ABC's of Art

By W. C. BURNETT JR.

One of the newest areas of activity in the arts is to be found in the Nathan B. Forrest School of 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 bear 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 press; and darkrooms 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; Pyroform Press and Foundry, which will teach printing, paper making and sculpture casting; Image, the filmmaking...
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, Melanie Hogan, Tony Gonzales, Mark Smith, Judy Henshaw, Walton Harris, Harold Cane, Gary Whatley, Amelie-Cone Skelson, Alyson Fou, Carl Andrew Andree, Rick Berman, Riders and Downing, Betty Japour, Tom Prochaska, Janie Getter-Rea, Virginia Wattrin Smith, Susan Starr, Lyn Sterling, Robert Tauber, King Thackston and Genie Wright.

A number of these 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 curators 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 Affairs 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 performers in the school's auditoriums and teaches dance classes; the Nexus printing press and darkrooms will be the focus of activities in workshops and classes sponsored by that cooperative; and the Pygmalion 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 house the casting of iron, bronze and brass 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 is also aimed at meeting 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 in finding well-lighted, spacious places in which to work; at prices they can afford. The old, unused school, available on

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 Fou 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.