

State of the Art Gallery:

Jeff Sanders' Eye In the Sky

By **ANDRIA WATSON** / CASA

TRANSFORMING AN IDEA into not only a piece of art, but also a statement, Jeff Sanders' State of the Art Gallery sculpture, *Annuuit Coeptic*, on display on the corner of State and Canon Perdido Streets through November, takes a closer look at God and the Government.

"I like making art ironic through observations," shared Sanders. "The process of playing with ideas and figuring out a way to build something that conveys my idea is what it's all about. I'm able to write my own script."

Sanders was approached about the State of the Art Gallery by Rita Ferri, the Santa Barbara Arts Coordinator, who remembered Sanders from an exhibit he had at Sullivan Goss. She called, hoping he would be able to submit a piece of work. Sanders wasn't sure if he was going to be able to complete the proposal on time, but he knew what he wanted to do.

"I had already started work on a series of sculptures referencing the pyramid with the floating eye on the back of the dollar bill," explained

Sanders. "The title of the piece, *Annuuit Coeptic*, translates from Latin as 'He approves our undertakings' which is found just above the eye on the back of the dollar. I got to thinking about our government, not only in the past eight years, but the past sixty. I had to ask myself, 'Just because it's the government's stamp of approval, would God really approve?' I was interested."



Jeff Sanders

Annuuit Coeptic is filled with crushed aluminum cans that Sanders had a golf course save for him, as he and all SOAG artists were encouraged to use recycled materials. Other than aluminum, the San Francisco native used galvanized steel, stainless steel,

and glass for the eye. The result is an unusual surface full of color and shine, measuring twelve feet by 22 inches that took Sanders approximately one month to fabricate.

"I think it's important to question the things around us; to study more carefully, and find our own truths," explained Sanders. "Most people don't have a lot of art to look at, or don't frequent galleries as often as they might like. Public art is an opportunity for all kinds of people to become the

audience."

Sanders first became interested in art as a kid growing up in Palo Alto, making model airplanes and model boats. In high school he took classes where he was mentored by the art faculty, and was encouraged to pursue a career in art.

Sanders enrolled in Cal Poly as an architecture major in 1963. In 1965, he switched his major to industrial design and transferred to San Jose State. After getting familiar with the art department, soon, Sanders was helping the art professors in their studios. After some deliberation on career paths, Sanders received both his BA and MA in sculpture.

He went on to teach art in Redding before moving to Los Angeles where he was offered a job at Gemeni G.E.L. (Graphics Editors Limited) where he was the project manager for three years.

After he and his wife had a son, Sanders wanted to re-locate to Ojai, where they had friends. In 1981, they bought a lot, built their house in 1984, and moved in, and have been residents ever since.

"I'm lucky to live and share my ideas in a beautiful place," shared Sanders. "If my art makes people notice and



Annuuit Coeptic by Jeff Sanders, 12' x 22"

wonder, I've done well."

For the fifth annual State of the Art Gallery exhibit, eight artists were selected from a call for entries by Dean Anes, Director of the Acme Gallery in Los Angeles, to present their sculptures in a public forum. Other State of the Art Gallery sculptors include: Richard Aber, Jeff Elings, Edward Inks, Bill Malis, Rafael Perea de la Cabada and Matthew Woodford, Jeff Sanders, Helle Scharling-Todd, and Jeff Kaiser. For information, call the Arts Commission at 965-9663.