

Street

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1994

ART ON THE EDGE

Searching:
Artist
Dennis Jones
searches for
identity in an
untitled
installation
at the Willis
Gallery in
Detroit.



Self-exploration shows in his art

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

A dramatic installation by artist Dennis Jones deals with the search for identity and the ability to define and change self-destructive behavioral patterns. Cathartic in nature, the exhibit presents a sea of images to taunt, tease and tempt viewers with a psychological house of mirrors.

Take a look for yourself. Jones' untitled one-man show runs June 24 to July 15 at the Willis Gallery, 422 W. Willis and Cass, Detroit. Upon entering the gallery an 11-foot-long niche begins the journey. On the wall to the right five file drawers, covered with plaster, feature lone porcelain figures sealed in wax. To the left, five steel-coated muslin dolls use the irony of the materials as a response to the unnatural role men are forced to assume in our society.

As you enter the primary space, directly in front of you 10 7-foot tall panels spanning 30 feet across the wall, each with a faceless life-size figure painted in a palette of black and white. As if lost in a foggy inner world, the 10 figures alternately emerge and recede in repetition.

"These paintings are about looking back; the figures have to do with opening up and expressing my emotions clearly and a tendency to withdraw," said Jones in an interview in his Westland apartment. "Some of them just have an outline form. I wanted to emphasize this emerging from the background, a freeze-thaw, a freezing of emotions, a thawing of emotions."

"The figure has a fragile quality, and the fact that there's no features, it's as if it's looking for an identity."

Jones juggles multiple mediums and issues in the installation. To the right of the paintings, 100 3-by-5 black-and-white photographs of singular figures are aligned horizontally in rows of 20. To the left, drawings on mylar quiz the mind. Working through a divorce that became final in January, Jones reflects on the past and what went wrong.

"The identity issue relates specifically to my divorce, trying to start anew," he said. "How do you respond to the notion, you've been married for nine years and then all of a sudden the relationship has changed drastically?"

Jones' work has come a long way since receiving his master of fine arts in painting from Wayne State University in 1990, and a two-man show at Swidler Gallery in 1992. From darkness to light, Jones' search for self has paid off big time, and as always, the work is confrontational.

In the 1992 show at Swidler, Jones' paintings were dark and heavy incorporating iron, steel, dirt and bones into the rough but flat surfaces. He used a power sander, torch and wide spackler to work the medium.

As part of a group show at the Detroit Artist's Market in 1993, Jones, colors became vivid and bright. Gone was the roughness and zealous working of the medium. His newest work emerges the overall winner, a struggle with emotions that proves everything isn't always black and white.

The installation at the Willis combines Jones' talents as architect and artist. A graduate of the University of Detroit School of Architecture, Jones opened his own studio, providing architectural and design/rendering services in 1992. Previously, he had worked for a variety of architecture/design companies, including Peterkenzars Design.

In 1989, he won the City of Troy Beautification Award for Design of a Michigan National Bank branch, and in 1984 was awarded the second-place Design Award and \$5,000 cash prize in the International New York Vietnam Veterans' Memorial competition.

Jones, who has served on the drawing faculty of Wayne State University and Macomb Community College, is presently teaching at UD's School of Architecture. This strong architectural background surfaces in his use of space in the installation.

"My architectural background has had an effect on how I respond to space; I really take into account the space," he said. "There's a certain regularity of size with a place. I like to establish a rhythm as you walk around the space."

Plans for the installation began last fall after Jones submitted slides to the gallery for consideration. A muslin doll bought at a craft shop served as a jumping-off point.

"I hope people take time to connect. It has to do with fear. It has to do with trust, being aware of yourself, how they might respond to a person they're involved with in a relationship. I hope it helps someone else become aware of themselves." The opening of Jones' installation will be 6-10 p.m. Friday, June 24, at the gallery. For information call (313) 831-0136.

Kids come first for Biohazard

■ Don't expect gangsta rap or gut-wrenchingly violent lyrics from Biohazard. In "State of the World Address" they just tell it like they've seen it.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER



Don't call Biohazard "a sellout" for jumping from independent label Roadrunner Records to the giant Warner Bros. Records. They just followed their hearts.

