

ART ON THE EDGE



PHOTOS BY WILLIAM HANSEN

'Sphinx': John Shannon prefers working three-dimensional pieces like this one, entitled "Sphinx."

Imagination works well for his art

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

John Shannon, painting on a variety of materials ranging from canvas and wood to found objects, struggles with social concerns.

He volleys back and forth between creating two dimensional imagery that deals with the fragile balance between industry and nature and decorative functional pieces. Tables imitating cats and winged sphinxes, boxes mimicking human heads as well as totems and room dividers thrive on tropically flavored themes.

"I try to invoke an imaginative participation from the viewer. Why limit a table to a table when it can be a mystical object? Why should the legs be just supports when it can walk? It goes back to other cultures where they give spirits to objects," said Shannon, who graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree from Center for Creative Studies in 1986.

"Instead of being just a cat, it has its own personality and even though it's not living, you feel like it could be."

Three works by Shannon including a cat box paused on four legs are part of "Fusion: A Blending of Talents," the third annual exhibition by alumni of Center for Creative Studies, College of Art and Design continuing through Oct. 30 at the Seabrook Club, 217 Farnsworth behind the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Some of the functional works begin as found objects. On trash collection days, Shannon scouts for antique sewing machines, tables and drawers on which to paint feline faces and tongues. The rest of the time he crafts the pieces himself before painting.

A "Sphinx Table" has wings, breasts and walks on four legs. Shannon first constructed the table from discarded wood, then carved into it. Finally, he oil painted the surfaces with pure reds, greens, yellows and blues. Shannon sees the process as "kind of meditative."

"There's a lot of sawing and drilling. It's as much about the construction as the image." When he tires of building, he switches to painting two dimensional works. Factories, figures and nature dominate. Flat planes of pure complimentary colors keep the work bold and bright.

"Factories are so important to the Detroit area. Growing up it's always been a big part of the environment. Now with the decline so much is being torn down," said the Plymouth Salem High School graduate. "Is it going to be built back up or is it going to go back to nature or will they just leave it naked?"

Architecturally speaking, Shannon's factories are boxy child-like line drawings usually occurring in backgrounds. They seem to tug this way and that at the seams.

See SHANNON, 6B

One piece:
For one of his small pieces, John Shannon selected the title, "Woman with Dog."



LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Street Scene next week:

- Christina Fuoco's interview with Majesty Cruise.
- Bob Sadler's look at the local comedy scene.
- John Monaghan's look at the latest offering on the alternative movie scene.

Music with a Colour

■ When the Living Colour tour for their most recent album "Stain" comes to town it will be a bit different than previous shows. Each leg of the tour has featured a slightly altered show, and with each leg comes a more polished performance.

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Having a platinum-selling record and a performance in an acclaimed film before the age of 30 is a remarkable success.

Living Colour's Corey Glover doesn't see that as the most exciting aspects of his careers, however.

"Getting up in the morning is," said Glover from his New York City home while packing for the next leg of his tour. "I get a chance to do something different."

The tour for Living Colour's most recent album "Stain" has been about "something different."

Each leg of the tour features a slightly altered show.

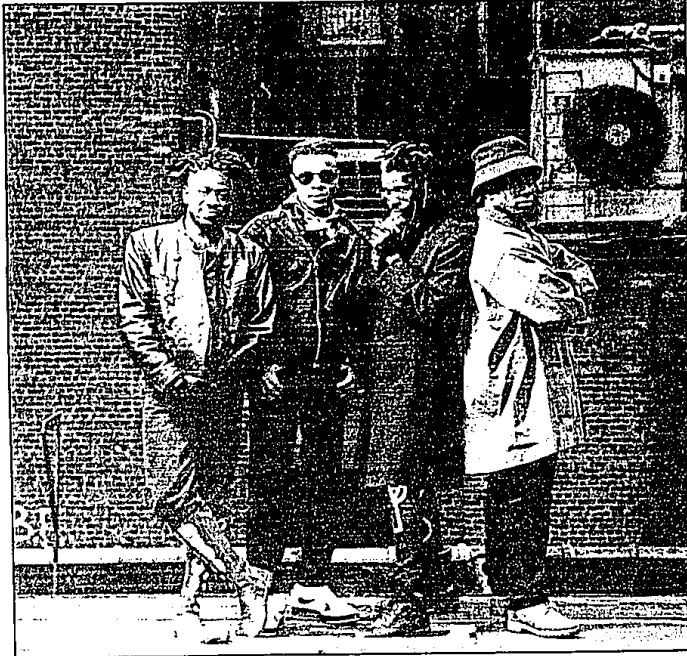
"The lights are slightly different, we've been playing longer so it's (more polished) . . . the sets are much longer, too," he said.

The shows also feature new bassist Doug Wimbish who replaced Muzz Skillings. He joined the band in January 1992 for dates in Brazil tour, something Glover didn't see as permanent member in June.

The next month he solidified Living Colour's new lineup by playing "live rehearsals" for "Stain" at CDBG and Wetlands in New York City.

"What Doug is playing is amazing," Glover said. "All over the record, he's playing beautiful things. I think that after making the change from Muzz, the band got a new beginning," he said.

The result suggests a darkening of the group's vision, with song titles such as "Go Away," "Ignorance Is Bliss," "Never Satisfied" and



Vivid sound: The members of Living Colour include drummer William Calhoun (left), bassist Doug Wimbish, guitarist Vernon Reid and vocalist Corey Glover.

