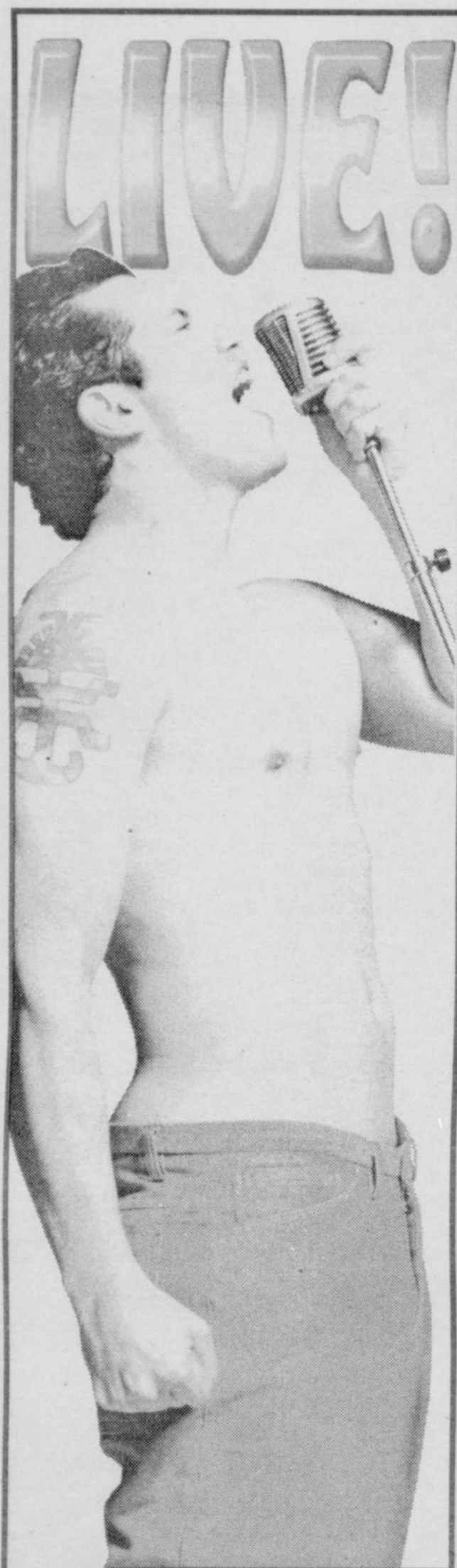




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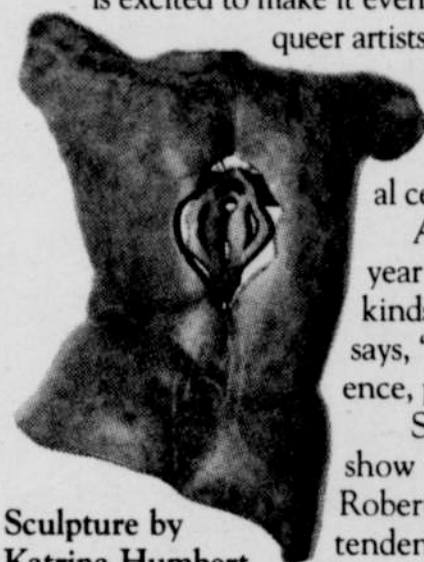
Have an art attack

Pride pitches a bigger
and better tent this year

BY HERON

One of the highlights of Pride 2001 will be the second annual queer art display, "Bridges of Pride: Connecting Our Communities Through Art," curated by Reggie Petry, director of Our Dream Gallery. This year's tent will have twice the space, allowing for more art and space for people to move about.

"Last year's production was overwhelmingly well-received," says Petry, who is excited to make it even better this year. "This is a rare opportunity for queer artists. We, as sexual minority people, just don't get many chances to show the work that reflects our lives. Here, we get to gather that work together as a community as part of our annual celebration of who we are."

