

# Exhibit looks back on career and life of Fulbright scholar

BY BETH FINZER

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — The details in Simon Dinnerstein's *Fulbright Triptych* won't leave the viewer alone. They demand attention.

Like a painting by William Harnett or Jan van Eyck, the three panels contain small, telltale snippets that verge on distraction but when put together offer insight into the then-young artist's life.

## Art Exhibit

### "Simon Dinnerstein Paintings, Drawings and Etchings"

Through Jan. 14, with art party and reception from 5 to 7 p.m. today, Walton Arts Center, 495 W. Dickson St., Fayetteville.

Admission: Free.  
(501) 443-5600

Dinnerstein was only 28 when he finished the painting, his largest

to date. The triptych shows Dinnerstein, his wife and yet-unborn child seated in their home in Germany. Dinnerstein left his native New York to spend a year in Germany studying printmaking with the help of a Fulbright Fellowship in 1970.

Originally Dinnerstein planned to name the painting for the street that passed in front of their house. But as the year in Germany came to a close, he changed his mind and named it for the fellowship. The

year in Germany was full of growth and curiosity on the part of the artist.

"It seems to me that the painting is an echo of the program," Dinnerstein says.

The work is also an echo of Dinnerstein's world. Recently, Dinnerstein saw the work for the first time in 15 years. He was apprehensive about viewing the painting after such a long time, worried that it would not stand up to the test of time.

"My first response was I couldn't believe I did it," he says. "It is so large in scale — not just in size but in conception."

From the interior of the home, the painting captures the view of the surrounding homes and, even farther away, to the fields and mountains around the town.

"The thing that struck me after not seeing it all these years was the depth."

The painting, with all its many facets, is on display at the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville. It's part of the "Simon Dinnerstein Paintings, Drawings and Etchings" exhibit, which will be up through Jan. 14. The exhibit brings together works from Dinnerstein's early days as an artist in the 1970s to his most current project. It's a large exhibit, with 43 pieces, and could easily be called a retrospective.

The Walton Arts Center is the second stop for the exhibit. When the exhibit closes in January, the paintings will travel on to the Regional Arts Center in Texarkana and Marsh Art Gallery in Richmond, Va., before its dismantling in October 2000.

It's not the first show in Arkan-

sas for Dinnerstein, who lives with his wife in New York. His works have been exhibited at the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock.

Along with the *Fulbright Triptych*, the show is filled with images of his wife and daughter, several nudes, various still lifes and scenes germane to an artist, like one of a paint-splattered sink.

All of the works are finely detailed with carefully drawn lines.

Walton Arts Center visual arts manager Rebecca Johnson says it's the details that catch her attention.

"I think his work is important to me because it's so well crafted. He's just a gifted draftsman."

Some of the works are rendered with oils and others are done in conte crayon, colored pencil and pastel.

Dinnerstein's most recent work is *Passage of the Moon*, which was completed in 1998.

The painting is the cover image on the companion book to the traveling exhibit. The book is the second devoted to Dinnerstein's work.

The first book was published by the University of Arkansas Press in 1990. The book was the result of a chance meeting between Miller Williams and Dinnerstein. The two first met in 1976 in Rome at the American Academy, and they met again 12 years later in New York. At that time, Williams was the head of the University of Arkansas Press. Dinnerstein was interested in showing his friend a few of his new works in case any of the pieces could be used for a book cover. But Williams saw enough for a full-length book.

For the newest book, published by Hudson Hills Press, Williams wrote the introduction.

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SECTION 11W

Northwest Arkansas  
Weekend

Friday, November 19, 1999