

Taxes, taxes, we're up to here in taxes."

Who should come along at this

For 12 years Fantasy Forum has presented its innovative, original musical fairy tales to the young

the satisfaction of seeing their names in print. But they are so good, they deserve to be named.

In "Hansel and Gretel" we have Bennett Cale as Hansel; Sarah Wachenheim as Gretel; Jonathan Leh-

This weekend's fun includes: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," Friday at 7:30 p.m., Sat-

7:30 p.m., Sept. 22 at 7:30 p.m. For tickets phone 944-1925 or the Civic Arts box office at 943-5862.

Latest Civic Arts exhibit is not necessarily what it appears to be

Reviewed by Carol Fowler
Times art critic

WALNUT CREEK — What you see, at first glance, is not necessarily what the artist means in the new Civic Arts exhibit, "Inside/Out." These realistic paintings of metaphoric content by six California artists hang on the main floor and Joseph Slusky's sculpture and drawings (reviewed separately) are installed on the mezzanine in a double exhibit through Oct. 21.

Not quite symbolist and not quite surrealist, the style has been identified as "Synthesism" by the English art critic, Edward Lucie-Smith. According to curator Carl Worth, the artists borrow elements from reality and refashion them to make a personal statement, often an autobiographical one. The paintings have a narrative quality that engages the viewer.

Unlike the highly charged images of figurative expressionism, given such extravagant exposure recently by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in "The Human Condition," these paintings have an almost cool quality that allows the viewer to bring his or her own perceptions to the "stories" within. Prompted by the visual elements, they are the psychological meeting ground between artist and viewer.

By limiting the choice to six artists, Worth allows sufficient exposure of the artists' range and depth. And the choice of six artists reveals a range of style from the magical clarity of Paul Pratchenko

to the intentionally awkward patterns, color and space of Valerie Patten, and from the metaphysical to the expressionistic.

Patten paints complex environments inhabited by one or two persons, seen only in profile. Although jammed with objects painted in raw, often harshly contrasting color, the rooms seem strangely empty. The viewer becomes voyeur in these private moments, often framed by windows or doors. Patten's narratives give the strongest sense of a past and a future.

India Ingargiolo paints mural-size canvases relating directly to her daydreams and nightmares. A small male figure in the background regards three children and a life-sized woman in the foreground over a ruined wall in a scene bathed in slanted, strange light. In another stark space, a male figure, rather like a posturing flamenco dancer or bull fighter, also regards a lone woman, an almost Modigliani-esque figure, who shares the vast foreground space with a caged rabbit.

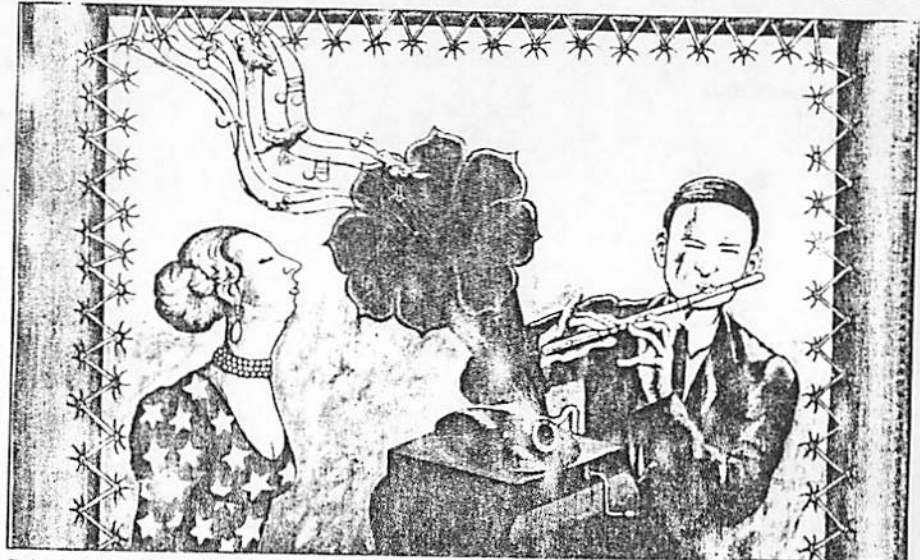
Elements borrowed from Walt Disney and 19th century art world masters co-habit William Snyder's canvases. In imitation of Delacroix' monumental studio paintings, Snyder paints his studio with his friends, including a host of Disney characters, perhaps his lost friends from the innocence of childhood. Painter Terry St. John

snoozes on a couch alongside Snyder and the late art critic Thomas Albright fiddles in the corner. Is this what Snyder thinks of art criticism? All of them are dwarfed by the enormous painting of a whale in the background.

In another, rather a moral statement, the artist disdainfully regards three card players — the three Stooges — in imitation of Cezanne's card players. Painted with old-master expertise, the paintings are at once humorous, satirical and theatrical.

Social comment, often as it applies to the dilemmas of women, characterizes Roberta Loach's gouache paintings. Depicted in the guise of rituals, these "scenarios" appear in lovely, clearly articulated color and form.

Hours at the gallery are noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and 7:30 to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday evening. Special events include a slide lecture by Joseph



Roberta Loach's gouache paintings, including "The Couple," above, is part of the new Civic Arts exhibit, "Inside/Out."

Slusky on Sept. 19 at 7:30 p.m. and a "Gallery Morning" on Oct. 17.

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