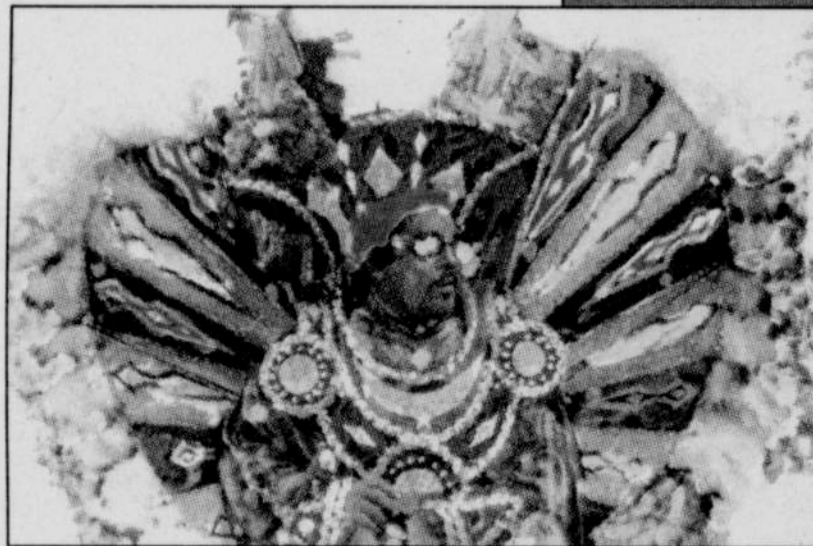


Sculpture by
Katrina Humbert

And as varied as last year's works were, this year will be even more so. "I am welcoming all kinds of work by sexual minority artists," Petry says, "from every media to every level of experience, professionals and beginners."

So far, these are the artists scheduled to show their work: Sharon Barnes, Kelly Begley, Robert Vig Brawner, Peggy Cochran, Rick Crittenden, Paul Dahlquist, June Edmunds, Jessica Enouf, Melissa Frye, Jenny Gilbert, Shahara Godfrey, Mary Hauer, Heron, James Hayes, Katrina Humbert, Leonard James, Page Jordan, Salongo Lee, Maria Pace, Amy Pedersen, Sheila Pree, Ron Smith, TheArthur Wright, Mariah Ureel and Ela Zavrta. "Last year thousands of people saw work by queer artists in that two-day period, and I expect more will come into the tent and see our work this year," Petry says.

The Art Tent quickly is becoming a traditional part of Pride Week. While you're there, be sure to look for the Lesbian Art Guild section.



"Feather Man" by Salongo Lee

Mariah Ureel

While at the Art Tent, check out Mariah Ureel's ceramic goddesses, which stand about 18 inches tall. Some have an ethereal air, some have a homey disposition.

My favorite has a distinctly dykey posture—relaxed, self-assured, self-satisfied. She wears a yellow T-shirt and denim overalls.

"She feels the peace and joy of the moment," Ureel says. She's one of a series the artist calls her Blue Jean Goddesses.

Why is she a goddess? "There is something about finding one's own beauty that you could say is the experience of the goddess in each of us," Ureel explains.

The artist also has been working for nine years as a psychotherapist specializing in couples counseling. She refers to her career as "guiding a human being on their path."

Ureel, 46, was born in Michigan and moved to California in 1976. "I have been a creative person since I was a little girl," she says. She recalls choreographing ballets with her six siblings when she was 8.

"My art has taken many forms," she explains. As a child, she wrote poetry and danced. In her early 20s, she started writing and singing original music. "I was lead singer and lyrics writer for a band."

It is notable that her first song was "Bitch." "That was me coming out of my Catholic upbringing, throwing off restraints, coming into my power," she confides.

During that time, Ureel also was enrolled in

John F Kennedy University in California. She studied psychology as well as spirituality, dance and theater. "By this time, my work was embodying spiritual themes," she says, "which continues to be my prevailing motivation and foundation for art and everything else in my life."

