

sundayARTS



03.04.01 | EAST VALLEY TRIBUNE

East Valley success stories

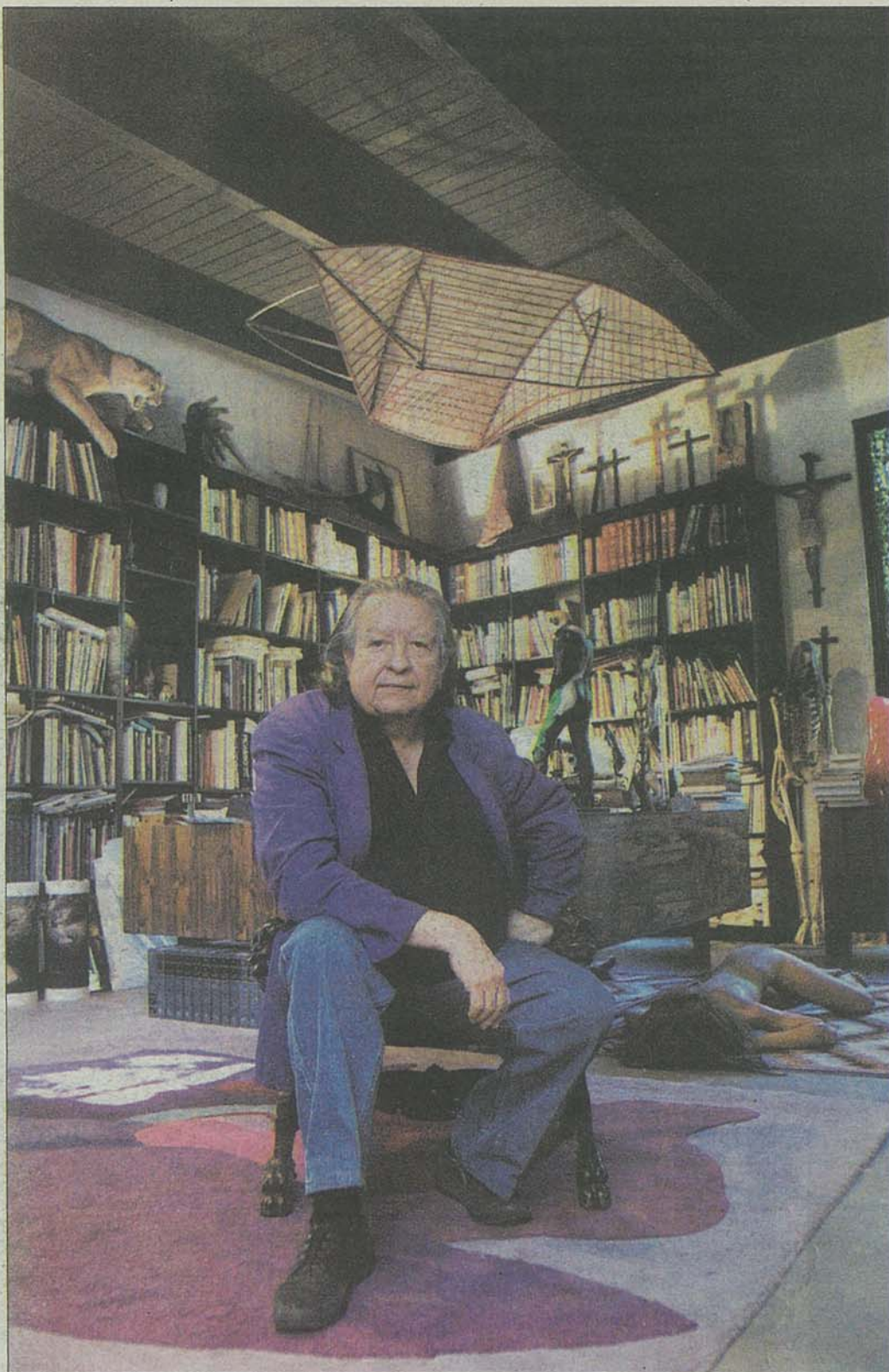
Local actresses migrate
to Broadway stages. 8

Authors gather for a good cause

Brandeis luncheon serves
up best-selling writers. 18

On the Fritz

Scottsdale artist
has new exhibit. 4



PAUL O'NEILL / SUNDAY ARTS

The Scottsdale office of Fritz Scholder, with its artifacts and animals, reveals much about the famous artist. Scholder says he finds inspiration in his unusual objects and surroundings.



