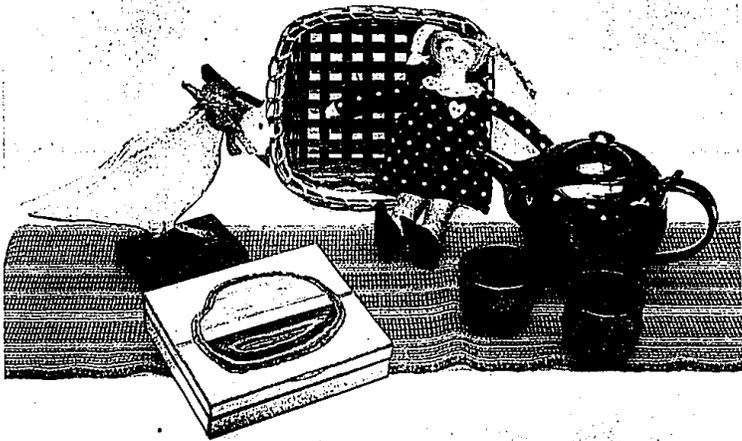
McGHEE is represented in a large number of private and public collections, and in 1982 was commissioned to create a large mural for the Martin Luther King Center in Detroit.

His work has appeared in several national exhibitions: Black American Artists (Chicago), Mid-West Artists Exhibit (Milwaukee), The Art Center (Ansburg, Canada), Kalamazoo Art Center and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The exhibition runs through Nov. 24. Sheldon Ross Gallery is at 250 Marin, Birmingham. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



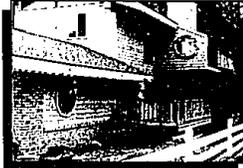
Detroit artist Allie McGhee creates richly textured surfaces of oils, acrylics and other substances for his current series of paintings which have an upbeat feeling to them. This one is titled "Masquerade."



Celebrating the holidays

The Holiday Sales Show which opens at Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association Monday and continues through Saturday, Dec. 8, is always a colorful harbinger of the season ahead. A highlight of the show is the huge Christmas tree with original ornaments by 60 artists. There will be many new artists such as

Sharon Hubbard, pottery, Janice Haddad, evening purses, and Wayne Peterson and Kathy Burtcher-Peterson, windsocks and kites. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Friday, until 4 p.m. Saturday, 1518 S. Cranbrook at 14 Mile, Birmingham.



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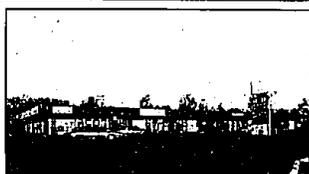
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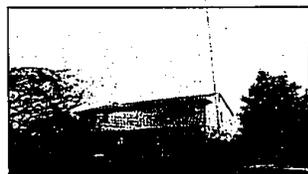
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