

Lerner at the Allyn Gallup

This month, Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art is featuring works by the late Leslie Lerner.

One of the city's most acclaimed artists and a faculty member for 15 years at the then Ringling School of Art and Design, Lerner was the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Achievement Award in 1990 and the Ballinglenn Arts Foundation Fellowship Residency in Ireland.

Lerner came to artistic maturity during the '60s, in the pop culture of San Francisco and on the surreal stage sets of Southern California. An installation artist, trained by abstractionist professors, Lerner found his voice in the narrative tales of his imaginary voyage, "My Life in France."

Inspired by the unreal quality and fantasy of a Watteau painting depicting an idyllic romp, Lerner started painting in a manner that combined the lush use of paint with a contemporary, slightly wacky, sensibility.

He depicted the world travels of a boy forced to flee his native Holland during the Protestant riots of the 17th century; the series culminat-

ed in the character's return to Delft 20 years later, where he recounted his adventures through exotic realms.

In Lerner's last body of work, this alter-ego's "travels" were in America: "I have followed a narrative like a psychological thread that parallels my real experiences in a constructed fable, filled with morality plays, incidents, mysteries. I never want to explain it - I can't," Lerner said. "I paint it all in my American theme park." Yet, this narrative really reflects the psychological, interior world of the artist.

On Sept. 10, 2005, Lerner passed away after a long illness. His work is in numerous museum collections including the Corcoran Museum of Art, Arkansas Arts Center, Oakland Museum, the Progressive Corporation and the Norton Museum of Art.



(Above)
"My Life in France, The Lost Boy; The Empty Cup."
(Left) "My Life in France, the Lost Boy; The Metal Star."



The show continues through Feb. 9. Also on exhibit will be a collection of sculptures by Richard Kessler, "Homage to Calder." The gallery is at 556 S. Pineapple Ave. Call 366-2093.

(Left) "My Life in France, The Man with the Wooden Arm; Great Fleets."