

ARTS

DECONSTRUCTING REMBRANDT

THEATRE

MOON OVER BUFFALO •

Theatre Jacksonville presents this comedy at 8 p.m. on April 17, 18, 24, 25, 30 and May 1 and 2 at Theatre Jax Playhouse, 2032 San Marco Blvd., Jacksonville. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for students, military and seniors. Reservations may be made by calling 396-4425.

THE CHRIST, THE CROSS, THE CROWN

Trinity Baptist Church presents this musical at 6 p.m. on April 11 and at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. on April 12 at the church, 800 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville. 786-5320.

NO GREATER LOVE • The St. Johns Co. Passion Play is presented at 7:30 p.m. through April 25 at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340 A1A S., St. Augustine. For information call 825-0871.

CONQUEST & COLONIZATION •

This play about the founding of St. Augustine and the colonization of Florida runs from 10:30-11:45 a.m. most Thursdays and Fridays through April 17 at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre, 1340 A1A S., St. Augustine. Tickets are \$8 per person. Group rates are also offered. 824-9449.

PUMP BOYS AND DINETTES •

This country-western musical is presented by the Limelight Theatre at 8 p.m. every Fri. and Sat. through May at the theater, 1681 U.S. 1 S., St. Augustine. 825-1164.

SOME LIKE IT HOT • "Some Like it Hot" runs through April 26 at Alhambra Dinner Theatre, 12000 Beach Blvd., Jacksonville. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are

Ken Aptekar takes another view of the master with "Rembrandt Redux"

AS A COMPANION SHOW TO "REMBRANDT Etchings from the Carnegie Museum of Art," the Cummer Museum presents the aptly titled "Rembrandt Redux." The juxtaposition of Ken Aptekar's contemporary, large-scale paintings with the original etchings of the Dutch master is a bold move that happens to work well. The paintings, based on reconstructions of Rembrandt's masterpieces and the use of text, are on display in the Barnett Concourse of the Cummer through Sunday, April 12.

Aptekar, a New York artist, creates his paintings in steps Rembrandt could not have conceived. Each piece begins as a computer image, scanned from source material, which is then disassembled, redesigned and overlaid with writing on a large piece of glass. A computer print-out becomes the study for an oil painting on wood, but the work is incomplete until the pane of glass is sand-blasted with text and bolted over it.

"I try to bring out some of the history of Rembrandt's life and times through a contemporary point of view," says Aptekar of his unusual renderings.

The use of language in art is rife with controversy. Purists believe that art is something to be viewed, not read. Conversely, the relationship between visual art and the written word is rich and long, dating back to illuminated manuscripts. In the right context, words can complement, even enhance, the visual

experience. This is indeed true of Aptekar's work. Text is indispensable to his art, as he acknowledges: "The language I use is just as important as the image."

In "Heavy Equipment, 1992," the torsos of a nouveau-riche couple are recreated from Rembrandt's full double portrait. Rembrandt meticulously painted the couple's excessive adornments — satin rosettes, ornate collars, wide lace cuffs — and Aptekar deliberately omits their faces, running snide snippets of New York Times wedding announcements across his rendition. Both artists share the view that the vacuous couple depended on the shallow trappings of wealth. Aptekar points out that little has changed.

Far from always agreeing with Rembrandt, Aptekar has strong views on interpreting meaning in art. "I believe you enter into partnership with a work of art and create the meaning together," he says. "You bring your own subjectivity, your own history and your own experience to the project of producing meaning in a work of art. I try to lead people into the frame of mind where they'll want to do that by suggesting that I've done that when I look at old paintings."

So in "What would you say to me? 1994," inspired by the "Syndics of the Drapers' Guild," Aptekar asks poignant questions. The rich, powerful men in the portrait commissioned Rembrandt to paint them at a time when his personal finances were in shambles. He painted them to pay the

bills, a woe common enough to artists, including Aptekar, who did this piece when he was beholden to the patronage of a wealthy man. Aptekar's text, "What would I say to you if I didn't need your money?" speaks for itself, as do the soulless eyes of the Dutch Syndics.

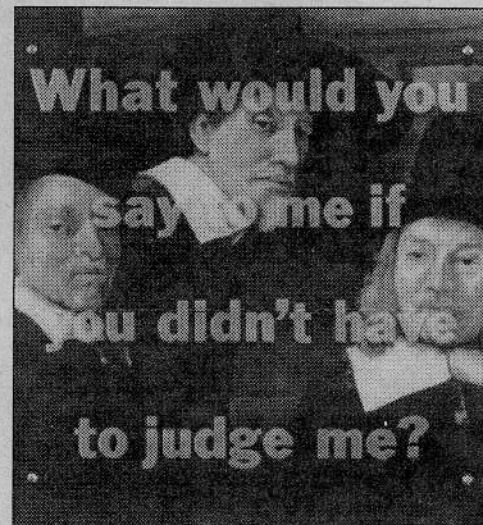
Hands are Aptekar's implements in "A Man with a Knack for Illusion, 1994." He interweaves hand gestures from many Rembrandts into a flowing composition linked by a limerick that reads like a Burma Shave ad. Rembrandt often puts dramatic hand gestures at the center of his paintings. "He could make paint come alive by the way he worked a brush," says Aptekar. The words that run across the work say all of this and more. They speak

of "a man with a knack for illusion" who created the illusion of reality as an artist, as well as of a man who "could get you to buy his confusion."

Rembrandt's control and discipline in the workplace clearly did not spill over into his personal life, which was a disaster. After all, Rembrandt was just a man, and like other men, he was imperfect. This is a vital theme in Aptekar's work. "As an artist," he says, "I can't bear the burden of heroism that is normally accorded to the artist."

To that end, through his wit, sense of irony, and provocative social and political comments, Aptekar achieves a stated goal about Rembrandt: "I am trying to make him an ordinary person."

— Charlotte Safavi



Ken Aptekar's "What would you say to me? 1994."

"Rembrandt Redux: The Paintings of Ken Aptekar" run through Sunday, April 12 at the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, 829 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville. 356-6857.