

Artist Bing Wright brings new images back from New York

By Regina Hackett
P-I Art Critic

Bing Wright is a young Seattle artist who moved to New York several years ago to get some work done. He's a member of a family prominent in the arts locally, but he had little involvement himself in the local arts scene.

Nothing he had done here, including an experimental film, suggested he would be capable of the work that is currently on view at the Linda Farris Gallery, 322 Second Ave.

Wright is inspired by news photographs, the unstaged quick shots at scenes of disaster — a plane crashing, buildings on fire — or shots that seem later to be premonitions of disaster — pilots who later crashed, laughing before takeoff.

As a second-generation pop artist, he has learned from Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol how to make the impersonal image resonant.

If Lichtenstein can be thought of as the cool end of pop and Warhol as its ambiguous and vaguely ominous center, Wright weighs in as hot and unsettling, without veering off into the personal.

Wright appears to be on to something, or the beginnings of

ART REVIEW

Bing Wright's altered photographs and large-scale charcoal and gouache drawings are at the Linda Farris Gallery, 322 Second Ave., through Aug. 31.

something. "Sailors Load the Top of Challenger's Fuel Tank . . ." is a photo silkscreen, black and gold leaf on panel. He has enlarged the image until it lifts toward abstraction.

This is the image of sailors loading the nose cone after the crash, but it might also be worshipers engaged in a religious rite. The gesture seem oddly sanctified, a feeling that Wright accentuates with the use of gold leaf, long associated with religious paintings.

I also like his image of a jet crashing. The atmosphere around it is a scattering of black and gold dots, and the jet itself an accumulation of those colors, a focal point sliding down the panel. As Peter Santino, another former Seattle artist now living in New York, also knows, jets can look like crucifixes if positioned right, and Wright's jet has these vaguely religious overtones.

Wright works from fact and makes the facts uncertain. Who

are these figures? What are they doing? What is the import of the scene? We feel as if we should know, since everything is vaguely familiar, but even when the wall label identifies the subject, we still aren't certain.

Not all the work has this edge. His charcoal drawings of landscapes at night are mainly of interest in the context of the other works. They are more or less mood studies, sketches not especially significant in themselves.

Sometimes, Wright moves perilously close to Gilbert & George style camp, as in "Sleep (For Andy Warhol)" and "Despair." If the world becomes a more sensible place in the future, the fame of Gilbert & George's garish photographs will give veterans of 1980s art some explaining to do. Because I admire this show — Wright's first solo effort — I hope he doesn't move in that direction.

There are always ways for artists to falter. Wright could falter not only into camp, but into fashion, because behind the power of these images lies a sleek tastefulness of means, a refinement that could loom up and cut his power lines. The pieces that work in this show, however, have real authority. This is a strong and promising beginning.



Times Syndicate NED RIDDLE

is a nostalgic comedy
he slept a lot."



FREE CONCERTS

POST ALLEY — Kimberly Demetre, Nick Moore Trio — noon
MURAL AMPHITHEATER (Seattle Center) — Living Dolls, Moving Parts — 6

THEATER

THE CABARET (Pioneer Square) — New Contemporary Curran Theater: English as a Second Language — 8
EMPTY SPACE — The Just Assassins — 8

