



Skolle: Activity Rarely Seen

Skolle: Skoal

By DOROTHY MAVES

Nearly all of John Skolle's acrylic paintings and pen and ink drawings now on display at Jonson Gallery are indicative of a type of artistic activity which is rarely seen, but when it is, should be appreciated. The artist has internalized his experiences, as most people do, but has done more than retail or reflect them. He has not remained a passive observer, but has actively reinterpreted experience with a personal edge, a violent kind of animation, an involvement in the mechanics of living and seeing which becomes ends in themselves.

As a group the acrylics are more powerful than the ink drawings. Both "Circus Act" and "Juggler," pen and ink wash drawings, are reminiscent of the surrealist school, and in terms of ideas presented, are good. But the draughtsmanship is weak. It is unsure enough so that the viewer, while looking at these two, feels rather unsteady. Something like listening to a singer who, while not really sour, cannot hit the notes quite on key.

Soft Eunuch

"Two Eunuchs," a soft, light ink wash drawing, is much better. The two figures are faceless and are defined by their garments rather than by their bodies. A very delicate work.

The artist has used a different

approach in "Another Fine Job of Precision Bombing" and "Fire," both pen and ink washes. "Bombing" is a mass of writing, intertwined areas and lines of black, yellow and white, with bits of bodies and blood bordering on the surrealistic. "Fire," which possesses the same sense of animation and violence, and in which the artist has used the same twisting lines, suggests buildings exploding under the force of a flash fire.

Mangroves Best

The best work in the show is an acrylic—"Mangroves 5"—constructed with varying shades of green, both transparent and opaque. There is a general mood of threat in the forest, or rather, indifference to the presence of man. Through color gradations and the use of transparent areas the artist has achieved a fine sense of receding space and pictorial depth. A dribble technique used to define some of the tree trunks and branches convey the idea of a nervous, animate, living forest.

"Fatal Wound," also an acrylic, uses bright, undiluted colors in an abstract composition to bring about an emotional reaction bordering on disgust. But the painting is successful, for the composition itself and the color juxtapositions are very pleasing.

Klee Echoes

"Equilibrium," which is

“ Skolle’s bright colors, blinding whites and sense of animation are very refreshing. But in some cases the pictures seem too small for the amount of movement contained within them.

The artist could very likely deal with large canvases in a highly successful way. The artist’s vitality and distinctive feeling for life could then take on monumental proportions. ”