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ON THE ARTS

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Euphrat Gallery fights cultural deprivation in the valley

The Euphrat Gallery at DeAnza College in Cupertino has an unusual and unique role in the visual arts world of the south bay.

The gallery is the only community college arts appendage which makes any impact on the arts scene. In fact, its exhibition program has become so strong its professionalism can be favorably compared to any gallery or museum program in the valley.

Under the direction of Jan Rindfleisch, the program has achieved one additional distinction. Rindfleisch has produced a significant number of well-designed publications to accompany exhibitions at the Euphrat.

The Euphrat's exhibitions often relate to functional aspect of the art world, with shows such as an annual presentation on graphic arts.

This functional adaptation is evident in the current exhibit, which is a serious attempt to understand the nature of art collections and the motivation of art collectors in the south bay.

On display are representative examples of art pieces collected by individuals in the Silicon Valley, including sculptures, paintings and original graphics.

The current exhibit is undoubtedly one of the most important art shows ever assembled in Silicon Valley. It is important to the visual arts experience of the area that we begin a dialogue with and



Elizabeth Catlett's 'Two Generations' is on display at Euphrat Gallery.

about serious collectors.

These collectors will, along with private galleries, public museums and art schools, determine which artists, art styles and genres will flourish in the south bay.

As important as the exhibit is, the accompanying catalogue is even more significant. Not only is the catalogue a guide to the exhibition, but it is also a reference work to the history and philosophies that have guided some of the major collectors

of the valley.

As a history of the visual arts in the south bay, the publication is invaluable. There is information contained in this publication that is essential to anyone with any knowledge of the visual arts in the south bay.

The exhibit is also noteworthy because Rindfleisch has centered on more than the biggest collections or the largest numbers of famous works of art.

Rather, she has chosen a broad spectrum of collectors, whose motivations and guiding interests are very different. It is this breadth of interest and diversity which give life to the visual arts scene in the valley.

The publication supports one observation I made some time ago. This is the amount of influence that the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Smith Anderson Gallery in Palo Alto exert on the serious collectors of the area.

There are a number of conclusions that could be drawn from the exhibit at the Euphrat. One observation might be that Silicon Valley is still in the clutches of cultural deprivation.

Certainly there is no local collection or collector who has made any real impact on modern art despite the tremendous wealth in the south bay.

On the other hand, I was impressed with the joy in discovery which seems to dominate the narrative in the exhibition catalogue. It seems that Silicon Valley and its collectors are just discovering the arts, that the valley's significance in the greater world is beginning to be envisioned.

The Euphrat gallery is to be complimented for its foresight in chronicling this important event in the emergence of the visual arts in the valley.

"Art Collectors in and Around Silicon Valley" is on exhibit at the Euphrat Gallery, DeAnza College through April 18. □