


# What's Up!

on the inside



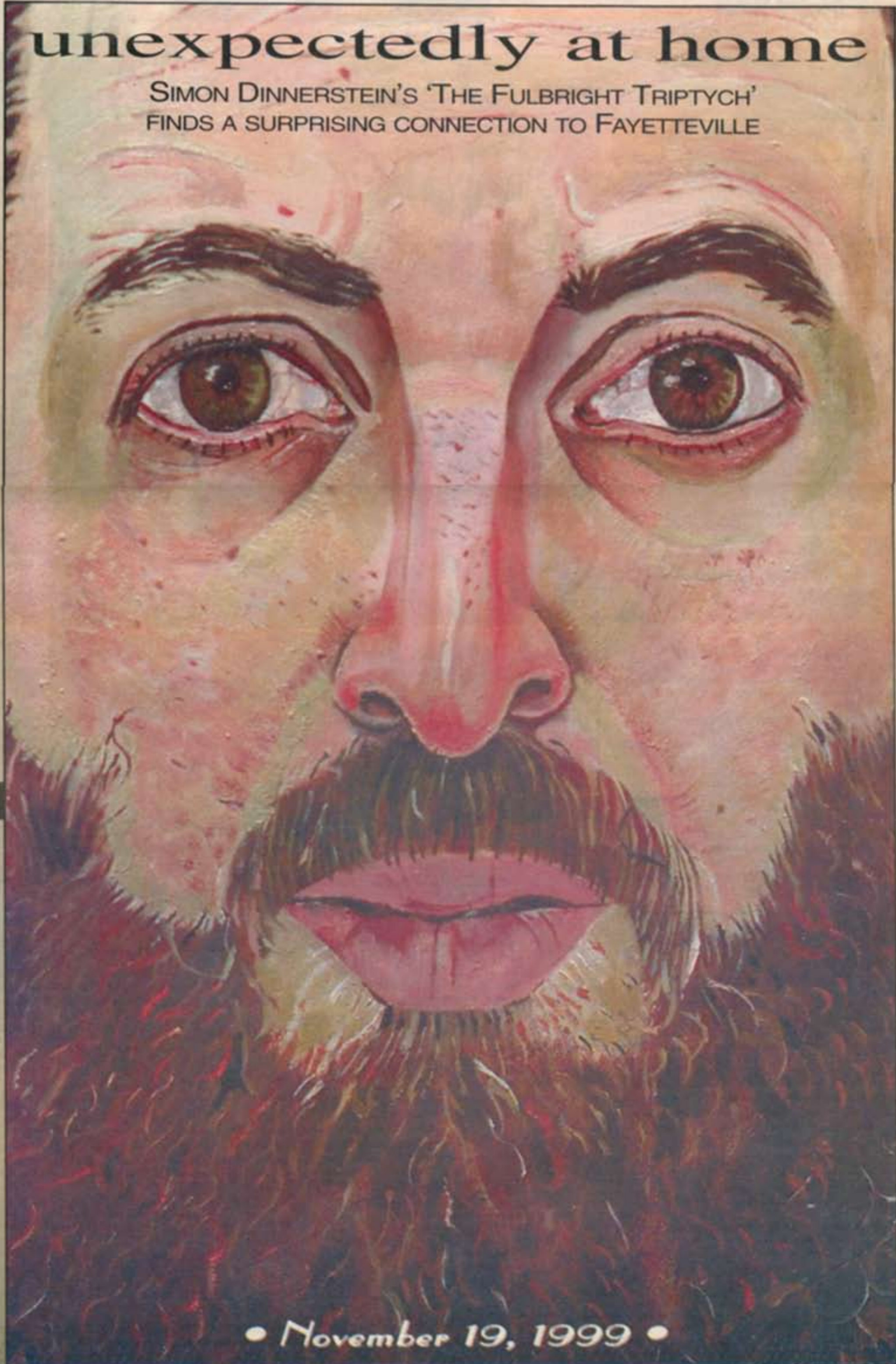
'Talk Radio' stage version same, yet different from film ..... C14

BRIEFS .....	2
NIGHTLIFE .....	3
CONCERTS .....	5
MOVIES .....	7
EXHIBITS .....	11
COVER STORY .....	12
RESTAURANTS .....	15

RECORD  TIMES

## unexpectedly at home

SIMON DINNERSTEIN'S 'THE FULBRIGHT TRIPTYCH'  
FINDS A SURPRISING CONNECTION TO FAYETTEVILLE



• November 19, 1999 •



# unexpectedly at home



On the cover, detail shows the artist, Simon Dinnerstein, from the oil-on-wood-panels work, "The Fulbright Triptych, 1971-1974," top, on display at the Walton Arts Center. Above, "A Dream Play" (1986). Left, "The Quiet Woman" (1988). Right, a self-portrait of the artist, Simon Dinnerstein, from "Rear Window" (1994).