MOVIE THEATERS

ADMIRAL 1 — A Fine Mess — 7:15, 9:10
ADMIRAL 11 — The Fly — 7, 9
ALDERWOOD 1 — A Fine Mess — 2, 4, 6, 7:50, 9:55
ALDERWOOD 2 — The Karate Kid, Part II — 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:10:10
ALDERWOOD 3 — Nothing in Common — 1:15, 3:35, 5:55, 7:35, 10
ALDERWOOD 4 — Armed and Dangerous — 2:10, 4:10, 6:15, 8:25, 10:15
ALDERWOOD 5 — Manhunter — 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10
ALDERWOOD 6 — Back to School — 2:10, 6:15, 10:15; Club Paradise — 4:10, 8:25
ALDERWOOD 7 — Transformers — 1:45, 3:45; Howard the Duck — 5:40, 7:35, 9:35
AURORA CINEMA 1 — The Boy Who Could Fly — 12:45, 2:55, 5, 7:15, 9:30
AURORA CINEMA 2 — Howard the Duck — 2:15, 4:40, 7, 9:15
AURORA CINEMA 3 — One Crazy Summer — 1:15, 3:25, 5:35, 7:45, 9:55
AURORA VILLAGE 1 — Great Mouse Detective — 1:45, 3:45, 5:45; Back to School — 7:45, 9:45
AURORA VILLAGE 2 — Manhunter — 1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:10:15
AURORA VILLAGE 3 — Transformers — 2, 4, 6; Club Paradise — 8, 10
AURORA VILLAGE 4 — Nothing in Common — 1:30, 3:45, 6, 8:15, 10:30
BAY — Transformers — 7; Legal Eagles — 8:45

MONDAY SHOWTIMES

PARKWAY 4 — Manhunter — 1, 3:20, 5:40, 8, 10:20
PARKWAY 5 — Transformers — 1:30, 3:30, 5:30; About Last Night — 7:40, 9:50
RENTON VILLAGE CINEMA 1 — The Boy Who Could Fly — 12:45, 2:55, 5, 7:15, 9:30
RENTON VILLAGE 2 — Howard the Duck — 2:15, 4:40, 7, 9:15
RENTON VILLAGE 3 — One Crazy Summer — 1:15, 3:25, 5:35, 7:45, 9:55
RIDGEMONT — Desert Bloom — 7, 9
ROXY — Cobra — 7, 10:20; Wise Guys — 8:40
ROXY 11 — Haunted Honeymoon — 6:30, 9:55; Big Trouble in Little China — 8
SEATAC NORTH 1 — Top Gun — noon, 2:30, 5, 8, 10:30
SEATAC NORTH 2 — Transformers — 12:15; The Karate Kid, Part II — 2:15, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15
SEATAC NORTH 3 — Howard the Duck — 11:45, 2:30, 5:15, 8, 10:15
SEATAC NORTH 4 — One Crazy Summer — 12, 5:30, 10:30; Heartburn — 2:15, 8

SEATAC NORTH 5 — Nothing in Common — 11:45, 2:15, 5, 7:45, 10:15
SEATAC NORTH 6 — Manhunter — 12, 2:30, 5:15, 7:45, 10:30
SEATAC SOUTH 1 — Ferris Bueller's Day Off — 12:15, 5:15, 9:45; A Fine Mess — 2:35, 9:30
SEATAC SOUTH 2 — The Boy Who Could Fly — 12:30, 3, 5:30, 8, 10:15
SEATAC SOUTH 3 — Aliens — 12, 2:30, 5:15, 8, 10:15
SEATAC SOUTH 4 — Flight of the Navigator — 12:15, 2:45, 5, 7:30, 9:45
SEATAC SOUTH 5 — The Fly — 12:30, 3, 5:30, 7:45, 10:15
SEATAC SOUTH 6 — Armed and Dangerous — 12, 2:30, 5, 7:45, 9:55
SEVEN GABLES — A Room With a View — 7, 9:15
SOUTHCENTER — Aliens — 7, 9:45
TOTEMLAKE 1 — The Fly — 7, 9
TOTEMLAKE 2 — Top Gun — 7:30, 9:45
TOTEMLAKE 3 — Ruthless People — 7:20, 9:15
UA 70 — The Fly — 2, 4:15, 6:25, 8:05, 10:15
UA 150 — Aliens — 2, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15
UPTOWN 1 — Armed and Dangerous — 1:45, 3:35, 5:25, 7:15, 9
UPTOWN 11 — Top Gun — 12:45, 2:45, 5:15, 7:30, 9:15
UPTOWN 111 — About Last Night — 10:00, 2:30, 4:45, 7, 9:15
VARSITY I — Home of the Brave — 7:15, 9:15
VARSITY II — Twist and Shout — 7, 9
VARSITY III — Manhunter — 7:15, 9:30

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