

*Three Artists Offer Art Dreamscapes*

Olson-Larsen exhibition has work of Jane Gilmor, Doug Shelton and Sharon Burns-Knutson

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### **The Des Moines Register**

October 29, 1995

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Image: "Bed Time Stories," a mixed media installation by Jane Gilmor

Dreams-good, bad and appropriated-tie together the three very different artists currently showing at Olsen-Larsen Galleries, 203 Fifth St, West Des Moines.

Jane Gilmor of Cedar Rapids, Sharon Burns-Knutson of Iowa City and Doug Shelton, formerly of West Des Moines but now living in Arizona, each employ dreams in their work, although the works themselves really couldn't be more different.

Gilmor weaves together the dreams and nightmares of others. Burns-Knutson organizes life's small events in dreamlike frieze frames. Shelton mixes idealized landscapes with dream figures in the skies above them.

Gilmor work, titled "Bed Time Stories," or alternately, "Bed Shoe Home," is an installation in the back of the gallery. It consists of a narrow door, from Gilmor's now-demolished home, covered with sheets of metal and inset with a small television screen. Playing on the television is a loop of video images take from some old home movies Gilmor purchased at a yard sale.

**Gilmor's etched squares are disquieting; some are downright disturbing, but most are quite poignant.**

The floor in front of the door is covered with squares of the same sheet metals as the door, etched with pictures and stories by children who were or are patients at the University of Iowa Hospitals at Iowa City. The etched squares display a wide range of emotions and ideas. They are at the very least disquieting. Some are downright disturbing, but most are quite poignant.

For example, one square has these words, written in a child's hand:

"My name is Holly. I had brain surgery. I was very scared. I have been brave. I want to go home. I am a farm girl. I love animals."

At the bottom of the square is her etched drawing of a rabbit.

On the gallery walls encircling the etched floor are five framed etched pieces of metal. These images were found in the trash at a school in London where Gilmor was a visiting artist last summer. They are physically tied with chains to small

notebooks titled "Home Management I," "A Letter to the Editor," "Letter From Phoenix" and "Letter From Dublin." These notebooks are resting on pillows that have been covered with etched metal pillowcases.

The overall effect is that of a sort of hospital ward or shelter.

The irony of those two possibilities, notes Gilmor, is that patients are in bed all of the time, and homeless people are always looking for a bed-and both tend to be unhappy about their situation. Further, there are connotations that attach themselves to beds that aren't always comfortable, that beds in a domestic situation are loaded with meanings. These loaded meanings reflect on the theme of the work, which is dysfunction.

On the one hand you have these cheerful home movies of a family from the '30s, yet these same flickering images are surrounded by evidence of physical and emotional dysfunction. It's a very sad work, but very engaging. In fact, people have spent hours standing in the middle of the work reading all of the messages, which gives you an idea of its power.

Despite disparate styles, Shelton's and Burns-Knutson's works have considerable visual power, if not the emotional weight of Gilmor's work.

Shelton's seven paintings are rendered in his excruciating precise style. They depict a variety of landscapes that give evidence of human presence-though no human figures are included-and human aspiration in the form of wispy, ghostlike dream figures floating in the sky.

Burns-Knutson's five paintings look a little like stained-glass windows in that all of the richly colored figures are outlined in heavy black lines and there are no blank spaces-she fills the canvas. Her figures are gentle and folklike, almost as if a clever child had drawn them, yet they suggest personal documentation of life in the manner of a visual diary.

The three-artist show will remain on display through Nov.18. Olsen-Larsen Galleries is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.