## SIMON DINNERSTEIN'S 'THE FULBRIGHT TRIPTYCH' FINDS A SURPRISING CONNECTION TO FAYETTEVILLE

story by scott a. johnson  
*Staff Writer*

**a** painting by a New Yorker about his experiences in Germany finds its way to Arkansas by way of a chance connection made in Rome — and oddly enough the work suddenly finds itself at home.

Simon Dinnerstein's "The Fulbright Triptych" is a study in dislocation — a painting about a Brooklyn-born and raised artist finding himself in Germany in the 1970s studying art on a Fulbright Fellowship. The complex three-piece work is also the largest and most eye-catching work in the current exhibit on display at the Walton Arts Center's Joy Pratt Markham Gallery — "Simon Dinnerstein — Paintings, Drawings & Etchings."

Begun in Germany in 1971, the piece was completed three years later in Brooklyn. Its three interconnected parts portray the inside of the studio Dinnerstein worked in while living in the small German town of Kassel, a place where the artist admits he had never intended to stop.

One of Dinnerstein's most famous and commented on works, "The Fulbright Triptych" comes to Arkansas via a chance connection made with noted local poet Miller Williams when the two men were in residence at the American



■ See Dinnerstein / C20

## Dinnerstein

Continued from C13

Academy in Rome during the mid-1970s. More than 20 years later, Williams would prove instrumental in bringing his friend's work to his hometown.

It wasn't until after those arrangements had been made that Dinnerstein learned through a friend that Fayetteville was actually the birthplace and longtime home of J. William Fulbright, the famed senator who is the namesake of the fellowship that got him to Germany in the first place.

"I had no idea," Dinnerstein said of that surprise revelation. "So I said, 'Really.' I knew he was from the South, but the only other thing I remembered about him other than the Fulbright Fellowship was his stance on the Vietnam War."

The odd chain of coincidences that brings the work to Fulbright's hometown almost demands speculation about the workings of chance or fate, Dinnerstein admitted.

"Life is full of secrets and mysteries," he said. "I believe there is a fated element."

**T**he more than 30 works now on display at the WAC represent a range of media and 32 years in the artist's career.

Some are fairly conventional still-lives and portraits rendered in oils and finely detailed pencil drawings. Others are large, complex canvasses representing an almost surreal vision of the urban landscape, and a major portion of the exhibit is given over to Dinnerstein's elaborately detailed nudes rendered in ethereal shades of blue and green.

In this context, "The Fulbright Triptych" stands out in both scale and execution.

Split between three different canvasses — a large central portion surrounded by two smaller ones — the piece resembles a traditional altarpiece triptych. But, according to Dinnerstein, that wasn't the first thing he had in mind when creating the piece.

"The triptych to me is more connected to the feeling of the book," Dinnerstein said. "The compartmentalization has something to do with a book opening up, or chapters in a book, or the unfolding of a book."

In the center of his triptych, Dinnerstein has painted his working table on which he has represented his engraving tools and an unfinished work in progress. In the WAC exhibit, the actual engraving plate represented in the triptych has been hung next to the painting.

To the left of the center panel is a smaller one featuring a portrait of Dinnerstein's wife and child. To the right is another panel featuring the artist himself.

### on the walls

#### SIMON DINNERSTEIN ART PARTY FEATURING THE KEEFE JACKSON TRIO

When: 5-7 p.m. today  
Where: Walton Arts Center, Joy Post Markham Gallery, Fayetteville  
Admission: free  
For details call 443-5600  
■ Simon Dinnerstein will attend tonight's reception. His retrospective, "Simon Dinnerstein — Paintings, Drawings & Etchings," will remain on display at the WAC through Jan. 14.

