

ART

Site-Specific Creations, Altered Images and Top Photographs

By HELEN A. HARRISON

Site Specifics

Carriage House, Islip Art Museum,
50 Irish Lane, East Islip Through
July 6, 224-5402

As part of the museum's continuing series of site-specific projects, six artists have created installations in the carriage house's ground floor rooms. Iain Macchell's "Bedbook 2" uses domestic intimacy as a springboard for exploring the breakdown of relationships. With its sheets flying out to the room's corners, the bed's cocoon-like safety is violated, exposing it as a place of disturbance and disorientation. A television monitor literally embedded in its center conjures restless dreams and mocks the sense of security that such a resting place might promise.

Dreams are also the subject of Maureen Palmieri's "Three Wishes," dominated by a raft of pillows cradling rows of wax life masks. This captivating collection, suspended on cables from the ceiling, floats like a magic carpet to the accompaniment of voices describing their wishes, from the heart-felt to the humorous. More hopes and desires are collected on a nearby "wish-catcher" wall, amplifying the aura of collective longing to which every dreamer can relate.

The connecting thread of humanity binds terrestrial and celestial elements in "Tumuli/Odyssey," by Carole Jay and Madeleine Burnside. The room is dominated by a group of grass-covered mounds, miniature versions of ancient earthworks. Thanks to modern technology, however, these normally silent monuments emit sounds evoking the human activity that shaped them. Projected images of the sun, moon and earth establish a context for efforts

embodied in Merle Temkin's "Two Left Feet," a collection of generic high-heeled sandals and their effigies. Lying around the room or schematized in drawings and tasseled cutouts, the shoes symbolize the artist's transition from girl to woman. But Ms. Temkin's ambition to stir feelings of ambivalence and awkwardness are not fulfilled by the ghostly footwear, although her threaded pieces, with their allusion to disconnection and lost security, come closest to that aim.

Luisa Caldwell's "Mush room" makes a more effective statement about disorientation in familiar surroundings, in this case a Surrealist-inspired enclave where patterned paper slants across windows and ironing boards crawl up the wall like giant cockroaches on the march. The confusion takes on sexual overtones in wallpaper images of gender-bend-

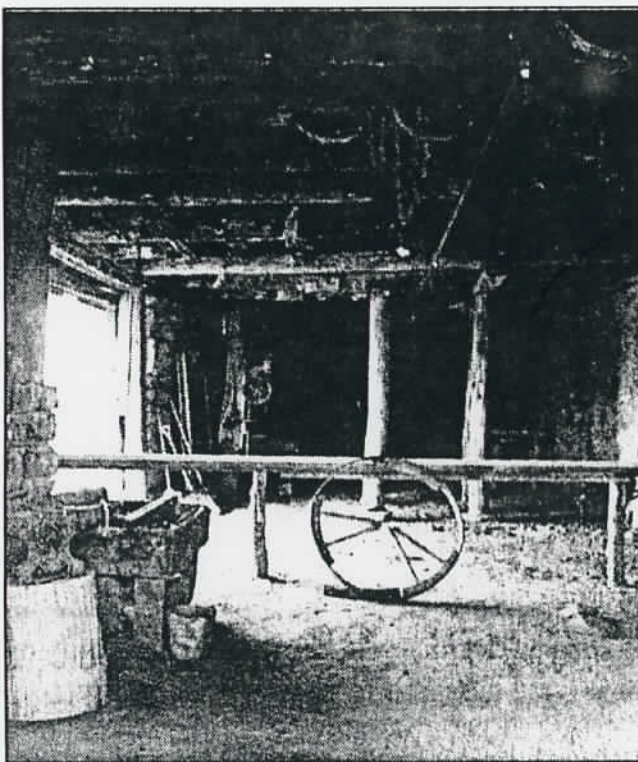


ing movie stars, discreetly hinting that traditional roles are as threatened in the home as in society at large.

The Altered Image

Islip Art Museum, Through July 13.

Selected by Anne Cohen DePietro, curator of the Heckscher Museum, this large group show examines the many implications of Jasper Johns's



"Portrait of Miriam Schapiro," left, by Caroline Kaplowitz, and "Hubbell Trading Post," by Raymond Germann.

well as what might be done to it, ranges from the mundane to the marvellous. With 79 artists participating there is virtually no strategy left unexplored. Even a separate small show by Bobbi Mastrangelo, who turns rubbings of manhole covers and other street textures into prints and reliefs, fits the overall theme of transformation.

For this viewer, the most provocative metamorphosis is Aleksandar Pilipovic's "True Colors," a collection of fish hooks painted red, white and blue in the pattern of an American flag. The barbed banner is suspended from a slat labeled green, the color of money, which provides literal and symbolic support for this alluring but treacherous emblem of

Richard B. Ziello's "52,000 Nails." The nails are undisguised, yet they take on an organic character by virtue of their deployment, which mimics the growth of fur on an animal's leg.

Several artists use their own work as raw material, reshaping it to shift its intent. In "Meaning No Disrespect," Norman Shapiro cannibalizes his sketchbook to create new variations on recurring themes. Using a copy machine, he destabilizes and bastardizes his images, violating their integrity while wittily maintaining that it is done with the best of intentions. His work metaphorically thumbs its nose at appropriation while asserting that the artist's imperatives are the ultimate authority



"Three Wishes," by Maureen Palmieri, in "Site Specifics."

photographs and statements pieced together in a quilt-like format that alludes to Ms. Schapiro's use of fabrics traditionally associated with women's work. Within the grid of repeated geometric patterns, a multifaceted composite picture emerges.

Juried Photography Competition

East End Arts Council, 133 E. Main St., Riverhead. Through June 21, 727-0900.

Chosen by a three-person jury, the 38 photographs on view are a mixed bag, with the usual complement of landscapes and flower studies enlivened by a few outstanding pieces.

Chief among them is "Inferno," a small, unassuming but haunting image by Paul Westerbeke. Taken 51 years ago in Le Havre, it shows a group of men in unknown circumstances, clustered together in a foggy atmosphere that cuts them off from their surroundings. Their bodies communicate anxiety, and the visible faces heighten the feeling of uncertainty. Are they refugees, war prisoners, workers, returning soldiers? Like a news photo or a still from a documentary, the picture tells a fragment of a story that begs

gnarled hand, nothing more, but the hand is implicitly attached to an unseen embodiment of Nazi evil. On one finger, a ring bearing the SS insignia seems to ooze blood, or perhaps the wearer has simply skinned his knuckle. As in the Le Havre image, Mr. Westerbeke prefers inference to outright declaration, employing his camera as a sage would use a parable.

The show's top award went to Myron Brenton for his Rembrandtesque portrait of an Asian man eating his humble meal, using a bed for a table. The figure merges with the shadows, resisting our efforts to define his elusive presence. "Gondola Medley," another handsome color print by Mr. Brenton, uses rippling water to enliven a formal study of boat prows reflected in a canal.

Thomas Donohue's highly professional color work earned him four entries, among them a third place award and an honorable mention. His close-up of a dolphin caught in mid air, its glistening body breaking the water with a graceful leap, is a tour de force of action photography.

The atmospheric interior of an Arizona stable is nicely captured in Raymond Germann's honorable mention winner, "Hubbell Trading Post," a black and white print notable for its rich tonal range. Also in monochrome, stark contrast is the