

A&E

ON MUSIC

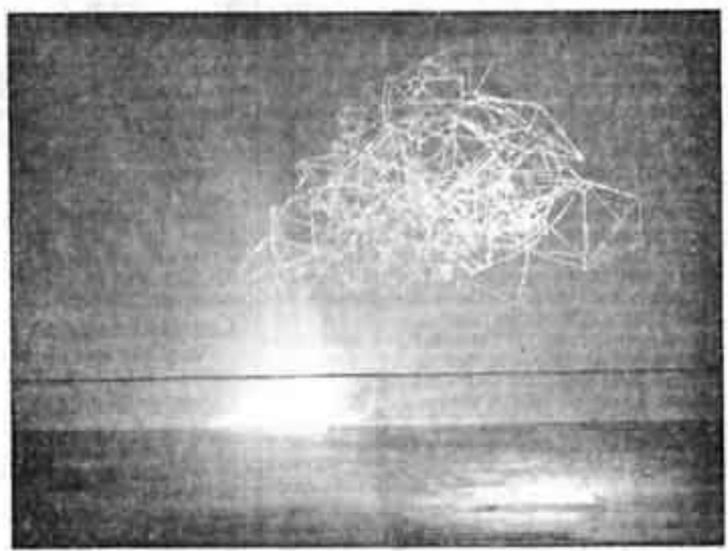
Hungry? For Motown magic, that is? Then head to the Allegheny County Rib Cook-Off at the South Park Fairgrounds. The Temptations are scheduled to perform at 9 tonight. Chances are you'll find sustenance for your other hunger, too. Admission is \$7; free for children under 10.

FOR FAMILY

Speaking of hunger, those of you who shriek "GREEK!" whenever the thought of food crosses your mind should amble over to the Greek Food Festival at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, North Side. In addition to fine food, you'll find music, dancing and tours. Details: 412-321-9282.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT: FILMS, TV, STAGE, DANCE, BOOKS

Transcendent works reach for the 'Aether'



"HB1517," a suspended painted brass sculpture by New York artist Shari Mendelson, is in the "Aether" show.

By Mary Thomas
Post-Gazette Art Critic



New York artist Paul Villinski's "Lament," comprising found knit gloves and backpack frame, speaks to man's desires to soar kept earthbound by the limitations of the human condition. It's in the exhibition "Aether" at CMU's Miller Gallery.

The calendar may not have flipped over to fall yet, but the season's begun at the Regina Gouger Miller Gallery, Carnegie Mellon University, with a very fine group exhibition and two good solo shows.

"Aether" — a traveling exhibition of work by artists Delanie Jenkins, Shari Mendelson, Linn Meyers, Paul Stremple and Paul Villinski — is as airy, dreamy, quiet and difficult to pinpoint as the mythical substance from which it draws its name.

Defined by the dictionary as the medium ancients thought filled the "upper regions," the notion of "aether" (or ether) inspired these artists to represent something that is pervasive but intangible. In doing so, they've achieved a new expression of transcendence that draws from contemporary circumstances.

While the exhibition opened in New Haven, curator Meyers is from Pittsburgh and, along with Jenkins, exhibited in the 2000 Pittsburgh Biennial at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Her extraordinary "33,411 Strokes" is the most ethereal piece in the show — a 16-by-10-foot panel of diaphanous cloth marked by flocks of black ink strokes that bunch and spread across the filmy expanse like schools of fish or segments of genetic code. Shadings of blue painted on the wall behind the cloth add dimension and the illusion of water or sky.

Jenkins, who also exhibited at the Mattress Factory in 1998, addresses issues of the body — the container that is both familiar and unknown, obsessed over and ignored. "Scape," an evocative 33-foot-long by 10-foot-high site-specific installation, comprises nearly 300 puckers of white paper, each of which yields a length of transparent monofilament terminated in a glob of lead. Cast shadows, some multiples, scatter along the length of the work, making it installation, sculpture and drawing.

It calls to mind, but is more successful than, Ann Hamilton's 1999 Carnegie International "welle," because of Jenkins' painstaking

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craftsmanship (it took more than 100 hours to make) and its less trafficked location, which allows for the contemplative exchange that "Scape" invites.

The other artists, all New Yorkers, make equally engaging objects of observation and seduction. Mendelson's constructions of multiple painted enamel wire shapes at first suggest chaos theory rather than ether, but they have an underlying order and rhythm that is logical and even calming. Stremple's elegant glass and steel "Telescopes" are subtle from afar, but reward those who peer into their centers with a glimpse at a luminous mini-world in prismatic display. Villinski appears playful with his constructions inspired by flight, and he is. But within his sculptures is a longing, the disjunct between the human desire to soar and his clunky success in the air, between the promise of the ether and the clay feet of man.

Paul Warne's digital media installation "Perspective," on another

er floor, also provides an experience of space, one that the visitor may immerse in. Filling a darkened room is a gossamer maze of suspended panels that catch and repeat computer-animated images fired out of three projectors in 15-minute loops. Standing in their midst, surrounded by sound and visions of, among other things, tumbling binary numbers or dashing patches of light, is akin to being in the center of a video game.

That should please Warne, an Edinboro University of Pennsylvania graduate who screened a video at Filmmakers' Film Kitchen in 1999. He now lives in San Francisco where he works for Lucas Learning designing three-dimensional virtual worlds for video games that are seen on two-dimensional monitors. Here, he liberates both his animation and the viewer.

The 121 works in Dale McNutt's first floor "Vocabulary," in contrast to those above, are not subtle. The expressive compositions of color and found objects on paper have a vitality that sets the gallery abuzz, reflecting the artist's enthusiasm

as he embarked upon this body of work a year ago, on his 52nd birthday.

A 1970 CMU graduate, McNutt is better known as the founder of Soho Invention, Inc., a Pittsburgh design firm. But for this series, he's become a collaborator with such forces as rain and automobile treads that have formed the castoff artifacts he integrates with slashes or washes of color.

The most successful pieces are those in which painting dominates and is accented by the three-dimensional objects, as in numbers 78, 79 and 80, "Listening" (number 90) or "Thatbloodytime" (number 93). Striking the right balance is "Ganesh," the first work in the exhibition and, fittingly, inspired by the Hindu god of new beginnings.

The gallery occupies three floors (with elevator) at the Forbes Avenue side of the Purnell Center for the Arts. The exhibitions continue through Oct. 14. Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, including this weekend. For information, call 412-268-3618.