COURTESY OF VANIER GALLERIES

"Owl and Mouse" is featured in the show, opening Thursday at Vanier Galleries on Marshall in Scottsdale.

Scholder unmasked

Famed Scottsdale artist finds power in truth, inspiration in artifacts

BY AMY ABRAMS | SUNDAY ARTS

Fritz Scholder's insatiable desire to uncover the truths of life's mysteries continues to fuel his creative endeavors. He shares this journey to the unknown through his art.

Inside the antique wooden doors to the courtyard of Scholder's Scottsdale home and studio, sleek gray and black cats greet visitors then stroll away. High plaster walls enclose lush, flowering foliage and shimmering bronze sculptures by the artist. It is a sanctuary — a place of refuge for the creative spirit.

Scholder emerges from one of his two large studios. Like his surroundings and artwork, Scholder emanates an energy that is powerful and mysterious.

In his residence, Scholder surrounds himself with objects that provoke and inspire him. He sits comfortably at a glass table

VISUAL ARTS

amid artifacts and "entities," as Scholder likes to call them. Stuffed birds and animals are mounted on the walls or looming nearby, including two bats, an owl, an armadillo, a bear and a beaver. A stuffed buffalo stands in the master bedroom. Scholder believes that everyone has a corresponding animal totem. His is the buffalo.

Objects from his collection often find their way as props into his work. "Owl and Mouse," featured in the Vanier Galleries See **SCHOLDER** on next page

VALLEY MUSEUMS

MESA

Mesa Contemporary Arts (155 N. Center St., [480] 644-2056). "Anything with a Drawer," Tue. through April 14. Hours: noon to 8 p.m. Tue.-Fri., noon to 5 p.m. Sat.

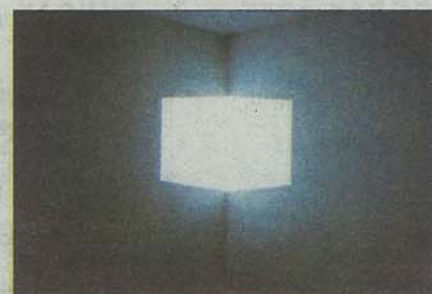
Mesa Southwest Museum (53 N. Macdonald, [480] 644-4040). "Life of the Santa Cruz River," curated by Carlos Hernandez and Larry Marshall, through

March 25. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tue.-Sat., 1 to 5 p.m. Sun.

SCOTTSDALE

Heard Museum North (34505 N. Scottsdale Road, [480] 488-9817). Gallery talk about the history of Navajo textiles to coincide with the exhibit "Fancy Blankets: 19th Century Navajo Textiles." Gallery talks: 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Mon.-Tue., Thu., Sat., through May. Museum hours: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon to 5 p.m. Sun.

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (7374 E. Second St., [480] 994-2787). "Illuminations: An Exploration of Light," local high school students' light-based art, through April 8; "Kyoko Ibe: Spirit and Nature," meditative installation based on traditional Zen gardens, through Aug. 12; "Infinite Light," featuring an exhibition of works by visionary artist James Turrell, through June 3. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tue.-Wed., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thu.-Sat., noon to 5 p.m. Sun.



"Afrum proto" by James Turrell.

SCHOLDER

from previous page

on Marshall show that opens Thursday, presents a startling representation of the stuffed owl ominously standing guard in Scholder's dining room.

Human skulls "decorate" his breakfast room and also appear in paintings at the show.

"I live with objects that interest me," Scholder explains. "My life and my work are inseparable."

Scholder's art and artifact collection is vast and varied, including everything from antique postcards to voodoo fetishes.

"It gives me inspiration every day," Scholder says. "I love waking up and walking through each room. The richness of human history is so great. I try to just pack it in."

Traveling is essential for Scholder to savor life's richness.

He embraces the world's many cultures and avidly travels to exotic lands as well as the world's art centers — London, New York and Paris. Egypt is one of his favored destinations and he often makes pilgrimages to the ancient land of temples and gods.

