

T&P Doors by Daniel Blagg

Art Space III makes room for hometown art lovers

About this time each year, some 700 Metroplex art aficionados descend upon an old furniture warehouse-turned-art-studio to attend the opening of the annual show of the nine artists who share the space.

Brothers Daniel and Dennis Blagg, founders of this loosely connected group, are joined in the exhibition at Fort Worth's Art Space III by Carol Benson, Susan Harrington, Bill Haveron, Nancy Lamb, Jim Malone, Linda Miller and a new associate, JoAnn Mulroy.

Although many of these artists are represented by galleries throughout Texas, this exhibit gives the hometown crowd a chance to see their work, often their most recent pieces.

Dennis Blagg, well-known for his paintings of Big Bend, has numerous landscape drawings on display, four of which have just been purchased by the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Like his paintings, most of these drawings are highly realistic renditions of sites he photographs on his yearly expeditions to the West Texas park.

Many are so finely and densely executed and display such subtle variations in light and shade that they have a photographic quality.

These scenes have a special meaning to Blagg. "The landscape offers itself as a stage, and the things within the landscape become the metaphors and symbols that play a role in understanding my own life," he says.

While Dennis Blagg's primary subject matter is the landscape, his brother Daniel focuses on urban life and has several cityscapes on view.

Two large oil paintings, *T&P Doors* and

Revolving Doors (from the Oil and Gas Building downtown), depict the hustle and bustle of life outside these structures, as reflected in their glass doors. These reflected scenes are more loosely and abstractly rendered than the architectural details of the metal that surround them. This alludes to the ambiguities of the business world that these buildings represent.

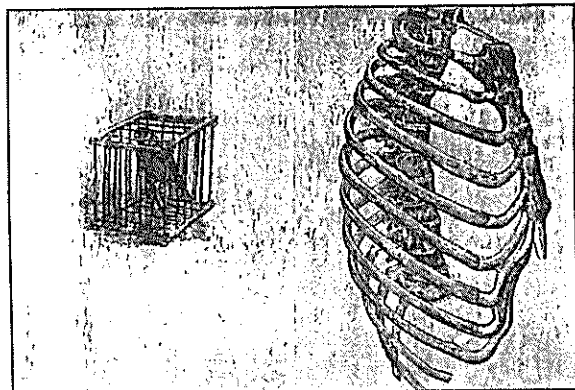
Susan Harrington combines, for the first time, images that have been basic to her work for years — horses, birds and hands — with text in the form of journal entries about dreams and ideas. Several riders and horses and a written passage about dreams comprise *Piaffer*, which is the name of a dressage movement in which rider and horse communicate through subtle body movements. This would seem to allude to different kinds of communication — between humans and animals, ideas and art, and artist and viewer.

Nancy Lamb has several richly painted party scenes that draw attention to the unmistakable truths revealed by body language when she crops her figures and focuses on the unmasked emotions that are revealed when alcohol and people mix. In a different vein, *The Big Sleep* is a scene from her father's country burial; a brilliant sky contrasts with the dark scene under the funeral canopy, while relatives express a kaleidoscope of emotions as they pay their last respects.

Along with a selection of works that reflect his Southeast Texas upbringing, Bill Haveron also addresses the conflicts elicited when he moved away from those familiar places in *Fear Fortifies as Stagna-*

tion Dilutes, a very large pencil-on-paper work. In this symbol-laden work, Haveron combines people and things (chickens, for example) from his childhood with those from his explorations of the Los Angeles art scene. Here, pine trees contrast with palm trees and comforting family figures oppose strange, fearsome creatures.

JoAnn Mulroy evokes a sense of nostalgia with her charcoal and gouache works on wood panels that are based on late-19th-century prints. *Bone House* is a diptych with a human rib cage on one side



Bone House by Jo Ann Mulroy, mixed media

and a bird in a cage on the other. It raises the issue of the dichotomy between the body and the soul, and how physical concerns often overwhelm spiritual needs.

Carol Benson reveals an increasingly sophisticated and original direction in her art, especially in her use of industrial metals to depict domestic settings.

In the Galleries appears Sunday. Send gallery news and announcements to Suzanne Akhtar, Star-Telegram, 400 W. Seventh St., Fort Worth, TX 76102. Fax (817) 390-7257.