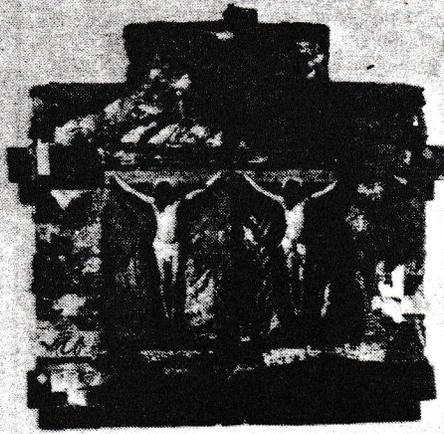


Pick Of The Week



Avery Danziger's "Jerry & Terry"



Jim Morphesis' "La Tempesta"

Monuments are the subject matter in the work of three artists now on view at Mount St. Mary's Art Gallery (12001 Chalon Road) through November 15. **Avery Danziger** photographs monuments at the Getty Museum in Malibu. His vision is one that renders the approachable alien and vice versa. His partial focus, strobe-in-daylight color technique brings the lifeless antique statuary a sense of animation. Their eyes gleam and they seem all but ready to step down from their pedestals like latter day Galateas. Similarly, his shimmering Cibachromes of a French pet cemetery imbue a seemingly morbid topic with humor and genuine pathos. The tombstones bear flowers, photographs of the deceased beasts, and inscriptions such as "Disappointed by man, but never by my dog." One doesn't feel that these images are sarcastic, or cynical. Instead, they exude compassion and comprehension. The third series on view, "K-9 Dream," portrays dogs, an obvious snapshot subject, in the least pedestrian manner. As James Hugunin wrote in the accompanying catalogue, Danziger is concerned with "making the familiar strange."

Jim Morphesis also creates monuments. Cruciform paintings are layered with gobby, asphalt-like pigment mixed with glass beads, bits of gold leaf, and collage elements. Many are as scarlet as Christ's blood, garish with slashes of turquoise, black and other untempered color. The cross-shaped works have a kitsch, Tijuana funeral parlor aura, but one senses that they are serious. While Danziger portrays the monuments to death as something other than that which they are, Morphesis is trying to re-create the real thing. In spite of their lurid colors and their sculptural tangibility, they are like contemporary re-creations of the Isenheim altarpiece, statements of identification with centuries of religious painting. Both artists deal with icons of death, one making a distanced statement about ritual, the other personally re-enacting it.

In a third room is a rather different kind of monument by **Richard Turner**. The installation, "Immolation Maze," consists of walls of yellow banners that lead the viewer to four perspectives of a delicately constructed lattice structure that houses a carved wooden flame. One can only see the flame through slits of camouflage-patterned screen. Unlike the other monuments to death, Turner's piece represents the act of dying, specifically the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk in protest of Vietnam. It is a quiet self-referential work accompanied by a two-page story. A little too sweet for its political leanings, I think, but nonetheless an interesting counterpoint to the rest of the show.

—Hunter Drohojowska