

## Arts

# Paintings intrigue with colorful shapes

By JECA TAUDTE

Walking by Lilly Library was never such a colorful experience.

The broad bands of color in the paintings of Eugene J. Martin are visible even from the quad. Upon walking into the gallery, playful colors and forms capture the viewer. The atmosphere seems vaguely reminiscent of a preschool with all its toys and blocks in a rainbow of primary colors.

Though simple, the shapes and colors of the paintings serve as building blocks for more complex figures. The primary shapes are recognizable one moment and ambiguous the next, creating an interlocking pattern of symbols.

Particularly intriguing are the circles which abound throughout the paintings. Since they are often associated with eyes, they signal human or animal figures. Martin uses this symbolic language to pull distinct forms out of the realm of the abstract.

This kind of guidepost is helpful because Martin frequently layers his fundamental symbols. In "The local marriage" Martin combines different units into one almost amorphous collection of odds and ends. In several other paintings he also makes the abstract elements simpler by outlining them with rough brushstrokes, almost like a coloring book.

Yet one need only look at the titles of the paintings to know that Martin is not just an over-grown kindergartner experimenting with finger paint and

## Exhibit Review

coloring books. From "Therapy culture" to "Psychiatrist falling with dog," Martin seems concerned with the internal landscapes of our contemporary culture. One senses in his paintings both humor and serious fascination with his topics.

In "Mister bad logic," a flattened figure with a mischievous grin on his face is emerging from a kind of box. Presumably representative of bad logic, this symbol is swinging his fist as he escapes his prison. Martin's treatment leaves little doubt that the painting represents a figure both dangerous and intriguing.

Martin trained at the Corcoran School of Arts in Washington, DC. A local artist of the Durham-Chapel Hill area, he has exhibited his work all over the world, from New York to Washington to Paris and Budapest.

The Lilly Library Gallery doubles as a seminar room for various classes and group meetings, providing an example of how art can be inte-

grated into daily environments. The gallery lends just the right casual atmosphere to this collection. A notebook containing details of Martin's background and a register of viewers' impressions invites community interaction and discussion of the art.



SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

"Psychiatrist falling with dog"

*"Lorsque l'art d'écrire obsède mon esprit et ronge insidieusement mes forces, je laisse errer mon regard sur un dessin d'Eugene Martin, je me repais de ses couleurs sereines et puis des certitudes dans ses lumières si denses."*

Françoise MALLET-JORIS