

ART ON THE EDGE



WILLIAM HANSEN

Cultural Concerns: Jason Yates serves up plenty of food for thought in an installation piece constructed from toast and Vaseline.

Young artist uses toaster on traditions

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Jason Yates uses innovative materials and concepts to create artworks ranging from a teddy bear wrapped in duct tape to a seven foot installation of toast alattered with Vaseline. Through his work, Yates questions self as well as cultural values all the while incorporating a childlike sense of whimsy.

The creative young artist's constructions and "Vaseline Toast" installation as well as a painting were on exhibit through July at Urban Park-Detroit Art Center in Greentown's Trapper's Alley.

"I hope viewers get a sense of themselves, remember something they forgot or realize something they never did before," said the graduate of Birmingham Seaholm High School.

"No Title," a construction consisting of black plastic projecting like so many worms from a water-like wood box, confronts the dark side of the mind.

"If you look at the piece with the hoses, you begin to understand we live in fear of what we don't understand, what we don't know," he said. "That's when the dark side comes out. As children we're scared of the monster that hides under your bed. As we mature, we still maintain a large part of our childhood. The monster just changes."

Yates is in his final year of study for a bachelor of fine art degree from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor after transferring from Center for Creative Studies in Detroit.

"There's always a dark side to what I'm working on, a naive quality," he added. "There has to be the dark with the light."

Yates' provocative toast and Vaseline installation provides plenty of food for thought in combination with light-hearted satire.

"There's a certain amount of vulgarity in our traditions and mores in our country," he said. "The Vaseline's to symbolize the ridiculousness of our culture and our daily routines and rituals, the patterns that we set for ourselves. We're strong ties to linear time and we're ruled by that."

"Some people choose love. Some people choose money. It has to do with choices we make and what we do with our life."

Yates constructed the toast primarily on site after spending four hours at home toasting the bread. Dowel rods through the center prevented it from toppling over but Yates didn't foresee the amount of touching the bread would have to endure. Over the course of the show, he had to repair the artwork several times.

"They cannot help touching it because it's a real; people are interacting with it," he said. "Whether they laughed at its stale humor or scoffed at it, just to have their reactions, I had moments of their lives."

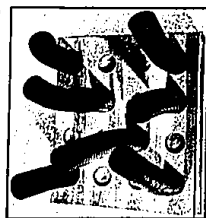
If you're wondering about the asking price for this work of art, Yates evokes innovation here, also. "There's a hilarity to the piece. To add to the hilarity, I just ask for dinner and a massage."

Yates sees himself a little like the bound teddy bear in "Overprotected Childhood." Art assists the quest for himself. He strives to incorporate an introspective element in much of his work so that others question their existence.

See TOASTER, 7A

Wormy

Wormy
Wafers:
Yates ex-
plores the
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construction
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Sweet revival for the 'Bunch'

■ The first blended family of television, "The Brady Bunch" captivated America with its sappy sweetness. Now four of the weekly shows have been turned into a stage show, "The Real Live Brady Bunch," that comes to the Strand Theater this week.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Davy Jones is making good on a promise he made years ago as lead singer of the Monkees — he's coming to our town.

Jones will star as himself for a week, beginning Aug. 10 in "The Real Live Brady Bunch" — a four week, long recreation of four episodes of "The Brady Bunch," complete with a laugh track, at the Strand Theatre in Pontiac.

"I did it in Los Angeles a few months ago," Jones said. "I love everything about it — about being me, about the '60s when TV was fun, not like some shows that are on now."

STREET BEATS

He is squeezing in the play between concert appearances around the United States. These days his schedule is so hectic that he won't be able to rehearse with the Pontiac cast before opening night.

"I'm just wandering into the 'Brady Bunch' show," he said.

The Davy Jones episode, where Marcia is set on being with Jones, will kick off the play's run. A different episode is recreated each week. Those include: "Oh, My Nose," "The Silver Platters" featuring the tune "Sunshine Day," and "Time to Change."

This is the first time the play, which originated in Chicago, will run in this area. Barry Saltzman, who plays Mike Brady, said so far the play's tour is going over well.

"It's gone over really well; Most people know all the lines, especially, 'Oh, My Nose.' Practically every line gets a response," said Saltzman during a tour stop in Atlanta, Ga.

"When Jan comes in, people applaud for a minute then every line Jan has she gets a hoot or something. The response is amazing. This is sort of a rebirth of vaudeville."

"A lot of people said this is the death of theater. I see it as the rebirth of vaudeville," Saltzman said.

"The audiences are able to interact with the actors. The lines are funny. People shout them out. The more audience participation, the



The 'Bunch': Members of "The Real Live Brady Bunch" are Barry Saltzman as Mike (top row, from left), Carrie Aizley as Jan, Patrick Towne as Greg (center row, from left), Brett Paesel as Carol, Kimmin O'Donnell as Marcia, Benjamin Zook as Peter (bottom row, from left), Biff Rickard as Bobby and Nora Laudani as Cindy.

more give and take, the more fun it is."