"A sellout is someone who isn't true to themselves, who prostitutes themselves for somebody else's gain," said bassist/vocalist Evan Seinfeld in a phone interview from London, England. "What we're doing is for us. Whoever puts out (our) record is always going to make more money than we do on it so we want to make sure whoever does it does the best job they can do."

Most of the time, guitarist Bobby Hamel said, those who slap that label on Biohazard are being hypocritical anyway.

"There's a lot of kids that talk about sellout, as if they know what the word means. Meanwhile, they wake up every day, go to a job that they know is going to pay them at the end of the week that they hate," he said. "Now who's the sellout?"

Last month, the band released its first effort for Warner Bros., "State of the World Address." Produced by Ed Stasium (Living Colour), the album tells the hard rock band's view of the world in 14 songs.

"We try to confront a lot of social issues, not just because anyone else does or doesn't... because it's important to us," he added.

For example, "Love Denied" is a song about dysfunctional families that suggests "a notion of forgiveness." The song is especially important to Seinfeld, who found out a month ago that he's going to be a father. It has made him think about how he is going to treat his baby.

"I'm very conscious already; I'm thinking about every little thing," he said. "There's so many kinds of abuse — physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual, emotional. So many people don't realize they're abusing their kids."

Inner-city lifestyles, Vietnam veterans and anger are some of the other topics touched upon in "State



of the World Address." By voicing their opinions about issues like these, Biohazard hopes to turn around the lives of troubled kids. Having grown up in Brooklyn, the band can relate.

"We're just four regular (guys) out of the streets (whose) lives were saved by this band. We were all headed on self-destruction courses," Seinfeld said.

They deem this mission so important that the band has chose to visit youth homes in lieu of signing autographs at record stores. Biohazard wants to be these kids' one positive role model.

STREET BEATS

"That's why we don't have any qualms about doing public service announcements," Seinfeld said. "Our record company wanted us to do all these in-store (appearances). We told the record company, 'All the time you guys have allotted for us to do a record signing, we're gonna go to youth homes and group homes

where kids who are under 21 are incarcerated."

Most of these kids have heard the rap-laden hard rock of Biohazard so they're apt to listen to what the band says, he added.

It's been a way of life for the quartet — which also includes vocalist/guitarist Billy Graziadei and drummer Danny Schuler — since they formed in 1988. Their near-obsessive self-promotion early in their career is part of the reason Biohazard has gotten this far, Seinfeld said. Part of their deal with Warner Bros. is that they get total creative freedom.

"We've always done all the work ourselves. Back when we first started the band in '88, we'd go out every other night putting up posters with the Biohazard symbol and just 'Biohazard' underneath. We just kind of forced it on everybody," he said.

They played small clubs "until people started coming back." A year later, the band signed with Maze Records and sold more than 40,000 copies of their self-titled debut. In 1992 Roadrunner Records linked a

Not too dangerous:
Recently signed to Warner Bros. Records, Biohazard — Billy Graziadei, Bobby Hamel, Danny Schuler and Evan Seinfeld — performs at The Palace of Auburn Hills June 25.

deal with Biohazard. Following suit, the album "Urban Discipline" sold 300,000 copies worldwide. The video for the single "Punishment" has since become one of the most played videos on MTV's "Headbanger's Ball."

The massive distribution capabilities of Warner Bros. Records has made "State of the World Address" readily available to Biohazard fans. After rocky relationships with the two independent labels, that makes Biohazard feel more at ease.

They also finally nabbed the opening spot with Pantera that they've been vying for for two years. The tour, which includes Sepultura, marks Biohazard's first time in arenas.

"We're totally flabbergasted; we've never played in places this big."

Biohazard performs with Pantera and Sepultura at The Palace of Auburn Hills, 1-75 and Lapeer Road, at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 25. Tickets are \$22.50 in advance; \$25 the day of the show. For more information, call (810) 377-8200 or (810) 645-6665.

