

## Finding Their Muse

The Gramercy International Contemporary Art Fair, now in its fourth year at New York's Gramercy Park Hotel, has proved such a success that organizers decided to expand. This year's fair (May 2-5)

features 25 new exhibitors, including Muse X Editions, a Los Angeles studio that produces digitally generated limited-edition prints.

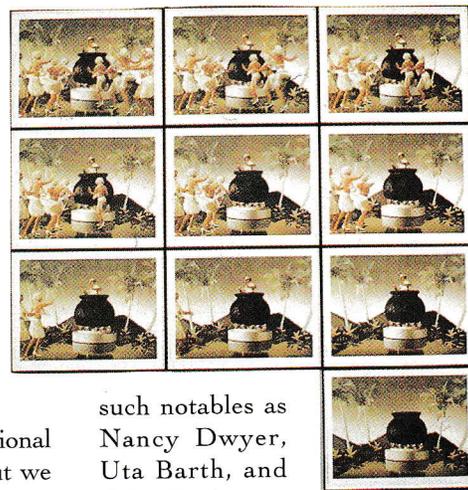
That does not mean "digital art," insists Muse X owner Randall Green. Rather,

Muse X translates artists' images into digital files, which are then printed on an Iris printer. With no inks or messy plates, Muse X can achieve a broader spectrum of effects and refinements than other printing methods allow.

"We are like a traditional atelier," says Green, "but we have 100 times as much control over the color and sharpness." Green, who eschews making prints of pre-existing work in favor of collaborations with artists, works with

such notables as Nancy Dwyer, Uta Barth, and John Baldessari, whose *Pot with Nine Removals* (above) will be shown by Muse X at the Gramercy Art Fair.

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## An Artist Besieged

To most people, the conglomeration outside Lonnie Holley's Birmingham, Alabama, home might look like, well, junk. To Holley, who creates art from cast-off materials (an example is shown at right), it's 18 years of precious work "weaved in together like you have in a basket."

Over the years, Holley's "environment," as his property is often called, has been the target of numerous acts of vandalism and theft. In at least one case, last fall, portions of several works were sold as scrap to a nearby junkyard. Even worse was an incident in January, in which Holley says three intruders spent "two or three hours" dismantling "about 75 to 80 pieces, mostly large standing metal sculptures." Though witnesses intervened to halt them, the looters, who were described as appearing poor, were not apprehended.

Meanwhile, Holley is in an ongoing battle with the Birmingham Airport Authority over his property, which sits directly in the path of a proposed runway. Last year, the



Courtesy Louise Koss Gallery, New York

airport offered Holley a \$14,000 buyout—an offer he rejected. In probate court this past February, Holley's attorneys—based on consultations with Birmingham Museum of Art director Gail Andrews Trechsel, and William Arnett, a collector of Holley's work—argued that Holley should get \$250,000, taking into account the value of his environment, parts of which could never be moved and reassembled. The court, however, ruled in favor of the Airport Authority, and Holley has filed an appeal.

Holley, who has limited himself to "creating a little music" and "doing some paintings on paper" since the vandalism, is willing to relocate but feels it must be done in a manner that respects his art. Casting the situation in Biblical terms, Holley describes himself as a David defending his art against the Goliath of the airport. S.W.

## Fastidious Frauds

In February, Italian police broke up what they believe is a sophisticated art fraud ring whose operations date back nearly two decades. Currently, 32 people, including art restorers, dealers, and auction house employees, are under investigation, and officials have confiscated more than 200 paintings.

"Operation Titian," begun last August, has uncovered documents relating to numerous fraudulent sales, some for as much as a million dollars. "Our main task now," says Col. Riccardo Piccini, who heads the department in charge of the investigation, "is to track down as many works as we can that have already been sold to unsuspecting museums and private collectors."

Using old typewriters and museum stamps, and falsifying signatures of deceased scholars, the ring

created convincing documentation for each artwork. "The ring worked in two ways," explains Piccini. "They would re-attribute secondary works from the 16th and 17th centuries to big names like Titian and Guido Reni. Other works were more recently commissioned fakes, including paintings and drawings by Fattori, Matisse, and Goya." One painting under sequester, *The Holy Family with Two Gift-Bearers*—attributed to Titian but probably painted 60 years after the artist's death—was accompanied by a phony letter from a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Not all of the testimonials were faked. "It appears," says Piccini, "that some critics, still very much alive, are involved and profit from providing their expert opinions."

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