He buys many of his most valued collectibles while abroad.

"I have a passion for collecting," Scholder says. "I purchase an object when I feel I have to possess it . . . that I can't live without it. I might even dream about it. I take an object home when I fall in love with it."

Searching for truth

Masks have captured Scholder's heart and comprise part of his eclectic collection. Masks explore the concept of man's identity, an ongoing theme in Scholder's works.

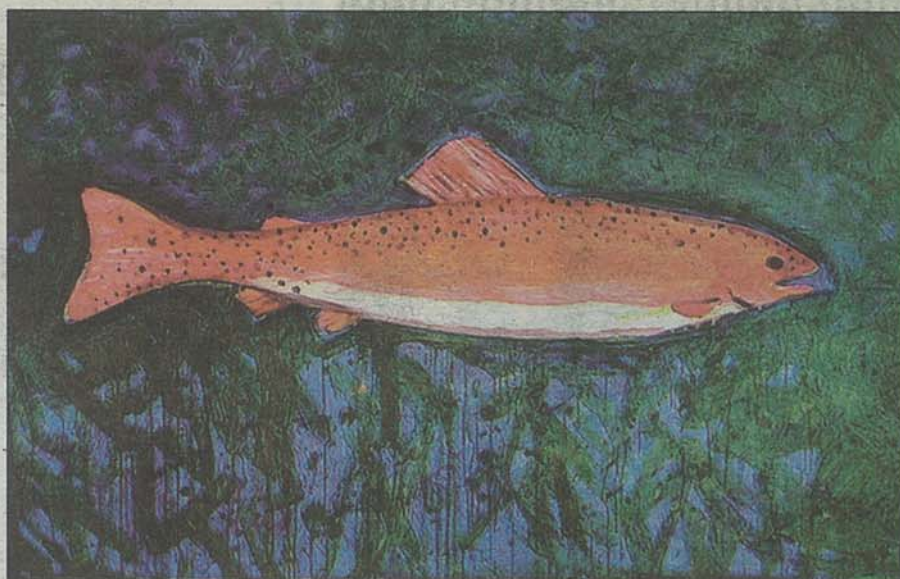
"We all have facades," he explains. "You must find out about yourself and accept yourself. For artists, there is only truth — no mask. This is how you obtain your power."

Scholder takes leap after leap into the metaphorical darkness seeking his power. While most stand trembling at the edge, Scholder jumps off, headfirst, plunging deep into the recesses of the soul.

Scholder believes that the primary occupation of an artist is to behold truth.

"I meet you halfway," Scholder says about his art. "You must do your half — that is your part."

Not surprisingly, Scholder is a night painter who likes to blast music in his studio to invoke a trancelike state to unleash his creativity. Only after



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VANIER GALLERIES ON MARSHALL

These Fritz Scholder works will be featured in the Vanier show: above, "Fish #6," acrylic on canvas; below, a portion of "Weather #4," acrylic on canvas.



exhaustively researching his subject matter does Scholder allow intuition to be his guide. Indeed, Scholder reads avidly and is known by critics as "intellectual as painter."

"After the intellectual process is complete, I always, ultimately, rely on intuition," Scholder explains. "I initially used the blank canvas for the large painting in the upcoming show as a backdrop for a photograph I was taking. I placed symbols on it thinking I would paint over them. When I got back to the studio to begin the painting, I knew to leave them there — some part of me knew it would work."

When Scholder feels free to lead with his heart, an unconscious ritual takes place. Painting becomes a sensual experience for Scholder.

"The paint is creamy and the canvas

See **SCHOLDER** on page 6

FRITZ SCHOLDER FACTS

Born: Oct. 6, 1937, in Breckenridge, Minn.

Awards: American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Painting; awards from the Salon d'Automne in Paris and Intergrafiks in Berlin; fellowships from the Whitney Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation; the Norsk Hostfest Humanitarian Award from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

Career highlights: Taught painting at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, N.M. Artist in residence at Dartmouth College. Guest artist at Vermont School, Oklahoma Art Institute, Idyllwild Art Institute, Santa Fe Art Institute, Taos School of Art and the American University in Washington, D.C.

