

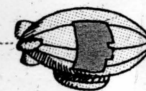
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Cartoons Make Unique Show [A review of a caricature and cartoon exhibit, Milwaukee]

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Cartoons make unique show



By Curtis L. Carter

The secret of a good caricature is that it offers a visual interpretation of its subject "which we can never forget and which the victim will always seem to carry around with him like a man bewitched."

These words of E.H. Gombrich are sufficient warning to any critic. Let him who presumes to comment on the works of a caricaturist—much less a whole "legion" of them, such as are assembled in the exhibit at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Max Taglin of Shore-



wood--beware!

The exhibit presents relatively polished works of such artists as Bill Sanders of the Milwaukee Journal; Tom Curtis of the Milwaukee Sentinel; Don Glassford, Denis Kitchen, Jim Mitchell, and Wendel Pugh of the Bugle-American; and John P. Schmelzer of Madison. It also includes works of college and high school students with ranging levels of achievement.

The form of caricature is totally abstract. Its vocabulary consists of highly expressive lines and shapes. These are selectively applied to personalities and situations in such a manner as to bring out the ironies, absurdities, and the humor that is inherent in life's moments. The result is non-realist but highly personal insight into the person or event being explored.

Sanders, as an editorial cartoonist, concerns himself with major poli-

tical personalities and events of the day. Accordingly one finds portrayals of the president, the vice president, governor Regan, the mayor of Milwaukee, as well as international figures such as Israeli premier Golda Maier.

His "American gothic" places Martha and John Mitchell with telephone and tape recorder respectively in the place of the familiar farmer and wife of Grant Wood's familiar work. The portrayal of Agnew in the playroom contains a splendidly drawn hobby horse which reveals some of the graphic talent supporting his biting social comment.

Don Glassford's "Hey Fella" is admirable for fine detailed draftmanship, especially in the texture of the hooded figure, the feet, and rope. His "Commissars are Comin'" is, for me, one of the funniest covers yet to appear in the Bugle.

The clear and direct style of Dennis Kitchen leads to fast perceptual impact. It is always clear in its point. If there is a lack of depth in his "message," it is certainly compensated for by surety of skill with highly expressive lines. I especially liked his "Card Players" for its expressive and distinctive character portrayals.

Jim Mitchell's comic strip "Smile" is in some respects closer

to classic forms of caricature. It achieves its effect almost entirely through highly imaginative uses of physiognomic pictorial conventions. Accordingly, it relies much less on verbal accompaniments to make its point.

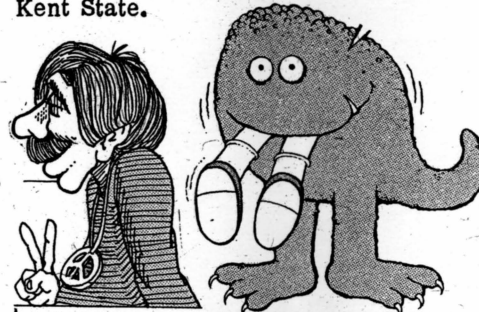
Whether at social commentary as in the "Laos" piece and the anti-pollution work, or when attending to more universal human situations as in "Smile," Mitchell's superior mastery of line and his subtle and humorous insights are evident. My main criticism of his social commentaries is that they tend to spell out too much for the viewer. But this objection will no doubt be corrected by experience.

Wendel Pugh's entries in this exhibit lead in a direction opposite that suggested in Mitchell's work. Pugh uses a mixture of verbal and pictorial elements in his composition. Verbal elements are not auxiliary but integral elements. The outcome is a highly complex structure which invites the viewer to explore the resulting pictorial puzzle.

Every detail is significant and possible multiple levels of response are suggested. I have trouble reading some of the symbols in Pugh's work. Perhaps it is because they are not meant to be public.

His excellent drawing is sometimes marred by rather useless and unoriginal inversions of letters. They add to intellectual confusion but do not enhance the artistry of the works.

Of the non-professional entries, two showed particular promise. "School Teacher" by sixteen year old high school student James L. Kern pictures the violent character of a hostile teacher. The style is undeveloped but promising. "Who is the Slayer?" by Michael Maersch is a well rendered statement concerning Kent State.



