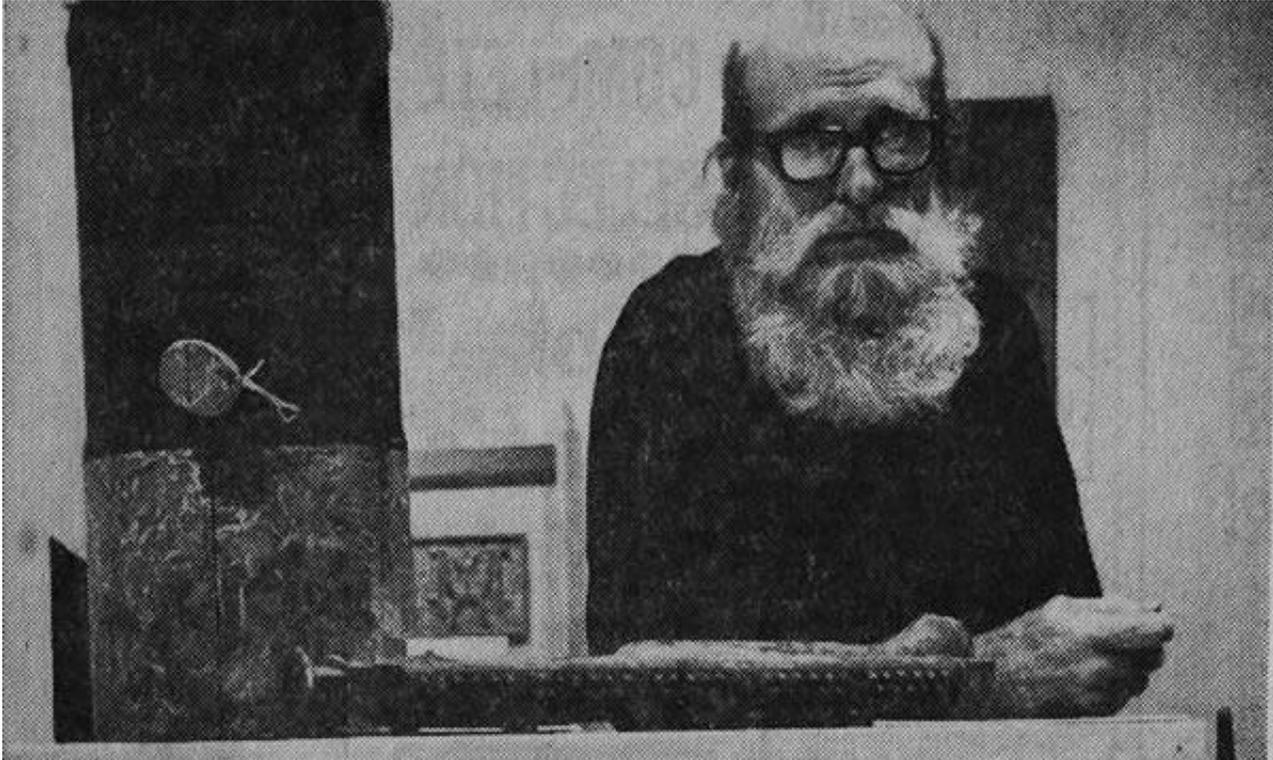


Dehumanized 'Art'

Civilization of Llhuros | Rochester Memorial Art Gallery
Democrat and Chronicle (Rochester) | November 4, 1972



Norman Daly

Norman Daly, inventor of that mythical and— now far-famed—civilization of Llhuros, touched a pressure point on the subject of contemporary art yesterday morning at Memorial Art Gallery.

He was raising some questions about the kind of dehumanizing material that the public today is accepting as art.

"So long as we (the public) have this servile attitude," he said, "The artist will continue to kick us around."

Daly, as artist whose "Llhuros" show that opened at the gallery last night, has overshadowed all else one has heard about his considerable career. He is a man

of wit, whimsy, and scholarly attainment. And, he said, he is deeply serious, he said, about his spoofing exhibition.

"...the product of the over-eager, industrious and success-minded artisan who has produced something that had never been done before but was not and is not needed now."

He calls it a burlesque—others have called it an outrage. And what it is in reality is a collection of objects of present civilization that have been made to look like relics from the digs of an ancient archaeological site. He said in hopes that the "foibles, follies, superstitions, cruelties ... of this mythical culture are recognized as having disquieting resemblance to our own civilization."

Daly, a small and white-bearded fellow with a twinkle and gracious manner who might pass for one of the elves in the St. Nicholas workshop, talked in the Gallery's "Leaders and Adventurers" series. He will give a public lecture Nov. 21.

He discussed innovative art, "the product of the over-eager, industrious and success-minded artisan who has produced something that had never been done before but was not and is not needed now." He brought up the danger of being defrauded by uncritical acceptance of anything new.

He asked how intriguing is a clear, plastic cube or a roomful of them, how gratifying is a shallow mile-long trench created in a Nevada wilderness as art. And he asked if there isn't "a stupefying, nauseous similarity between defunct Op Art and the current Porn Art. He wondered if the "artisan hucksters" were reflecting "the awesome vacuity" of their own lives.

That touched off a discussion from the audience about who started it – the willingly deceived public or the willingly deceiving artisan. Daly blamed it on the public, fearful of expressing displeasure for fear of showing ignorance.