## across the street ...

### HARDSHARE CONTINUUM HOLDS SECOND SET OF SHOWS

By SCOTT A. JOHNSON

Staff Writer

Across the street from the Simon Dinnerstein show at the Walton Arts Center, art lovers will find another exhibition of contemporary art in an unexpected space — Fayetteville's long unused train depot.

The name of the show has changed from the HARDSHARE Project to the HARDSHARE Continuum for a simple reason: It's happening a second time.

In July, three local artists — Susan Hutchcroft, Chad Wilson and Milan Jilka — opened the first HARDSHARE Project, a unique display of installation art, in the historic train depot on Fayetteville's Dickson Street. Last week, Hutchcroft and Wilson opened HARDSHARE's second incarnation.

The new show is clearly more ambitious than the previous exhibit. This time, Hutchcroft and Wilson have decided to act as curators for a juried display that is featuring 16 different artists in three separate week-long shows.

The artists chosen to participate in the Continuum range in age from their early 20s to their 50s and include a UA professor, a practicing psychologist and a local bookmaker.

The show's organizers admit that manipulating the complex schedule has been a bit chaotic. The first show was installed Nov. 11, opened Nov. 12 and was taken down Thursday.

Part of the reasoning behind that scheduling is practical, Hutchcroft said. Because the train station, long empty, is unheated, the shows had to be short in order to get in as many artists as possible without running the risk of requiring viewers to battle the cold.

Wilson, however, added an intellectual justification for the breakneck schedule.

On the walls around the figures, Dinnerstein has painted surfaces covered with a seemingly random collection of fragments. Reproductions of famous art works butt up against post cards and snapshots, while through several windows, the viewer gets glimpses of the small bucolic German town that hosted the family during their stay abroad.

Critics have differed on how to interpret the painting.

Because Dinnerstein has placed his work surface in the center of the triptych, some have seen in it a celebration of the artist's work. Others, noting the importance of Dinnerstein's family to the painting, have interpreted it as a celebration of a certain type of domesticity, which grew out of the early-1970s.

Many critics, however, have seen

### on the walls

#### THE HARDSHARE CONTINUUM Contemporary Art Installation and Exhibition

When: 5-10 p.m.  
Monday-Thursday, 7  
p.m. to midnight Friday-  
Saturday, 1-4 p.m.  
Sunday through Dec. 1.  
Where: Historic Train  
Depot, 550 W. Dickson  
St., Fayetteville  
Admission: free,  
donations encouraged



ANDY SHUPE Staff Photographer

Top, a collection of paintings titled, "Welcome to Group Therapy for Wandering Minds" by Brittany Stewart, hangs in one of the rooms at the historic Fayetteville depot building on Dickson Street. Above, a sculpture by University of Arkansas professor Larry Smartwood, titled "Angle of Repose," stands in a corner at the depot building.

"I would like to think of the Continuum as an experiment," Wilson said, "and that's why the shows are so short. The idea behind it was, 'Don't think about it. Do it.'"

The second show of the HARDSHARE Continuum opens today. An opening reception with live music is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. The third and final show will open Nov. 29.

something far different. Art historian Robert McGrath, for instance, has had this to say about "The Fulbright Triptych."

"At some deeper level, 'The Fulbright Triptych' seems to me to be a painting that is very much about separation and exile. There is the separation between husband and wife, art from and life and theory from practice. In addition, this great painting is informed by the palpable aura of exile: exile from home, from nature, and above all from the grand traditions of European painting."

**n**ew York, Germany, Rome, and now Fayetteville. It's a complicated painting with a complicated history.

"What is the link that connects Brooklyn, Rome and Fayetteville?,"

Dinnerstein writes in the catalog that accompanies the present retrospective. "How does a major painting, begun near Kassel, Germany evolve into 'The Fulbright Triptych'? Moreover, how does such a painting, with its particularly 'northern' influences, bring an artist to Rome? How does this painting and exhibition end up in Fayetteville, Arkansas, hometown of Sen. J. William Fulbright? And, curiously enough, could this exhibition in Arkansas have taken place had I not spent two and one-half years in Italy at the American Academy in Rome?"

The latest chapter in the history of "The Fulbright Triptych" may be the least expected. But for the artist, it's a serious part of the work's story, one which will only render its meaning even more complex.