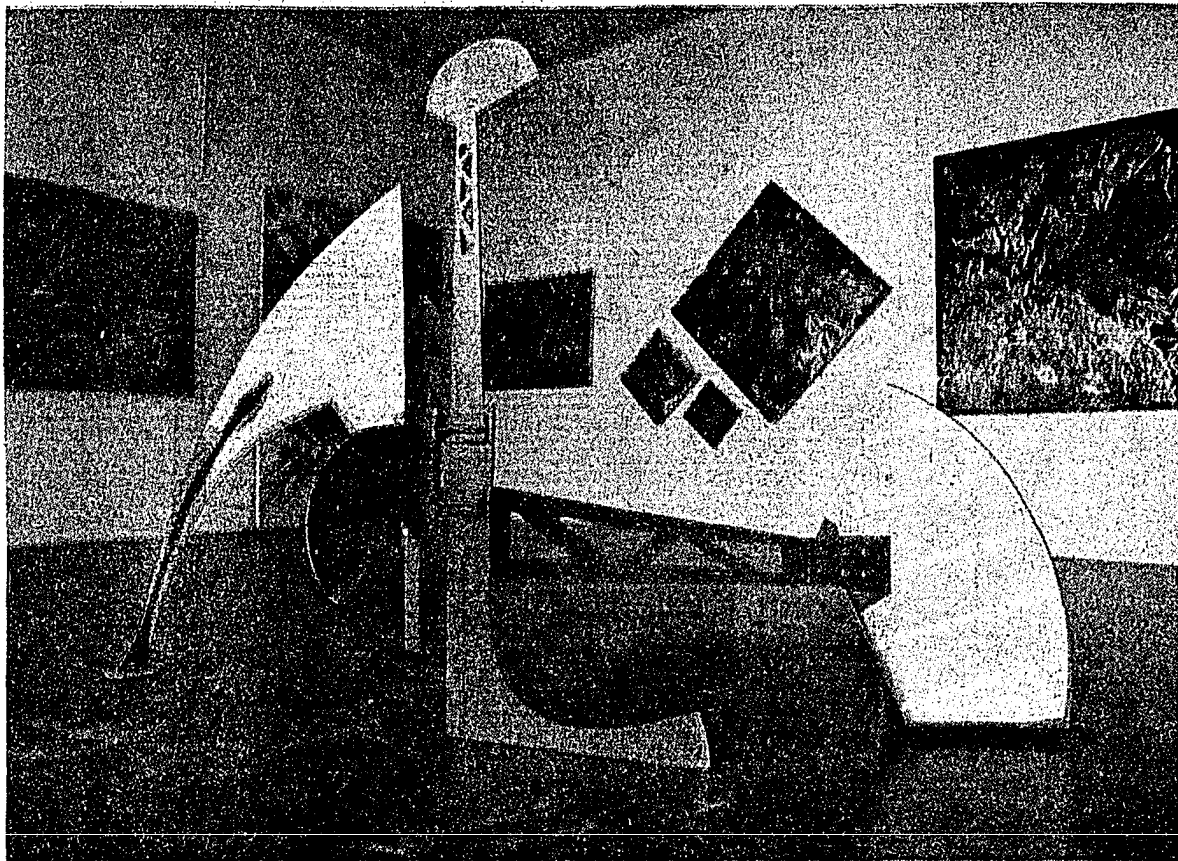


ABC's of Art



Carl Andree Sculpture, Harold Case Paintings Decorate Gallery

By W. C. BURNETT JR.
Journal Arts Editor

One of the newest areas of activities in the arts is to be found in the Nathan B. Forrest School at 608 Forrest Ave. NE. The old school used to resound to the noise of children playing and passing through its halls, but now the sounds a visitor will hear will be the noise of printing presses, cast sculpture being poured and processed and dancers performing in the auditorium.

The Forrest Avenue School is now the home of a consortium including Nexus, the photographer's cooperative, which has its own presses and dark-rooms and a gallery; the Dance Unit, which teaches dance and uses the auditorium stage for its own performances; the art magazine, "Contemporary Art/Southeast," which has its editorial offices in the building and which also will operate a gallery; Pynyon Press and Foundry, which will teach printing, paper making and sculpture casting; Image, the filmmaking

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Leslie Morris Teaches Dancing



Staff Photos by Louis Favorite

Tony Gonzalez Arranges Sculpture



Bob Tauber Operates Old Press

School Graduates to Arts Center

Continued From Front center; and an array of artists working in different styles, including Maurice Clifford, Jo Peterson, Cyndy Meyer, George Evelyn, Melissa Hogan, Tony Gonzales, Mark Smith, Judy Henson, Walton Harris, Harold Case, Gall Whatley, Annette-Cone Skelton, Alyson Pou, Carl Andrew Andre, Rick Berman, Richard Downing, Betsy Japour, Tom Prochaska, Janie Gelsner-Rea, Virginia Warren Smith, Susan Starr, Lyn Sterling, Robert Tauber, King Thackston and Genie Wright.