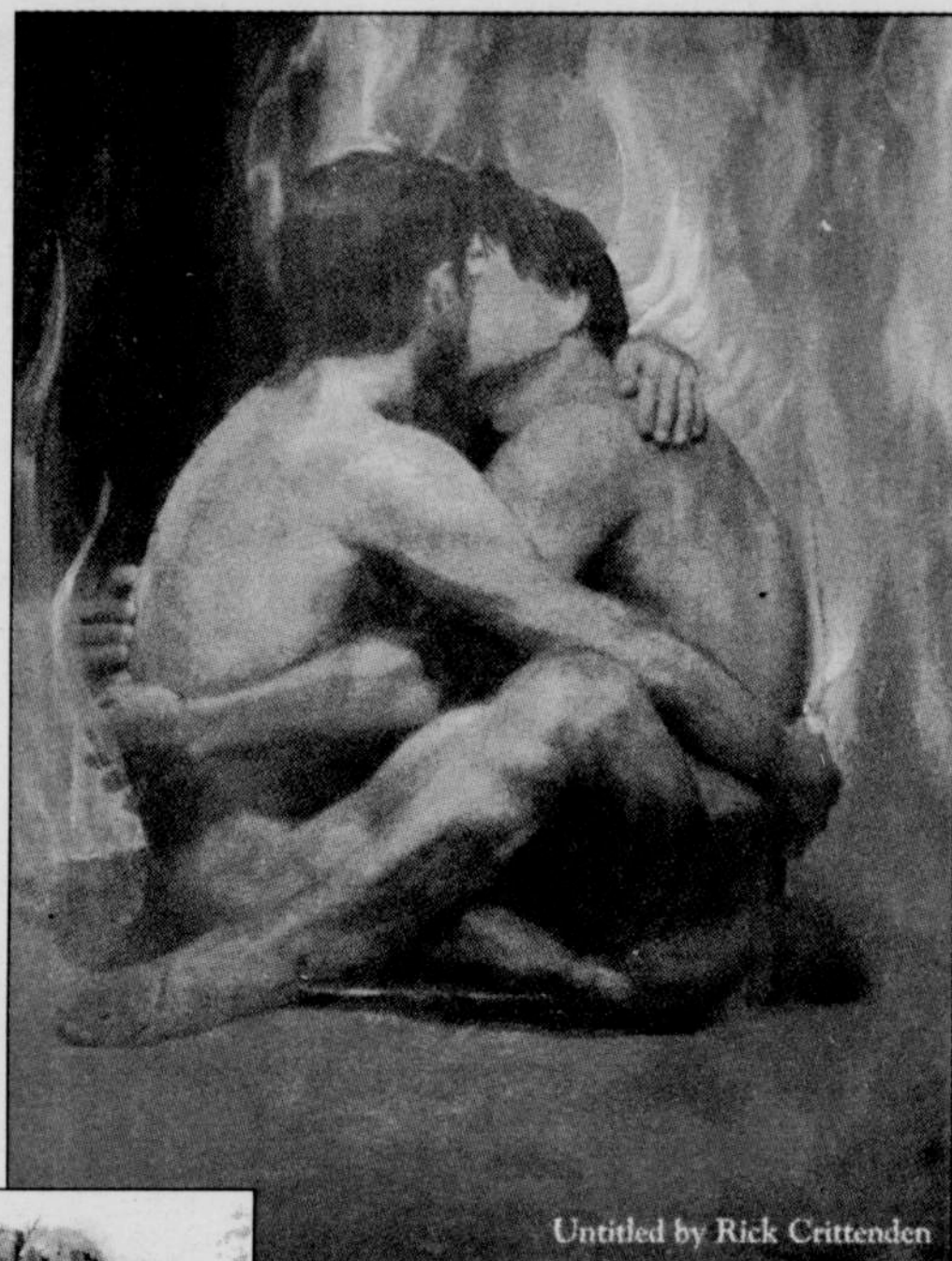
When Ureel turned 30, she took stock of her life. Realizing her music never would be record-contract quality, and having attained a master's degree in transpersonal psychology, she moved to Portland and started a private practice as a therapist and teacher.

Both parts of Ureel's life heavily are involved with spirituality and art. "Life is a spiritual art," she says. "All aspects of my life are an outgrowth of that expression."

She adds: "I dislike the distinction between artists and nonartists. After all, life is an art. The Balinese don't have a word for 'artist.' They simply expect that every human is an artist. Creativity is a part of human expression and is there for each person. Art integrates and is an expression of spirituality. I like the notion that creativity is a form of expression that is there for everyone."

Ureel has worked in many media but now works primarily in clay. "Three years ago, I began to work with clay and immediately resonated with this medium," she says.

Besides her ceramic goddesses, Ureel makes masks. "I believe that masks are a material way



Untitled by Rick Crittenden

Rick Crittenden

Rick Crittenden wears two hats: jazz musician and painter. His artistic endeavors began in high school but then fell by the wayside. About 10 years ago he gravitated back to acrylics and first showed his work at the Art Tent during Pride 2000.

He'll have some new works in this show, but this year he's been distracted putting together his first solo CD, *Passages*. In 1988 he went on tour with the band Oregon, because bassist Glen Moore was his musical mentor.

During a weeklong swing through Italy, Crittenden took some photographs that inspired some evocative landscape paintings. "The light was amazing," he says. "In the fall there was so much contrast, definitely different than it is here."

No surprise, he also enjoys painting nudes. He works from both photos and models, "but I don't try to render them realistically."

He hopes he can convince his partner, Robbie, to model for him one day. (Hint, hint.)

to interact with spirit," she notes. "From ancient times they have been a way to communicate, channel archetypal energy and explore the unknown recesses of our beings."

Ureel explains how she makes her masks and goddesses: "I start with a quarter-inch slab, and I begin to work from underneath the slab to form figures. I add pieces for strength, then I press in designs and textures. I raku most of my work," she says, referring to the firing process. "I like the unpredictability of firing the pieces. Some have iridescent glazes, some have rainbows. You are never sure how they will turn out. I like the unknown quality. I like surprises."

Ureel is pleased Pride shows queer art for all to see. "It adds a cultural aspect. It makes sense to include the visual arts along with the music and performance arts we always have. It shows a more full spectrum of what queer culture is all about."

HERON is a Portland free-lance writer and artist and a member of the Lesbian Art Guild.