Autobiographical vitas accompanying works in the show are interesting for their own sake. Written by the artists, they reveal success, struggle, tragedy, and hope characteristic of artists "making it," or not.

The exhibit is unusual in several respects. First, the show was devoted exclusively to caricature and cartoon. This is rare, if not unique in itself. It occurred in a private home, organized by two teachers, Mrs. Thelma Taglin and Mrs. Rona Steingart.

Also it provided a "forum" for young and lesser known artists, as well as for some seasoned ones. Not the least important was the attempt on the part of the sponsors to bring together artists working in a common area of art.

(Curtis L. Carter is assistant professor of aesthetics at Marquette.)

Theatre X originals

Milwaukee's Theatre X will present a program of original plays and sketches, "The Zipper is Stuck," Thursday through Saturday. The program will begin at 9 p.m., at the Coffee House, 631 N. 19th St.

Billed as "an evening of social satire" The Zipper is Stuck will include a revival of "The People vs. The People" which was performed in

January. The second half of the program includes new, original material in addition to pieces from last year's "X Communication."

Following the performance, the audience is invited to participate in discussion and informal improvisation with the company. Admission is \$1—tickets available at the door.

Additional images from the exhibit reviewed in this article are provided below, courtesy of the artist Jim Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell is pictured at the exhibit in the first image.