Education: Bachelor of arts degree from California State University, Sacramento; master of fine arts degree from the University of Arizona. Honorary doctorate of fine arts degrees from Ripon College, Wis.; Concordia College, Minn.; University of Arizona, Tucson; the College of Santa Fe; and the University of Wisconsin, Superior.

See his work: Thursday through March 25 in "The World of Fritz Scholder" at Vanier Galleries on Marshall (4142 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale). Information: (480) 945-0195.

PHOENIX

Heard Museum (2301 N. Central Ave., [602] 252-8840). Exhibits include "Inner Visions," bronze and stone sculptures by Michael Naranjo; "Arizona Highways: Celebrating Native Culture," photography by Jerry Jacka; "Cradles, Corn and Lizards," through July; "43rd annual Indian Market and Fair," featuring more than 400 top native artists, plus top entertainment, food and drink. Indian Market hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sun. Museum hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

EAST VALLEY GALLERIES

Aosis Cyber Café (815 W. University Drive, Tempe, [480] 736-1888). "Irrational Exuberance," selected paintings by Grant Wiggins, through April 1.

Bentley Gallery (4161 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 946-6060). New works by painters Martin Mull and Vernon Fisher, reception 7 to 9 p.m. Thu., through March.

Bishop Gallery for Art & Antiques (7164 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 949-9062). "The Work of Leonard Baskin," reception 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 11, through April 3. Hours: 10 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. A free lecture by Fritz Scholder and concert by Isola Jones will be at Scottsdale Civic Center Library Auditorium, 3839 N. Drinkwater Blvd., at 4:30 p.m. March 11.

Cultural Exchange Gallery (4235 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 941-0900). Color photography by Arizonan William Lesch and sculptures by David Dimm, through March.

Gallery Materia (4222 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 949-1262). Works of Marian Bijlenga, Christine Federighi, Kellogg Johnson and Philip Moulthrop, through March 31.

g2 Gallery (4200 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 429-7729). New works by local contemporary artists Fort Guerin and John Tuomisto-Bell, through March 31.

Leona King Gallery (7171 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 945-1209). "The Magic in the Trees," works by woodcarvers of Oaxaca, Mexico, in addition to limited edition prints and serigraphs on canvas by J.D. Challenger, through March 31.

Meyer Gallery (7173 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 947-6372). "East and West," landscape paintings by Raymond L. Knaub and Mian Situ, through March 14.

Peterson-Hall Gallery (13845 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, [480] 421-0155). New oil paintings by John Traynor, through March 13.

Rezurrection Gallery (601 W. University Drive, Tempe, [480] 377-9080). "Will Make Furniture for Food," sculptural furniture by local artists, through April 1.

Suzanne Brown Galleries (7160 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 945-8475). New work by Colorado painters Don Coen and David Foley, through Wed.

Udinotti Gallery (4215 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale, [480] 946-7056). "Spring Party and Group Exhibition," a revolving group show, through May 31.

Vanier Galleries on Main (7106 E. Main St., Scottsdale, [480] 946-7507). New Mexico landscape paintings by Teruko Wilde and oil painter Gregory D. West, through March 30.

TEMPE

ASU Art Museum (10th Street and Mill Avenue, [480] 965-2787). "Ubu Tells the Truth and Other Stories," an exhibition of drawings, prints and animation by South African artist William Kentridge, through May 20; "Rhapsody: African-American Art from Valley Collections," including Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker and Faith Ringgold, through May 13; "The Wayfarer's Journey," a film installation by Valley artist Gita Farid, through May 5; "Contemporary Art Furniture," featuring the works of John

Cederquist, Sam Maloof, Wendy Maruyama, through June 10. Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tue., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wed.-Sat., 1 to 5 p.m. Sun.

Tempe Historical Museum (809 E. Southern Ave., [480] 350-5125). "Profiles in Diversity," insight into Tempe's early experiences with different ethnic groups using photographs, newspaper articles and archives, through April 22. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon.-Thu., Sat.; 1 to 5 p.m. Sun.

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SCHOLDER

from page 5

moves as you touch it," Scholder says. "It's a turn-on, a catharsis, an exorcism. You are the creator and it's all up to you."

Scholder paints with vigorous brushwork, in an abstract expressionist style, giving his images vibrancy and intensity.