A number of those artists are conducting classes at the school. The whole group participated in an exhibition which occupied the third floor of the building during the Sept. 24 grand opening. Studios of resident artists are located on the third floor.

One important aspect of the space as an exhibition area is that the artists themselves are the arbiters of the contents of the exhibits. They aren't bound by the needs and desires of museum personnel or gallery owners, and the

exhibits to be seen at the school can be viewed as reflecting what the artists think an exhibit should be.

There is no central organization over the resident artists and groups, although they share responsibilities. Photographer Michael Reagan, who also represents the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural and International Affairs, is coordinator of the building, and has the responsibility for generally seeing that the physical facilities are maintained as they should be and that everyone pays their share of expenses.

The general public probably will become aware of the consortium's activities for a number of reasons. Nexus, the resident artists and "Contemporary Art/Southeast" are all organizations which will exhibit art in their respective spaces; the Dance Unit both performs in the school's auditoriums and teaches dance classes; the Nexus printing presses and darkrooms will be the focus of activities in workshops and classes sponsored by that cooperative; and the Pynyon Press and Foundry will become a focus of varied activities. In addition to operating printing presses, the organization also conducts classes on making paper by hand, a subject which is becoming very popular, and co-director Mark Tauber is building a foundry which will handle the casting of iron, brass and bronze sculptures, a badly needed facility in this region.

Nexus, the photography cooperative, primarily exhibits the work of members, who are chosen on the basis of their accomplishments as shown by submitting a portfolio of work. But classes and workshops, which will be announced periodically, are open for registration to non-members.

The consortium's use of the school answers several needs. Studio space is scarce for artists because of problems involved in landlord-tenant relationships when artists attempt to rent many other types of spaces. If the space is cheap enough to rent, the landlord often doesn't want to assume the legal responsibilities inherent in accepting a tenant for most old buildings. Therefore, "starving" artists have a hard time finding well-lighted, spacious places in which to work at prices they can afford. The old, unused school, available on

minimal rents which can be shared, is one answer.

Many old buildings simply aren't suitable for use. Several years ago, when the bureau of cultural affairs first sought to establish the Neighborhood Art Center, they considered the old Capitol Avenue School as a site. But too many windows had been broken and vandals had ripped out all of the copper plumbing and much of the wiring. Bringing the building up to present building code requirements would have been financially impossible. So the bureau decided to locate at the old Peter James Bryant School on Georgia Avenue as the home for the center. Now, after two years, director John Riddle and his staff and faculty are still working on the building, but it has been useable and is a valuable addition to its community.

The Atlanta Ballet moved

into the old Spring Street School. The facility still possessed enough facilities in good condition to make the project worthwhile.

One of the more interesting instances of a school being used as an art center is that of the Madison-Morgan County Cultural Center, in which the old school at 434 South Main in Madison was remade into art galleries, studio space, a performing arts auditorium and hospital-ity facilities. It is a remarkable achievement, the more so because the local residents raised more than \$300,000 in order to do the job.

Artists need "alternative" spaces for work and exhibitions. For economic reasons, a community can support only a limited number of art galleries and art dealers all have more artists' work to choose from than they can possibly represent. Existing museums and other types of art organizations will never satisfactorily provide adequate avenues through which unknown artists' work can be seen.

The "alternative" spaces, such as the Forrest Avenue School, the Unitarian Church at 1911 Cliff Valley Way NE, the various university and college galleries, space in commercial areas such as Peachtree Center, and other rooms,

lobbies and open spaces are needed by the growing numbers of visual artists in Atlanta.

The public is attracted to the efforts of the artists, as was proven on the opening night celebration on Sept. 24. The third floor rooms and hallways were all pressed into service as exhibition space, and the stairway landings were platforms for the exhibition of sculptural hangings by Alyson Pou and works by Cyndy Myer and Mark Smith.

The opening night drew a large crowd of people who seemingly reacted with great enthusiasm to the consortium's efforts. But it will take sustained interest over a long period of time as well as sustained effort on the part of members of the consortium to make the idea really fruitful.