"Nothingness."

"These songs have a directness in the groove of them and the heaviness of them," guitarist Vernon Reid said. "The joy of life is in this recording in the way the four of us are interacting."

"This record doesn't put you in a bag and tell you to stay there. As

STREET BEATS

writers we're trying to be less self-righteous, to come down off the soapbox."

In public, they're still willing to speak their minds. In 1991, Living Colour played the first Lilliputian tour, something Glover didn't see as very "alternative."

"Overall it was good," Glover said. "It was supposed to be about the al-

ternative music scene but nobody there was really alternative."

The band is pleased with its "Stain" tour which so far has lasted about five months. There has been one setback. The band's song "Bi" was banned in Singapore because of its "objectionable lyrical content."

When Sony Music in Singapore asked the band to delete it from the record, Living Colour refused to comply. Consequently "Stain" was not released there. Reid didn't see the song as offensive.

"Bi" isn't judgmental, it doesn't preach safe sex, and it's not about how the world should hold hands and sing," said Reid who co-wrote the song with drummer William Calhoun. "It's really more about desire."

For now, the tour continues and when it's over, Living Colour will

right into pre-production for its next album. Glover, who played a soldier in "Platoon," hopes to continue his movie career. The differences between acting and singing he finds appealing.

"They're (movie) a little more physical hours. I have to think and react and move. With recording, all I have to do is sing. Sometimes, that's a little more difficult," he said with a laugh.

Living Colour and special guest Candlebox perform at 8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14, at the Michigan Theatre, 603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$17.50 and \$14. Call 645-6866 or 668-8397 for more information.

Austin's sound goes 'On the Road'

BY MARK GALLO
SPECIAL WRITER

The first time Michael Fracasso and Austin, Texas, crossed paths, it was a case of instantaneous infatuation.

He remembers that he "drove through the hill country and didn't even see Austin."

"Still, he said, "I thought it was beautiful."

Just folk: Michael Fracasso's love affair with Austin, Texas, is evident in his "Love & Trust" debut disc for the tiny De-jadisc label.



He's been a resident of the Texas capital for more than three years, and when interviewed last week had just concluded two nights of performing with do Carol Pierce, David Halley and Jimmy LaFave. The shows were in preparation for a national tour, billed "Songwriter: Austin on the Road" that will bring the foursome to the Birmingham Unitarian Church concert series.

Born in Stubbenville, Ohio, Fracasso moved to New York in 1980 to pursue his songwriting muse. He did well, but not nearly as well as he had hoped. Gigs were infrequent, and the romantic fantasy of New York fell by the wayside.

Ironically, it was at a showcase at CBGB's, one of the most name recognizable venues in America, that he got one of the most important pieces of musical advice in his career. It was there that the local Warner Bros. representative suggested that his music,

while very good, just wasn't going to work in New York.

The difference, he said, is black and white.

"I needed a change from New York; It was hard to get anything done there," he said. "The music here is so together; it's a lot easier to get things done."

Musically, his sound is frequently reminiscent of early John Prine, Jimmy Dale Gilmore, Roy Orbison and Joe Ely . . . but, mostly of Michael Fracasso, a flawless, inventive songsmith, his "Love & Trust" debut disc for the tiny De-jadisc label is a standout CD. The title cut, "Door No. 1," "Wake Up George" and, especially, "One That Got Away" qualifies him as one of the finest new singer/songwriters to come down the road in a while.

The good news is that this isn't just Fracasso's show. Stage sharing is

See AUSTIN, 6B

IN CONCERT

Tuesday, Oct. 5

SUPERBUCKERS

With Kiss Me Screaming at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock) 99-MUSIC or 996-8555

Wednesday, Oct. 6

IGGY POP

With Cop Shoot Cop at State Theatre, 2115 Woodward, Detroit, (punk) 961-5450

FRANK ALLISON

Gotham City, 22848 Woodward, Ferndale, (secular) 399-7430

OTTMAR LIEBERT

With Luna Negra at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac, (spanish flamenco) 344-1988

20 MULE TEAM

Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit, (alternative rock) 832-2355

CUTTING HEADS

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

Thursday, Oct. 7

VELOCITY GIRL

With Tsunami at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (alternative rock) 996-8555

SACRED MONSTERS

Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit, 832-2355

ROBERT NOLL
Discothe, 18 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, (blues) 333-CAFE

DISCIPLINE VIDEO RELEASE PARTY

8 p.m. at Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac, (synth-influenced rock) 334-1999

THE BROTHERS

The Bix, 637 1/2 S. Main, Ann Arbor, 761-1800

Friday, Oct. 8

SCOTT CAMPBELL

With Deborah Veda, Peter Gee, Pitscilla (formerly of Cylindhead), Mike Nolan, James Clay,

Craig Schenk, Susan Sunshine, Eddie, John Demko, Mark Christensen, Brian Mroczkowski, Terry Shulman perform to benefit the American Civil Liberties Union of Oakland County at Gotham City Cafe, 22848 Woodward, Ferndale, (variety of genres) 398-7430

BLUE ROSE

Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit, 832-2355

ERIC GALEE

With Screaming Jets at The Ritz, 10 1/2 and Grand, Roseville, (rock) 726-6404

THE HAL GALPER TRIO

Bird of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor, (jazz) 962-2310

See IN CONCERT, 7B