

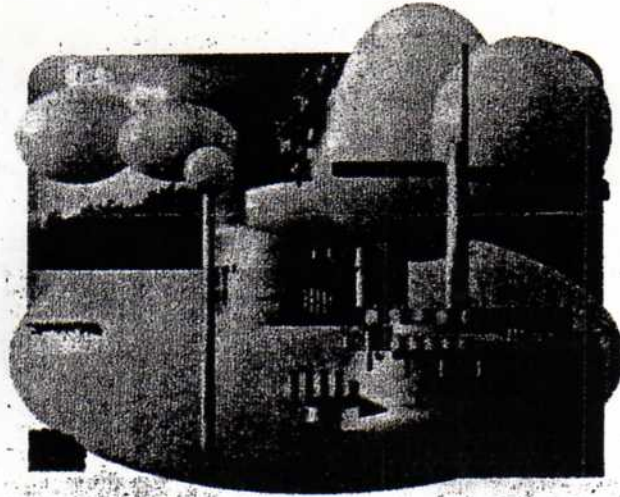
"TIPOFF," FEB. '01

ARTS COUNCIL GALLERY

A variety of perspectives in photography

Three new exhibits will fill the galleries at the Arts Council of Southeast Missouri in February. Photographs by Cape Girardeau artist Joel Ray, M.D., will be on display at Gallery 100, Incline Village, Nevada, artist Les Barta's photoconstructions will be featured at the Lorimier Gallery, and the Visual Arts Cooperative will have a new display in their permanent gallery. The exhibits will be on display from February 6-28, and open with a reception Friday, February 6, from 5-8 p.m.

Lorimier Gallery exhibitor Les Barta, a self-taught artist, describes his work as "metaphoric algebra." Using photography, digital manipulation and collage, he creates a reality quite different than what viewers see in everyday life. "Beauty has inherent poetic value," Barta said in an interview with the North Lake Tahoe Bonanza. "When stripped of its familiarity, it is transformed into power."



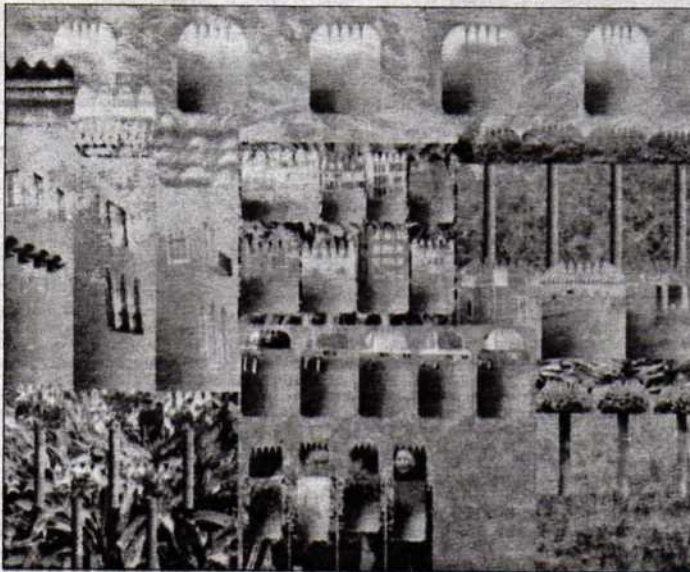
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'Dimensions' Art Exhibition Opens



San Francisco Flower by Les Barta

Artworks by two meticulous artists, Les Barta from Incline Village, Nevada, and Alicia Schmidt of Cape Coral, are showcased in a creative pairing for the newest fine art exhibition on view in the Alliance for the Arts William R. Frizzell Gallery. The show is called "Dimensions" and launches with a free public

opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, September 10, and then runs through Thursday, September 30.

Although the individual works of Barta and Schmidt are very different in approach, composition, style and technique, both artists' creations incorporate and emphasize spatial relationships that give viewers a firm sense of the underlying draftsman-like measurement and placement of objects and components that went into the works. Barta and Schmidt's common focus upon artistic dimensions prompted their pairing and generated the practical and sensible name for their joint exhibition.

Barta's work (primarily computer photoconstructions) is highly stylized and ultra-representational, with each detailed form and object clearly and easily recognizable. With Barta, a castle is a castle, a bridge is a bridge and sailboats are sailboats. Frequently, he repeats his major objects, placing them here, there and all about a work, as though they were multiple-cutouts. As Barta says, "Every structure in a setting could be seen as a metaphor for every other structure. The component parts of all the metaphors become interchangeable according to the logic of their metaphorical algebra. In effect, we can become the designers of our own reality. It doesn't really matter how we describe the design or how 'true reality' looks."

The initial impact of a Barta composition is often pleasingly light, amusing and entertaining, even when he is portraying views of power plant smokestacks or barges under a truncated Golden Gate Bridge. The underlying strength of his structures and his firm artistic control clearly come through, creating a fascinating interplay for viewers, somewhere between "definitely anchored" and "happily floating."

The constructions of Barta and the oils of Schmidt make a perfect artistic coupling, albeit maybe one reminiscent of Jack Sprat and his wife. United by their mutual love of effective dimension utilization, they individually espouse different values. He's more detailed, multi-colored

and multi-imaged; she's more single-minded essence with a firmly controlled palette selection. And, together, they'll live happily ever after on display for three honeymoon weeks at the Alliance.