

4 Artists' Works Selected for National Show

By HELEN A. HARRISON

EXPO III, the third national invitational exhibition sponsored by the Northport Galleries, departs slightly from its usual format by featuring four artists instead of three. Entries, in the form of slides, were received from 35 states, and the selection, made by Rae Ferren, associate curator of the Guild Hall Museum in East Hampton, includes landscape paintings from

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Texas, welded steel sculpture from Connecticut, color photographs from New Jersey and drawings by a Cold Spring Harbor artist.

Northport Galleries is an artists' cooperative, and the membership's initiative in administering such an ambitious project to expose area audiences to new work from outside the region is certainly praiseworthy.

The handsome structures by Joseph Fucigna of Darien are fashioned of steel I-beams fragmented into graceful arches or twisted in rhythmic shapes that open invitingly. The artist, who studied ceramics at Alfred University, has said he was inspired by the plastic qualities of clay and seeks to create a similar feeling using hard, unyielding metal.

He has succeeded especially well in the two pieces titled "Reach," which seem to be continuous ribbons of steel folded in on themselves. The rust-coated Cor-Ten surface even resembles terra cotta in color, and repeated lines of welded decoration add a sub-

tle texture not unlike the striations sometimes found on pottery.

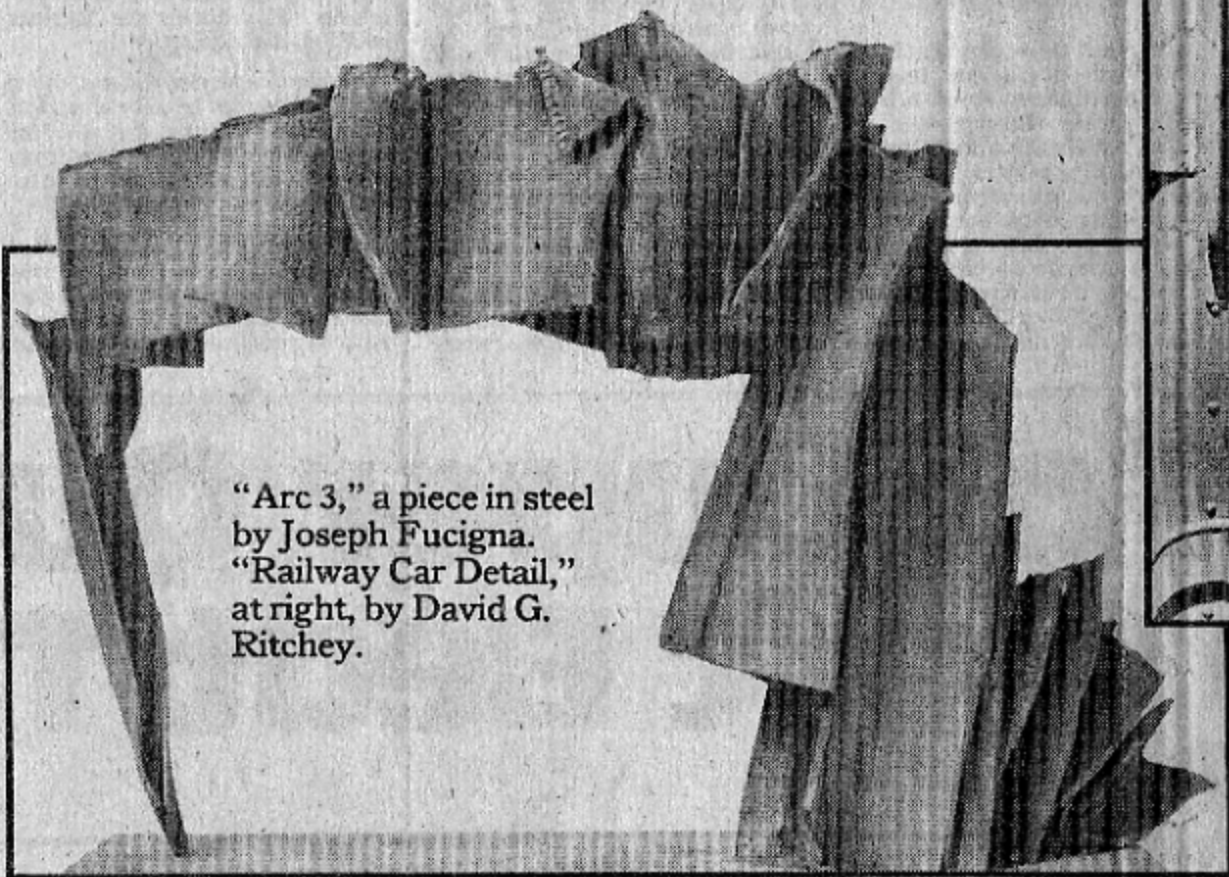
Mr. Fucigna's "Arc" series uses slablike pieces of metal to form small-scale gateways that, if enlarged to monumental proportions, might serve as modern counterparts of the triumphal arches that lend a touch of grandeur to the civic landscape. One can equally well imagine them set in an open meadow or highlighting a dramatic vista, or even framing the entrance to a park.

Artyce Colen of Dallas has submitted a group of oils that interpret the landscape in semi-abstract terms. Her emphasis is on flowing, organic forms, often accented by tufts of grass or foliage and unexpected touches of heightened color that give the best of the canvases an intensity of feeling that goes beyond observation of the natural world.

In "Impel," for example, the sense of movement is nicely communicated by bending grasses apparently straining against a seaside wind. "Unyielding," as its title implies, is hard and rocky, with a little sprig of growth struggling to assert itself in the foreground. No particular locale is described; instead, the artist interprets aspects of landscape more archetypal than specific.

A few of Miss Colen's paintings, such as "Summer Heat," are more naturalistic, and in this case the overall effect is a bit ponderous. When she uses natural elements as a point of departure for the invention and elaboration of line, shape and color, she is at her best. Her two small oil studies on paper show a freer approach to paint handling and an energy that makes them quite intense.

The detailed pencil drawings by Constantine Legakis focus on nature



with equal intensity but in a different style. Close-up views of pebbles, shells, leaves and twigs washed up on the beach near her Cold Spring Harbor home or observed through the water's surface are painstakingly depicted to emphasize the intricate patterns created by the random alignment of numerous fragments. One must admire the technical skill and patience that goes into such render-

ing, but for many artists, technique alone is not enough to make the work sing. Mrs. Legakis has managed to rise above such limitations, however, to produce drawings that are both skillful and lyrical.

"Reflections," with its dancing patterns and ambiguous space, is especially effective, and her untitled study of water rippling over shells has a similar spacial complexity,

heightened by a protruding branch.

The photographs by David G. Ritchey are also close-up views, but in his case, the subject matter is man-made. Mr. Ritchey, who hails from Sargentsville, N.J., zeroes in on sections of machinery and buildings, abstracting otherwise mundane objects into strong compositions that emphasize color contrasts and pattern.

"Grab Bar," a bright yellow rail-