

ARTS

The Future Isn't What It Used To Be*

Yesterday's Tomorrow's: Past Visions of the American Future is an exhibit of over 300 models, illustrations, toys, industrial designs, photographs, film clips and more to show how Americans have envisioned the future during the past 100 years.

The exhibit was organized by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service and underwritten by Champion International, one of the largest forest products companies. Its corporate offices are located in Eugene and the company suggested the tour include this city. It is the only city in the northwest and the first city on the west coast to host the exhibit.

It will be at WISTEC (Willamette Science and Technology Center) beginning Feb. 2 and remain there until April 14.

The event here is expected to draw 50,000 people according to WISTEC director Alice Carnes. "There isn't any age requirement to enjoy this exhibit," she said.

The exhibit looks at the future in terms of several key groupings: transportation, homes, communities, entertainment, advertising, weapons, literary works, and toys.

A highlight in the Homes of Tomorrow Section is Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House. It is a lightweight, portable unit with a central aluminum mast. Automatic climate control within the home eliminates the practicality of clothing and household chores are completed by highly advanced machinery. Having replaced the drudgery of housekeeping with competent technology, Fuller felt the individualism of family members could be developed.

An 18-minute film traces the visions of the future offered by the film industry, including Flash Gordon, Godzilla and Blade Runner.

There is a large display of space toys that flooded the market after

World War II. Japan manufactured 5,000 variations of these toys, many in the form of robots.

Located at 2300 Centennial Blvd., the 10-week Eugene exhibit will be open from noon-5 pm, Tuesday-Sunday. Hours will be extended until 9 pm on Fridays. Admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children.

The Planetarium will offer a special planetarium show adjacent to WISTEC for an additional fee. Titled *A Look Ahead*, it will contrast early expectations and fantasies about space travel with current NASA space exploration programs. Prices are 50¢ for adults and 25¢ for children.

A 157-page book with 64 full color illustrations and 136 black and white photographs is also available. It describes all the items in the exhibit and the paperback edition costs \$17.95. It is available in local bookstores.

*Quotation from Arthur C. Clarke

BOOKS

Review:

Lives of the Poets

Lives of the Poets, a novella and six stories by E.L. Doctorow. Published by Random House, 1984.

At first it appears these six short stories are independent of one another; they are dissimilar in place and time, the characters have nothing in common. *Lives of the Poets* is the novella which the author intends us to read after the stories. It is this final piece which ties together the diverse elements in all the stories. With characteristic skill, E.L. Doctorow weaves childhood memories, conscious observations, and ethical ruminations into an integrated work of fiction which defies exact classification.

On first reading *The Writer in the Family* seems to be a touching scene from the life of a young boy. When his father dies suddenly, Jonathan (the writer in the family) agrees to keep the news from his grandmother by writing letters from "father" in Arizona to the old lady. The letters are so well written, so emotionally rich, that the aunt who put him up to it half-begins to believe them herself, and gives him rave reviews for his colorful fictions. Eventually, the deception becomes untenable to the boy, who writes a clever last letter telling the truth (more or less) and bringing the charade to an end. Later, when we read the novella, we realize that the author of all these stories is Jonathan himself, grown up, working with memory and imagination in a wholly new and honest fashion.

The other five stories also figure into the novella in surprising and subtle ways. In *Willi*, set in 1910, a child witnesses his mother's infidelity and is psychologically compelled to tell his father. Willi suffers terribly when he is unable to protect his mother from his father's rage. In *Lives of the Poets*, the author shares the intimate secrets of love relationships with us—his marriage of 20 years which is failing and the marital problems and extra-marital affairs of all his literary friends—it all has to be out there. At the same time, he's worried that knowing the details of one another's love life destroys the possibility of discretion. But like Willi, he has to tell all, even risk causing others pain.

In *The Foreign Legation*, an emotionally empty man whose wife and children have left him becomes more and more alienated and confused. Loneliness overtakes him, and he begins watching people through binoculars—a classic mid-life crisis with a tragic twist. In *Lives of the Poets*, the situations seems to be different. It is the writer who suddenly leaves his wife and children out in the suburbs for an apartment in the city. He works about half the time, the other half he's traveling around the city, meeting friends, observing strangers, or looking in on his neighbors through binoculars. Our friend the writer is in the throes of a serious identity crisis in which everything he valued earlier now seems either of dubious value or worthless. He's ready to chuck it all, though he doesn't know why. When his wife and kids come to visit, he confesses to us:

"I wanted to tell them: I am doing this to find out why I'm doing it. I wanted to reassure them: after all, you kids could be visiting me in a prison, or a hospital, isn't this better, this working retreat I've made for myself in the middle of the electric city. I speak to the journey we must each make, I give you the lesson of courage in selfhood. . . ."

The Water Works seems to be about the unmourned death of a street urchin who drowned in some metropolitan water works some time in the past. In the novella, the author gives sanctuary to a refugee family and finds redemption for himself. He acts to prevent them from becoming the invisible victims of collective unconcern like the naked blue body of the drowned boy in *The Water Works*.

E.L. Doctorow is unquestionably one of the greatest American writers working today. *Ragtime* is a joy to read; *The Book of Daniel*, *Welcome to Hard Times*, and *Loon Lake* are equally interesting and entertaining jewels of his prolific art. *Lives of the Poets* doesn't tell a straightforward, linearly unfolding story; it is made up of disparate elements which fall into place "later," as it were. The critics laud Doctorow for illuminating "the sources from which fiction springs" and showing "how a writer's mind works." *Lives of the Poets*: worthwhile reading from a master of the art of fiction.

—Lois Wadsworth

Art Notes

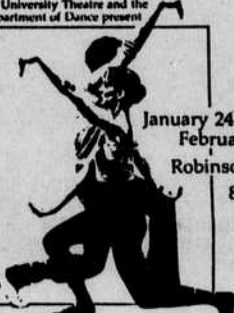
The New Zone Gallery continues a Eugene tradition of yearly featuring an exhibit of Northwest photographers. Artists from Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Montana are encouraged to submit their works. Three framed works (when appropriate) may be submitted. The deadline is February 23 for shipped articles, and Feb. 23, 25 & 26 for hand-delivered ones. Call 485-2278 for more information.

The EMU Cultural Forum is asking for participants in the Pacific Northwest Mall Art Show. Send anything that fits with their theme of Images of America. The deadline is Feb. 20. Mail to the Cultural Forum, Suite 2, UO campus, 97403.

The Oregon Bach Festival is sponsoring their Fourth Annual Poster Competition. This is the Festival's 16th year and Bach's 300th birthday. The deadline is April 1. The prize is \$500. Call 686-5667 for information.

And last but not least. Remember to check some dollars off for the arts on your Oregon tax return. Local groups who have received money from this program in the past have been KLCC, KWAX, Community Center for the Performing Arts, Maude Kerns Art Center and the New Zone Gallery.

University Theatre and the Department of Dance present



January 24, 25, 26, 31
February 1, 2
Robinson Theatre
8:00 p.m.

DANCE

Call 686-4191 for ticket information

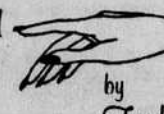
the Hult Center Presents

ON THE EDGE

ORIGINAL comedy, music, improvisations and SURPRISES

Studio I, downstairs, Hult Center
Feb. 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23 and March 1 & 2
10:30 pm . . . \$5 . . . liquor will be served
call 687-5000 for reservations and further info.

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Travel must start before March 31
*Fares subject to certain restrictions