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Entertainment Weekly

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ENTERTAINMENT Weekly

THE CALL

Friday, May 31, 1996

Local artist has Providence show

By KATHIE RALEIGH

Lifestyle Editor

PROVIDENCE — Artist George "Skip" Shea of Uxbridge admits it's not easy to describe his work.

He doesn't have a defined style.

He doesn't work in a single medium: "I use what's available when the spirit moves me," he says. That includes acrylics, watercolors, charcoal and chalk.

Nor does he title his works, "because it's like leading people into certain directions," he explains. "Whatever you see or feel is true, a real feeling."

Experiencing art is a personal event, and it's best to see it for yourself. That's what we can do this month when eight of Shea's works are on exhibit at AS220, the non-profit, free-wheeling center for the arts at 115 Empire St.

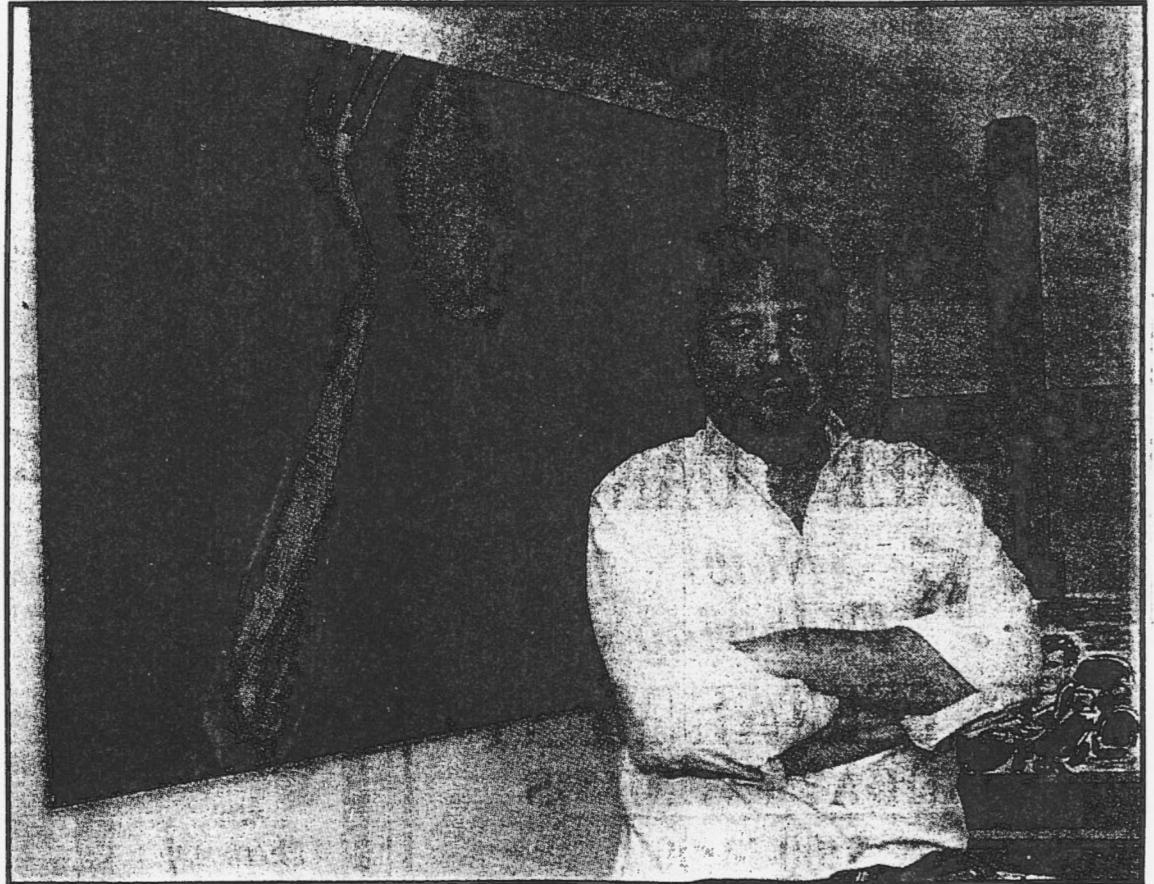
His paintings are part of a five-person show on display in the cafe and upstairs galleries at the center. Also represented are paintings and drawings by Michelle Benoit and Peter Berkowitz, sculpture by Frederick Fraleigh, and pen and ink drawings by Will Rodier.

The exhibits open Sunday with a reception from 4 to 6 p.m. and will be on display through June 23. The public is invited.

Shea, an Uxbridge native, says he has been "drawing and painting as long as I can remember." Among other instructors, he has studied with John Murphy of Worcester.

He experiments with media — "I used charcoal on watercolor paper once. The textures were nice." — and with technique.

"My work is fairly abstract. Sometimes it's subtle, and sometimes it's more 'in-your-face,'" he muses.



Call Photo/Susan E. Bouchard

Eight paintings by George 'Skip' Shea of Uxbridge are on exhibit this month in the cafe at AS220 in Providence.

His themes, however, even the colors he chooses, often are dark.

"It's a pretty crazy, mixed up world we live in. There is fear, hatred and bigotry that need to be reflected," he says. "But I guess you have to show the dark to see the light."

"We all have dark periods," he adds. "They come out, too."

While making his living from his art would be "a wonderful way to live," Shea is employed by the Blackstone Valley Na-

tional Heritage Corridor Commission and Historic Massachusetts Inc. in community development. In Uxbridge, for example, he is involved in a study on ways to revitalize the downtown area.

"I also love politics," he adds; he formerly served on the planning board in Uxbridge.

If it seems there is a disparity between his vocation and avocation of art, Shea dismisses it.

"I believe everybody is an artist, but they're just intimidated by the word. I don't know who it was that years ago put the premium on being an artist, but it has served to scare away a major portion of the population."

"There is a creative process in all of us."

The AS220 Gallery is open weekdays 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturdays 1 to 4 p.m., closed Sundays except this Sunday.