It was created with that in mind by sisters Jill and Faith Soloway at Matraform's Annoyance Theatre in Chicago, where it opened in June 1990 and ran for 14 months. The Soloways got the idea for "The Real Live Brady Bunch" when Jill's friend, actress Becky Thyre, entertained them with a dead-on imitation of middle child Jan Brady. Faith responded with the idea that they bring the act to the stage.

Due to its popularity, the Soloway sisters aren't working on the show anymore.

"It became a job and I always said that when it became a job, I would stop doing it," said Faith from her

San Francisco, Calif., home.

Since its creation, most of the original "Brady" cast has seen the play and approved of it — even creator Sherwood Schwartz who had reservations about the performance.

"When he saw it, he realized it's not this huge money-making thing. We did it justice. It wasn't maligned," Soloway said.

The episodes are re-enacted line-by-line with some ad libbing. That's one of the things Saltzman likes about the show.

"We've formed a certain looseness with it. It's also nice to play the staple force in the show. It's a fun. People ask me for advice which is funny because I'm so far from the typical father."

Like Jones, he also likes the sweet innocence about the television show which began its run during the Vietnam War.

"There's a certain warmth that 'The Brady Bunch' had, a certain gracefulness and respect and charm that's so lacking in today's culture."

For Kate Flannery, who plays Carol Brady, the pantsuits are what gets her.

"There's tons of pantsuits, lots of layers. It's worth it," she said.

"The Real Live Brady Bunch" will run Aug. 10 through Sept. 4 at the Strand Theatre, 12 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac. Call 335-3540 for more information. For group sales, call Maureen McCurdy at 334-1988, Ext. 210.



Moving up: The Gin Blossoms — Jesse Valenzuela (from left), Phillip Rhodes, Scott Johnson, Bill Leen and Robin Wilson — have discovered success can mean a tour bus and deli trays.

Blossoms adjust to a deli lifestyle

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Spending time in a grocery store may not be all that exciting for most people, but for the Gin Blossoms, it means a nice lifestyle change.

"With this tour, we get a deli tray everyday; this is the first time we had a (deli) bus," said lead singer Robin Wilson from a pay phone amid the clattering of the shopping carts in a Long Island, N.Y., grocery store.

"We had to stop and get a squirt bottle of mayonnaise... It's a big development in the band."

The band is touring with reggae/

cover song kings UB40 and will play Pine Knob on Tuesday, Aug. 10. Aside from the major tour, during the last couple months Wilson's band has blossomed into an MTV favorite with the song "Hey Jealousy" off the year-old album "New Miserable Experience."

Wilson said he thinks the single has finally taken off because it's a "summertime" song.

"'Hey Jealousy,' 'Allison Road,' 'Mrs. Rita,' all of the songs off the album make me think about summer."

See BLOSSOMS, 7A

Tuesday, Aug. 10

UR40
With the Gin Blossoms at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 175 and Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. (R 859/rocka rock)
377-0100

ROCKCHINA
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
996-8555

2 IGUANAS FROM EARTH
The Grand Cafe, 33316 Grand River, Farmington.
6-8181

Wednesday, Aug. 11
THE FASTBACKS
With Whiplast at Blind Pig, Ann Arbor. ("The Ramones meet the Shitlows")
996-8555

DROPPING NAMES
Gayle's Chocolates, Royal Oak.
398-0001

IN CONCERT

Cecil Bridgewater
With the Wendell Hamilton Quintet at the Magic Bag Theatre Cafe, 22920 Woodward, Farmdale.
544-3030

LIFE ON MARS
With Joy Blender and Slug at the Ritz, 17500 Camino, Roseville.
178-9150

SPEDBALL
With Fleety Cadavers and Bear Whores at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit.
961-MELT

Thursday, Aug. 12
THE CHARM FARM
CD release party for "Flirt" and special performance at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac.
398-0001

ac.
334-1999
THE MIND
With Fiction at 3-D, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak.
589-3344

BLACK WATER STATION
With Love Hammer at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac.
334-9292

DON'T LOOK NOW JUS BAND
Atvin's, 5758 Cass, Detroit.
832-2355

FOUR HANDS
Hosts Open Mic night at Gotham City Cafe, 22848 Woodward, Farmdale.
398-7430

VERVE PIPE
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
996-8555

Friday, Aug. 13
THE FACTORY
Techno dance night at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac.
334-1999

DWIGHT YOKUM
With Suzi Boggess at Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University, Watson and Squirrel roads, Rochester.
396-7600

STATE THEATRE SUMMER SPLASH
Three reggae bands at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit.
961-5451

See IN CONCERT, 8A