He adds enthusiastically, "You have to use everything you've got. You're fighting for your life."

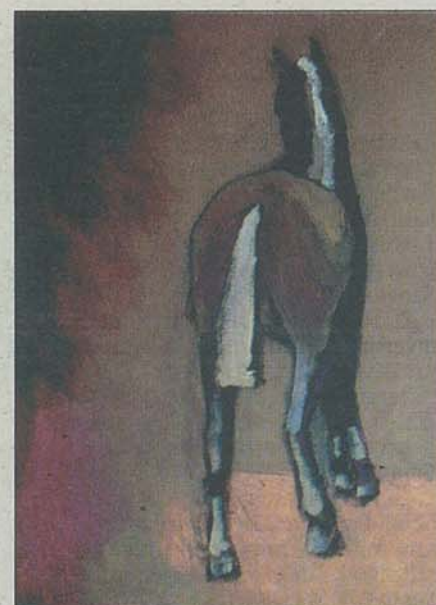
Shattering myths of Indian art

Scholder has been the subject of 11 books and three PBS documentaries. His work is in numerous collections including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.

Critics have proclaimed Fritz Scholder the most accomplished and internationally successful American Indian painter in America. While Scholder recoils from being defined as a great American Indian painter, instead of a great painter, it is largely how he is classified in the isms and neatly formed categorizations so prevalent in art history.

His catapult to fame 40 years ago was dramatic: He painted the very first images of American Indians in an expressionistic style portraying their bleak reality.

Drunken Indians and Indians wrapped in American flags were some of the



COURTESY OF VANIER GALLERIES ON MARSHALL

"Horse #1" is one of Scholder's new works that will be in the Vanier show.

highly controversial images he created and provoked demonstrations outside the galleries that represented his works.

Scholder depicted contemporary American Indians caught mercilessly between their heritage and the driving forces of modern American life. He singularly shattered the romantic mythology of the Indian in art.

Of one-quarter Luiseno, California

See **SCHOLDER** on next page

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BRIEF NUDDITY

SCHOLDER
from previous page

Mission, descent, Fritz Scholder was born in Breckenridge, Minn., in 1937.

His high school art teacher, Oscar Howe, was a well-known artist of Sioux ancestry. Howe served as a mentor to Scholder and inspired the teenager to pursue a career as an artist.

Moving with his family to California, Scholder attended California State University, Sacramento, where he studied with Wayne Thiebaud, a pop art painter of international acclaim.

Thiebaud helped organize Scholder's first professional one-man show.

Scholder continued his education by completing a master's degree at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Accepting a teaching position at the newly formed Institute of American Indian Arts, Scholder moved to Santa Fe, N.M. He began painting in series in Santa Fe, and it was here that he began the famed Indian series.

Transcendent themes

Scholder is a prolific painter who has explored many intriguing themes in subsequent series. Women have been, and continue to be, a central theme for Scholder.

"I love women," Scholder says. "Yet, almost everyone has painted women. It is one of the most obvious clichés. That's the challenge. Almost everyone has tried the subject. Essentially, everything has been done. It takes great audacity to

transcend — to make it your own."

Scholder paints images of women in swimming pools, in beds, standing nude in interiors, seated in chairs, and seemingly possessed in the arms of men who represent death.

The male lover is portrayed as devil, demon, monster or skeleton. Scholder uses the image of the vampire to represent male energy inducing the most erotic and sacrificial death. Sex often is portrayed as destructive yet irresistible.

"Sex and death are the most interesting subjects in our reality," Scholder says. "Sex has all the elements of living and dying."

As with most of Scholder's work, color is key, and the relationship of the figure is often to a strong, bright, flat ground.

Scholder is a master colorist and the bold rhythms of color transform each image into abstraction. Scholder admires many masters, including Goya, Matisse, Picasso and Munch, who all make use of expressive color.

"This is the natural part of a beginning artist — one has all kinds of heroes. I could go down the line — you take something from each one. You adore what they do," Scholder explains.

"Color is what makes painting painting," Scholder says.

"After working with color for most of my life, I know that with limited color you make the image stronger. Too many strong colors in painting compete. You don't know which one you like the best."

"In contemporary art, concept is everything," Scholder continues.

"Yet, how could we ever forget color?"

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