

"New Epiphanies: Religious Contemporary Arts," an exhibition of sculpture, paintings, drawings and mixed media works-opens at the Mandeville Art Gallery

May 12, 1983

"New Epiphanies: Religious Contemporary Art," an exhibition of sculpture, paintings, drawings and mixed media works, will open at noon Friday, May 27, in the Mandeville Art Gallery on the campus of the University of California, San Diego.

The public is invited to the opening reception at 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 26, in Mandeville Art Gallery.

Curator Carol Adney, Director of the Gallery of Contemporary Art at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, has included the works of 30 contemporary American artists. Each artist uses specific iconography of various religious persuasions, from fundamentalist beliefs to less orthodox views about the nature of the sacred. Adney chose not to include artists who create commercial devotional objects.

Works by Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Italo Scanga and Miroslav Antic are placed beside the more traditional imagery found in the woodwork of Konstantine Pilarinos, the gilded cross of Pedro Perez and the painting of Frank Lind. Also included will be the work of Tom Marioni, George Lopez, Howard Finster, Nellie May Rowe, Elijah Pierce, Michael Tracy and others.

The artists in this exhibition may be divided into five groups. In the first group are the older artists, generally recognized as naive and visionary. These include Howard Finster, Elijah Pierce, Edgar Tolson, Nellie May Rowe and Tony Joseph Salvatore. Their works are the result of definite fundamentalist Christian beliefs.

A second group of seven younger artists shares an interest in the representation of Christian liturgical themes, but differs from the first group in their technical ability. Most artists in this group have had art school or university training. They are Miroslav Antic, Frank Lind, William "Wylie" Lucero, Herman Raymond, Susan Sensemann, Audrey Skoudas and Andy Nasisse.

Most "contemporary" in attitude are the artists of the third group, those whose religious sentiments are unorthodox: Sam Thurston, Mary Beth Edelson, Tom Marioni, Peter Huttering, Brenda Goodman and Barbara Houghton.

A large part of this exhibition is made up of three-dimensional pieces, both as sculpture and in relief. The fourth group of artists includes those who create devotional shrines, altar pieces and crucifixes. Konstantine Pilarinos, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Richard Long, Pedro Perez, Ken Saville, Italo Scanga, Michael Tracy and Randy Schmidt are represented in "New Epiphanies."

New Mexican artists who carve "santos" make up the final group of artists. "Santos" can be divided into "bultos," carved figures in the round, and "retalbos," paintings or carvings on flat boards. "New Epiphanies" includes one "retalbo" and four "bultos" created by artists living in the colony at Cordova, New Mexico. Many are descendants of Jose Dolores Lopez, who provided the link between the traditional craftsmanship of the late 17th century and contemporary artistic expression. George Lopez, Chris Trujillo, Leo G. Salazar and Jose Mondragon are represented in this collection.

"New Epiphanies: Religious Contemporary Art" is being travelled by the Ohio Foundation on the Arts, Inc. The exhibition will continue at Mandeville Art Gallery until June 26. Gallery hours are noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (closed Monday). There is no admission charge and ample free parking is available on weekends. Mandeville Art Gallery is directed by Gerry McAllister. For more information phone the gallery at (619) 452-2864.

For more information contact: Jan Seagrave, 452-3120 or Gerry McAllister, 452-2864

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