



The Craft and Folk Art Museum examines American life at the just-opened exhibit, "The Front Porch."

ART NEWS

Front porches are not just for sitting

By Hunter Drohojowska

Whatever happened to the front porch, the humble locus of American domestic life? Due to the advent of condos and high-rises, automobiles, air conditioning and television, the front porch is now an endangered species. That is the concern of Davida Rochlin, organizer of the exhibition "The Front Porch," which opened yesterday at the Craft and Folk Art Museum at 5814 Wilshire Blvd. It will continue through Jan. 8.

The exhibition traces architectural development from the portico of Mt. Vernon to the front porches of the present. As a graduate student at UC Berkeley, Rochlin became interested in vernacular architecture — the common, mundane designs that solve specific human needs. Said Rochlin: "You design for people and it's important not to forget that people are going to be living in the buildings you design. The front porch involved people and that was my interest, as opposed to something sculptural or avant-garde. There were also the memories of my own front porch. It represents all the values I believe in — home, family, a way of getting people together. The porch was a link to the community."

The exhibition features photographs, documentation and a 12-foot-high model of a porch built in three different styles.

This is the first of a series of 14 exhibitions under the rubric "Home Sweet Home," conceived by architect Charles Moore and designer Gene Kavanagh to explore vernacular American architecture. Complete series schedules are available at CAFAM, at 934-3275.

On the topic of trends we're not sure about, two local public galleries have turned to private commercial galleries for curatorial direction. An exhibition of artists' self-portraits currently at the Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park was originally organized by the Linda Farris Gallery in Seattle. The catalog which accompanies the show is virtually an advertisement for that gallery, but it's prominently displayed and for sale at the Muni's book shop.

"My conscience is clear so I have no conflict," said Muni director Josine Ianco-Starrels. "I don't consider

this pushing the Linda Farris Gallery any more than I think showing Arnold Mesches (whose work is also on view at Muni) is pushing the Karl Bornstein Gallery. (Linda) had the show and I don't have the time or money to organize such an exhibition."

And the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art is being even more brazen by currently showing two short videotapes of New York gallery exhibitions. One, titled "Expressionist Painting," documents Lee Krasner's show at the Robert Miller Gallery, a group show at Monique Knowlton Gallery and a Malcolm Morley exhibition at Xavier-Fourcade. Next week they'll be showing "Young Expressionists," a tape of Jean Michel Basquiat's exhibition at the Fun Gallery, Francesco Clemente at Sperone-Westwater-Fischer and Mary Boone Galleries and Julian Schnabel at the Leo Castelli Gallery.

"These are educational tapes," said museum curator Linda Forsha, "put together by Art/N.Y., which is called a video magazine on art. It was a bit of a risk on our part because I hadn't seen the tapes before. What they are doing is interviewing the artists and showing the work but not focusing on the galleries per se. I have no reservations."

In the real world, they call these commercials, don't they?

If you're interested in supporting L.A.'s new Museum of Contemporary Art and want something besides a letter saying, "Thanks for your generosity," the time is now. MoCA is raising funds by offering a portfolio of eight prints for \$10,000 each in an edition limited to 250. The portfolios have been available since April and 50 have been sold, but this is the first time the works are on view to the public. Works by Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, David Hockney, Ellsworth Kelly, Niki de Saint Phalle, Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Tinguely and Andy Warhol are included in a portfolio box designed by Joseph Kosuth. The prints are on view at the Margo Leavin Gallery, 812 N. Robertson Blvd., Oct. 25 through Nov. 26.

SHORT TAKES: The Palm Springs Desert Museum has received a \$58,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation. The funds will be used by the museum's natural science department to create an exhibition of the desert palm oasis environment. The exhibition will open at the museum in March 1984.

■ Graham Nash, known as a former member of the group Crosby, Stills and Nash, is equally well known in art circles as a collector of fine art photography. About 20 works from his collection will be on view at the California Museum of Photography in Riverside from tomorrow to Nov. 26. There will be prints by Penn, Steichen, Weegee, Cartier-Bresson, Yavno, Arbus, Ray, Cunningham and Weston. Katherine Diage museum curator, said that the selection is representative of Nash's collection of over 1,600 photographs from the 19th and 20th centuries. The show is part of the museum's 10th anniversary celebration.

Chris Gulker/Herald photographer