Thunderharp Choir dares to be different



Graceful: Thunderharp Choir includes Christine McCall-Kuehn, Graham Strachan, John Donabedian, Ron Vensko, Jason McCall-Kuehn and Don Didonato.

BY KYLE GREEN
SPECIAL WRITER

Today's modern music styles demand that bands create as diverse sound as possible which many times — inadvertently or purposely — leads groups to simply mirror others.

Thunderharp Choir's diverse harmonic, acoustic-based sound comes naturally to the six-member band which takes pride in its flexibility.

But what do you expect from a band that enjoyed playing the sweater department at JCPenney's at Briarwood Mall in Ann Arbor.

"People were actually shopping as we were playing," said drummer Ron Vensko. "There was a lady shopping for sweaters behind me as I was playing. I felt something hitting my back and I turned around and there she was."

Unusual-placed gigs are just part of the dues that bands have to pay, according to Thunderharp Choir. On June 22, however, the band will play a

high-profile gig at Griff's Grill as part of the bar/restaurant's concert series in conjunction with the World Cup Games at the Pontiac Silverdome.

Mid-June will also bring the release of Thunderharp Choir's 14-track compact disc which was recorded at Livonia's Sound on Sound studios.

Critics have described the band's sound as edgy folk rock, but the band prefers to do its own name calling, such as "American," "pop/alternative" and even "neo-grunge."

"We like to experiment, but I've seen experimental bands which are far out there," vocalist Christine McCall-Kuehn. "We are grounded. We like lyrics and harmonies."

The band's liking for originality does not stop with lyrics alone. The band uses such instruments as a harp, violin and harmonica as well as its lineup of two lead vocalists, gui-

See THUNDERHARP, 9A

IN CONCERT

Information on limited engagements only should be submitted two weeks in advance to: Christina Fuoco, 953-3131; Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or by fax at (313) 591-7278. To ensure publication, the names, addresses and phone numbers with area codes must be included.

Monday, June 13

SATIN RAIN
And Bent Lucy plays a benefit for Seth Stein's drummer Jim Ramon who is suffering from AIDS, at Studio Lounge, 6021 Wayne Road, Westland.
(313) 729-2540

Tuesday, June 14

THE RHYTHM BLUES
Five Rhythm Blues Theatre, 175 and Southland Road, Charleston, (rock)
(810) 377-0100

BARNEY POSTER
Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren, (country)
(810) 756-6140

KEEFER
Hosts a blues jam at The Office, 15414 Telegraph, Redford, (blues)
(313) 533-4477

THE CURE VIBES APPRECIATION NIGHT
3-5, 1815 N. Main St., Royal Oak, (video)
(810) 580-1344

Wednesday, June 15

VIETNAM VETS
Veto: Frank Allison at The Ark, 637 W. S. Main St., Ann Arbor, (acoustic)
(313) 741-1461

BLUES GARDENS
With Born of God at Industry, 15 S. Sag-

new, Pontiac, (alternative rock)
(810) 334-1999

SEVEN AND CHARLES SCALES
Big Fish, 700 Town Center Drive, Dearborn, (blues)
(313) 335-6350

BEYOND BOLLS
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock)
(810) 334-7411

ROBINA JEAN BELL
Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw St., Pontiac, (blues)
(810) 334-7411

AND JUNE
Alvin's, 5750 Cass, Detroit, (jazz)
(810) 832-2355

THE THUNDERSTICKS
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, (rock)
(313) 981-4621

Thursday, June 16

7 YEAR ITCH
With Hoy rollers and Loudspeaker at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, (alternative rock)
(313) 981-4621

DRIVE LIKE JEDI
With Tanager and Custom Floor at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock)
(313) 995-8555

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
With Komwater Fountain at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, (rock)
(810) 334-9252

JAMES WALKIN
Q Club, 29 S. Saginaw St., Pontiac, (blues)
(810) 334-7411

GREAT WHITE
The Pit, 17580 Frazer, Roseville, (rock)
(810) 778-6404

See IN CONCERT, 9A