

MUNZNER WORK ON DISPLAY

Mystery of Life Flows Through His Paintings

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Minneapolis Tribune
Staff Writer

"Life begins! Its mystery evades us and we are left with a sense of wonder. An instant disappears into eternity but a symbol remains like a twinkling star."

Aribert Munzner, whose paintings now float in the environment of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' Little Gallery, made this explanation of his "Genesis-February 1963."

His complicated abstraction had prevailed in the 1963 Mead Corp. national competition, and he had been asked to describe it. After intense effort, this statement was produced.

Munzner stands on these few words as an explanation of all his painting — they are works filled with the mystery and wonder of life.

THE PAINTINGS on display at the institute cover the past five years. They carry such titles as "Little Yellow Dream," "Seedlings in Eternity," "Genesis-August 1961," and "Genesis-Summer 1965."

Now 35 and an assistant professor at the Minneapolis School of Art, he is careful not to be too explicit about his painting — "I don't want to be didactic in a visual way."

He is, however, willing to hold out a few hints, such as painting titles, to give the viewer a clue to the mood and attitude with which he created it.

There also is an ambiguity about the paintings. They are a complicated calligraphy of boundless small lines which combine to create colored forms.

THESE FORMS can simultaneously suggest advancing microcosms or receding galaxies, and these interferences are supported by the artist's deep interest in science, life force and time.

He feels that he is pos-

ing questions in his paintings, that he is using visual symbols to make the same queries scientists, poets or theologians ask through other means — "each is involved in asking the question, 'What is life?' in his own way."

Munzner paints his works in series, working on a horizontal surface about waist high. The largest portion of each group of paintings is discarded.

"In reaching a visual statement, I conduct a dialogue between myself and the painting," he said. "The tempo and rhythm of the brush stroke, the color and the evolving forms all are in harmony to reveal the identity of this particular work."

HE IS ONE of the most thoroughgoing students of materials in the Twin Cities: "There is a tradition in art of knowing your materials. This is part of my heritage and I want to live with it."

His dominating concern in material is permanence. It is this that motivates his five-year evolution from casein on rice paper, to casein and canvas with an acrylic varnish, to casein on plexiglas with a vinyl varnish.

The more recent paintings are bordered with specifically designed and custom-made anodized aluminum frames to provide maximum protection as well as suitable context for the works.

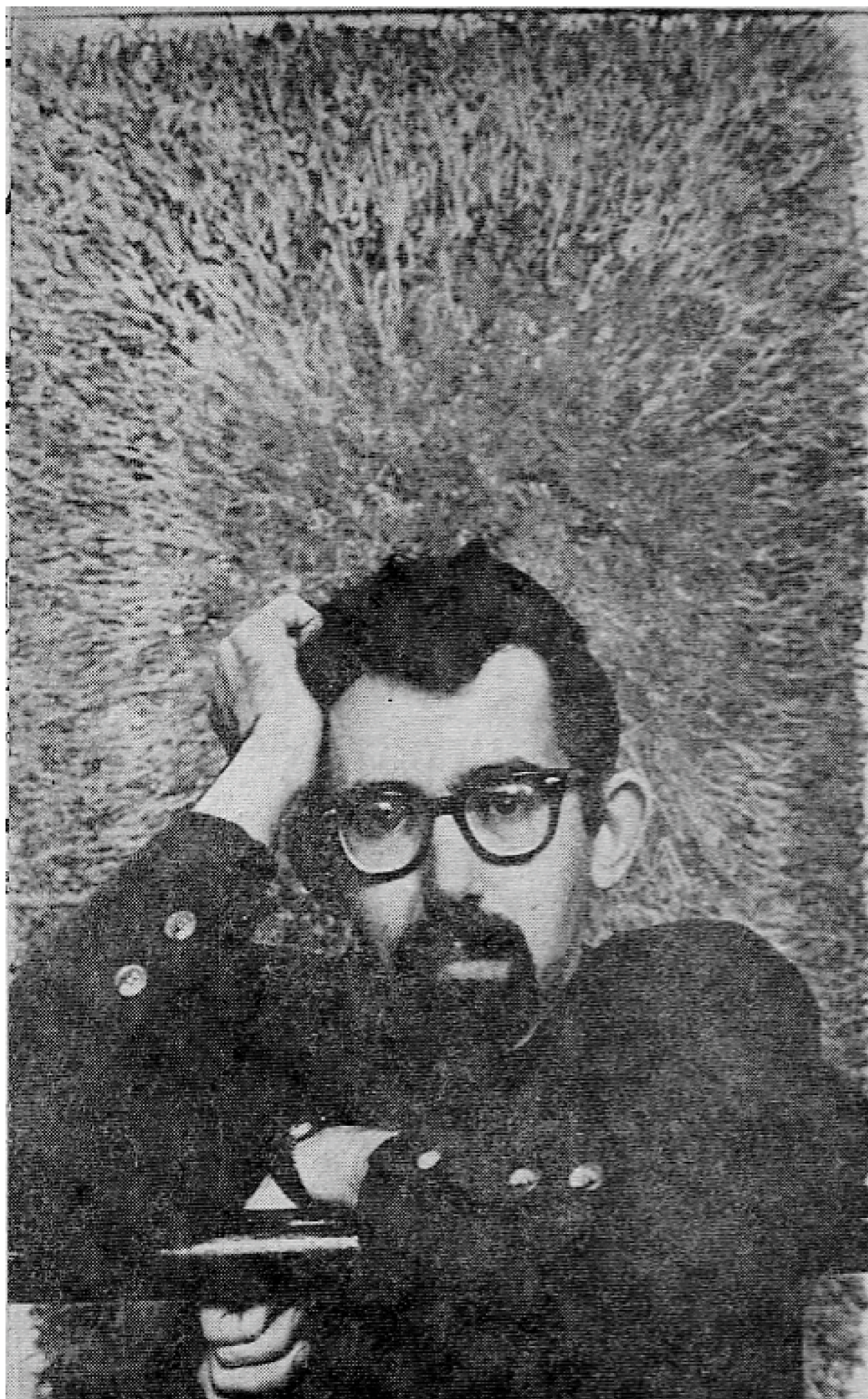
He was born in Mannheim, Germany. His family was driven out by the rise of Nazism, and his father settled as a country doctor in Alton, N. Y.

IN 1953 Munzner received a B.F.A. from Syracuse University where he had enrolled as a prelaw student. In 1955, a student of Zoltan Sepshy, he received an M.F.A. from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

He was appointed to the faculty of the Minneapolis School of Art in 1955 and has taught there since. He was married to the former Joan Messmer, a Minnetonka Senior High School French teacher, in 1960.

The couple moved to the former Plymouth Woods home of Winslow E. Wedin in June, and results of a summer of intense esthetic effort are on display now in the Little Gallery.

And that's where the artist will be between 2 and 4 p.m. today if you want to talk to him at the opening reception of his exhibition questing after the mystery and wonder of life.



Minneapolis Tribune Photo by Duane Braley

ARIBERT MUNZNER AND HIS 'GENESIS-FEBRUARY, 1963'

'I conduct a dialogue between myself and the painting'