

Daniel Miedzinski will be exhibiting at Gallery 101, Johannesburg from January 26.

Those artists who have been inspired by African art very often express this influence by a superficial interpretation of its obvious traits, such as its stark simplicity and lack of classical proportion.

Daniel Miedzinski has chosen African mysticism as the theme for his exhibition this month but the stimulus for this concept is not immediately apparent. One's attention is primarily held by the unusual format of his work, the intriguing support (he uses blocks of carved kiaat, imbuia or teak as a base for his painting) and by the restless movement of the design. It is only on closer scrutiny that one perceives the intricate symbolic patterns used to evoke the primeval forces which are his subject matter. Miedzinski describes the content of his paintings as a journey into pre-history and as an expression of the Africans' belief in the spirits which inhabit trees, stones and water. He subtly combines this concept of the elements with his choice of media. At the outset, the primitive ground for his painting is carved and finished with a craftsman's care (he studied woodcarving for eighteen months after his three year fine art course at the Witwatersrand Technical College). The surface is then prepared to take the acrylic paint which he applies thickly. Three skills are displayed in the final product, for he now takes up his pen and draws minute figures or symbols on the contours and ridges created by the paint.

DANIEL MIEDZINSKI

Barbara Parker

Miedzinski has adopted this technique since his introduction to acrylic paint a few years ago. His particular method of working could not be achieved with oils. It seems that an increasing number of artists are abandoning this traditional medium for the faster drying qualities of acrylic.

Daniel Miedzinski has not only set aside the oil medium but also his involvement in amateur cine photography which occupied the greater part of his leisure time for eight years. He represented South Africa four times at the International Salon of Amateur Cine Photography, winning several certificates of merit. In 1964 he was awarded a bronze plaque in the Abstract Animated Section for his semi-abstract space film "Orion's Eye" and in 1967 the Lion Trophy, South Africa's premier award, for "Escape", a purely abstract conception in which he used transparent plastic forms which moved to the music of "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue". Months were spent in creating the models and the decor and then photographing each change of position of the characters to achieve the effect of movement. It has been estimated that, to complete a film which runs for only ten minutes, he clicked his camera 9000 times.

Miedzinski has coupled this talent for painstaking workmanship with a fluid handling of painting media, resulting in a jewel-like quality which has attracted collectors in Europe, the United States and South Africa.

18 ARTLOOK January, 1970



"Chi-wara": acrylic on wood : 5" x 19-1/2"