

Art Review

By Ann Weinstein

Two art exhibits in Blacksburg are as unlike as art can get; One is techno; the other traditional. But they do share one similarity. Each ranges from reserved to vigorous.

An elegant exhibit of authentic Japanese kimonos, on loan from men & women in this country & Japan, hangs in the Perspective Gallery in the Squires Students Center at VA Tech. Tom Butterfield, Director of the Gallery, arranged to open the exhibit with the ancient tea ceremony, in which I was privileged to partake. The last time I was so honored was during our Bicentennial, in Kyoto (Or Nara) & in Tokyo, Japan.

The kimonos are fit for all kinds & occasions: baby's (each looking-to weigh more than the baby it would adorn); children's; formal & informal; austere & brightly embroidered; woven & wedding gowns. As intricate as some of these are, -I have no doubt that even the most elaborate is heavily bound by tradition.

The obi is the long, decorative sash that wraps around the waist over the Kimono. Butterfield has creatively installed several of them on wave-like fixtures so you can "read" them like horizontal scrolls. Along with other items of traditional dress, there are a few examples of calligraphy, some antique," which are highly prized by the

Japanese.

(Through October 10. For further information, Please call (540) 231-6040.).

• LesIye Bloom uses advanced technical systems in producing her images, & is bound only by the technical limitations of her equipment, And her world-view. And her philosophy. And her imagination. And her mood. And her mission. And her sense of humor. And oh, yes! her eye!

No wonder hi-tech art so often resembles contemporary art of more traditional means.

Bloom uses the digital camera to push color &, something more rare, to-subdue it. She combines her photographs with encaustic, watercolor, & acrylic. She calls the result "computage" to reflect the synthesis of 'computers' & 'collage'.

"Recent Computages," her exhibit' at Miller Off Main, also in Blacksburg is experimental, playful, varied - & inconsistent.

There are several images here that could gladly find their way to my walls. But as a reviewer, I wish that Bloom would develop some of her images into series - reworking such things as cadence, color, composition, size, placement - in order to gain consistency in her presentation. But mostly to exploit the magic of her insights more fully, so that all of us could understand them in the,



Torch- Song in Quarters and Squares
2001, 26"h x 19.5'-w
Mixed Encaustic Computage
Acrylic flag on paper

same way - more fully.

Among the effects Bloom achieves, she treats an image as an oriental scroll, or attains a resemblance to stained glass. She makes a composite of a photo on the computer, or tweaks a hand-made image.

Highly contrasted to colorful fish, swimming coolly in bubbled water & reflected sky, the strong red flower in, "Torch Song in Quarters and Squares" (titled for image & process) is up-front & confrontational..

Little circles of breakfast cheerios, strewn across the surface of an

aerial tryptych, relieve the irregular topography of "Carolina Clay" with random points of interest, while a geologic force erupts vertically "From the Depths to the Heights" of a melon-color sky. The National Memorial in "D-Day Twilight" nestles in the horizontal Bedford landscape under the pushed color of a sunset sky.

There is a lot to find & see here!

(The show runs through October 12. For further information, please call (540) 552-6969.)

