

Bay Harbor, North Miami shows offer good variety

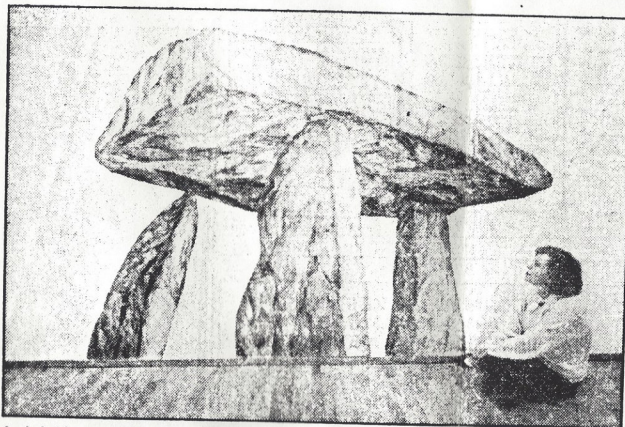
LESLIE JUDD AHLANDER

Miami News Art Critic

There's a lot of variety and interest in the shows this month in Bay Harbor and North Miami. The works cover a wide spectrum of techniques and approaches, from the video arts at the North Miami Art Center, the glass at Habatat, to the boxes, paintings and carvings at Galerie 99, Hokin and Luria.

Galerie 99 shows two interesting departures in the composed boxes of found objects by Carolee Thea and the paintings of monolithic stelae by Leigh Hyams, who has spent the past 10 years painting the remnants of the megalithic-Early Bronze Age periods. But while each painting of a monolith is accurately rendered as to appearance, the artist's real interest lies in the spiritual power present in these sites and objects. The quality of magic that she feels becomes an inherent part of the stones is conveyed through the use of thin washes of transparent color and the angles of vision that make the stones appear to loom in space, despite the fact that the unstretched canvases are simply tacked to the wall and have no dimension of their own. This is quite a tour de force. By eliminating the physicality of the canvas and of heavy paint, Hyams gives her stones a spiritual and other-worldly aspect that enables her intense feelings to dominate the weightiness of the subject.

Carolee Thea takes frames, then constructs compositions of found and made objects that come forward of the frame, as well as creating an illusion of depth in space. She cites Picasso and Braque in the 1912-14 period as her point of departure,



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elaborating on their still lives of the period in exploring the relationship of the frame to the picture plane and of the space forward of the framing edge. The problems she tackles are technical ones, but ones that have obsessed all artists in this century. While her objects serve as three-dimensional explorations of these technical concerns, they exist in their own right as attractive works of art.

The North Miami Museum has a fascinating show in "New Age Art," one

that can be explored at length, since it includes holograms, computer art, video installations, sound installations and computer-programmed moving images. Curated by Paula Harper, former art critic of The Miami News, the show is a lively and fascinating exploration of new directions in video and computer art — an art form that will be increasingly with us.

In this company, Enrique Castro-Cid's computer-generated painting seems almost academic, despite its distortions.

Tom Schmidt shows a beautiful computer program on a TV set that plays with the permutations possible in color and design: Steve Eliot, a series of large computer prints in black and white. Mark Diamond exhibits holograms, while Russel Frehling has created a sound installation that combines chanting with TV imagery. You should plan to spend at least an hour here, for each exhibit will repay the time to study it in depth.

Habatat is host this month to two artists in glass, Joel Phillip Myers and Dick Huss. Between them, they show two extremes to which work in glass can go. Myers' work is colorful and sculptural, with intricate patterns and forms buried within the glass at different levels, while Huss works in a more classical vein of vases and bowls cleanly and intricately hand-cut in overall surface patterns. Both are mastery technicians. Myers in particular astounds with his colorful and textural forms floating within the depth of the glass.

The Hokin Gallery is showing paintings by Keith Haring and Paul Giovanopoulos. Haring's work is well known graffiti-like drawing, especially in his huge untitled work in which hands part curtains so greenbacks can come tumbling out. Giovanopoulos takes a single subject, such as an egg or an orange, then paints it over and over again in the style of many famous artists. He'll also do portraits of interested clients who wish to see themselves as many artists might see them — with Andy Warhol gone, it's the best value for your money if you can stand 50 versions of yourself.

The Gloria Luria Gallery is showing

LEIGH HYAMS and CAROLEE THEA through tomorrow, Galerie 99, 1088 Kane Concourse, Bay Harbor, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sat.: 865-5823
NEW AGE ART through May 8, North Miami Museum, 12340 N.E. Eighth Ave., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 1-4 p.m. Sat.: 983-6211

JOEL PHILIP MYERS and DICK HUSS through tomorrow, Habitat Galleries, 1090 Kane Concourse, Bay Harbor, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sat.: 865-5050

KEITH HARING and PAUL GIOVANOPOULOS through tomorrow, Hokin Gallery, 1088 Kane Concourse, Bay Harbor, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sat.: 861-5700

REX LAU and ROBERT THIELE through tomorrow, Gloria Luria Gallery, 1033 Kane Concourse, Bay Harbor, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tues.-Sat.: 865-3060

work by Rex Lau and Robert Thiele, a local artist who astounds by a radical departure from the steele sculptures for which he has become known in recent years. The new work is of rough-hewn wood shapes, painted dark crude colors, that seem from some early, just-discovered culture. Beautifully installed, they have an air of magic about them, although each is deliberately ambiguous in shape and intention. Rex Lau shows paintings in relief made of Hydro-stone that describe landscapes in abstract terms. Each element is cut out in relief in the Hydro-stone so it gives a strong sense of actual depth in space while still adhering compositionally to the picture plane.

(Leslie Judd Ahlander has served as Metro-Dade County art coordinator and for 13 years was art critic of the Washington Post — twice winning the Art Critics Award of the College Art Association for critical writing.)