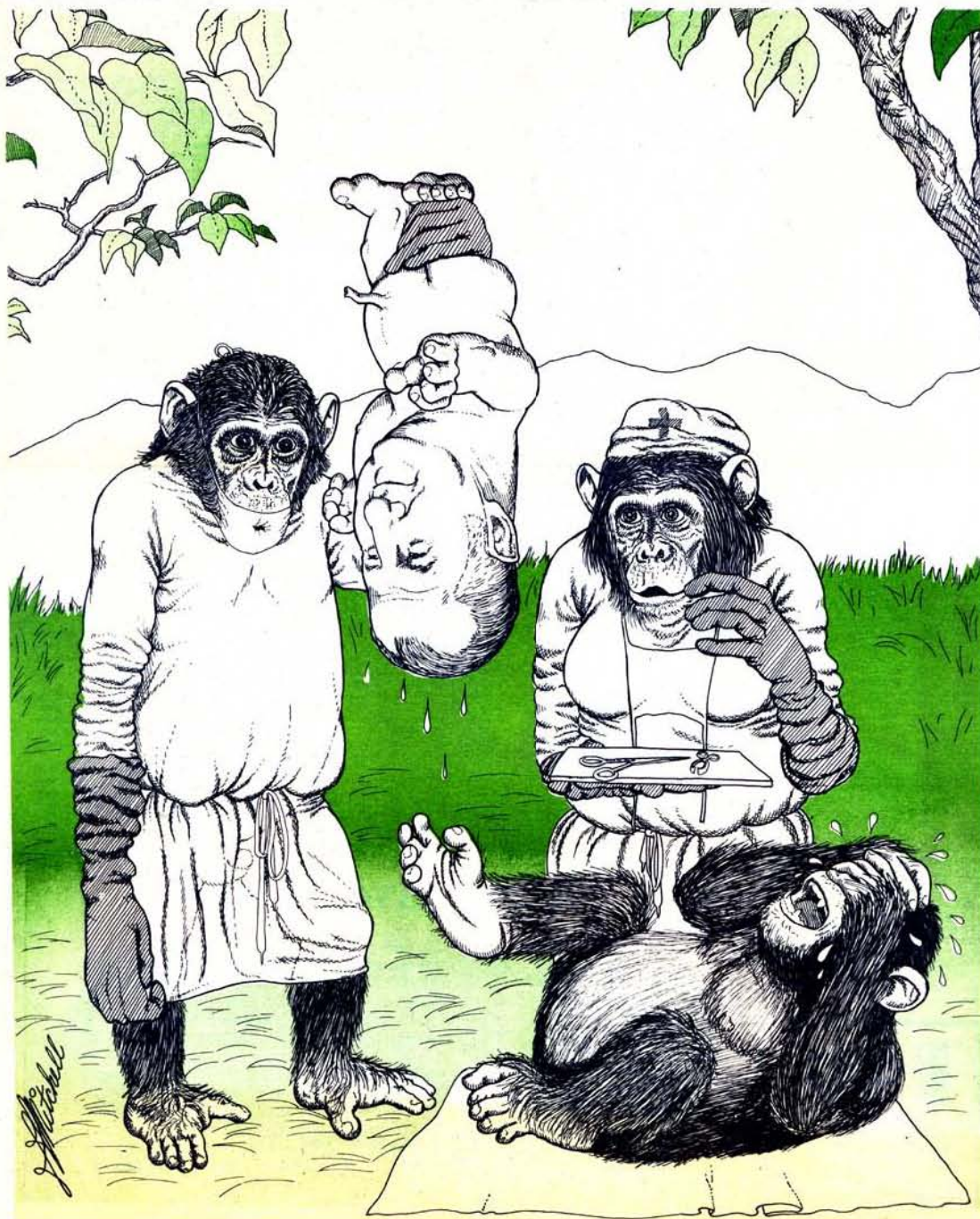
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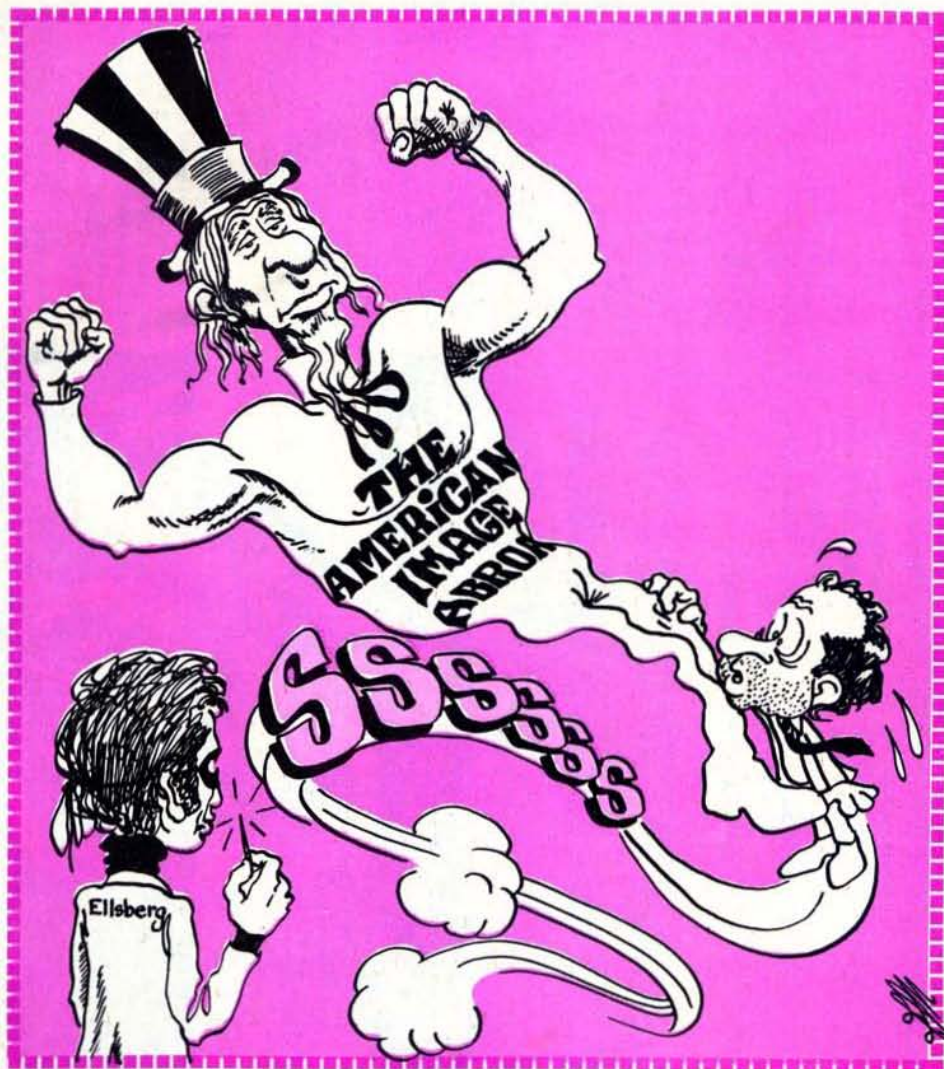
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