

# Local computer artist honored in France

By MYRNA PETLICKI

**S**o what are you doing to celebrate the new millennium? Artist Robert Stanley of Des Plaines plans to be at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chamalières, France. That's where he will be featured in a one-person exhibit during the museum's Fifth World Triennial. The honor



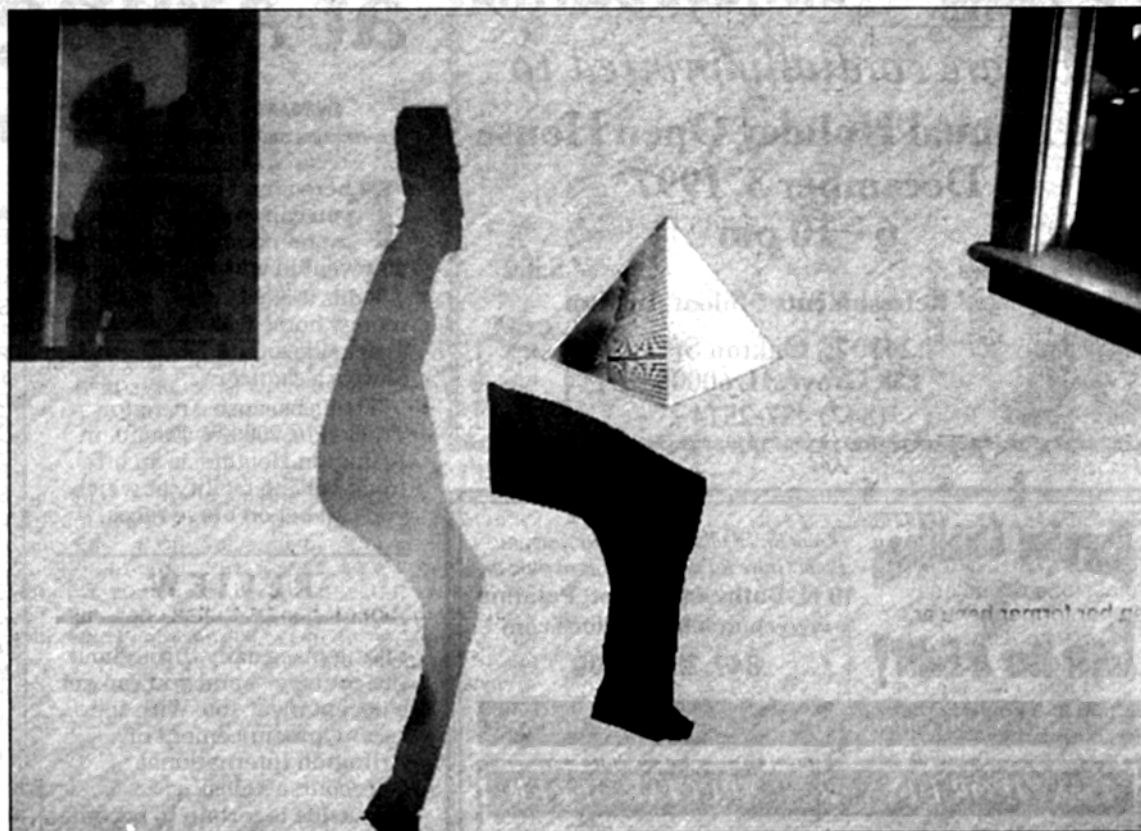
comes with winning the Prix de la Ville de Vichy at the museum's Fourth World Triennial.

Being selected for this international honor came as a surprise for the Oakton Community

College professor, who used a computer to create his prize-winning art. "They have an agent in the United States who somehow saw my work," Stanley reported. Being discovered in this fashion was a pleasant change of pace, as compared to his ongoing search for contests to enter, the artist attested.

The best part of winning will come in the year 2000, Stanley indicated. "Prizes are always nice — they cover a patch of wallpaper," he said, "but what really was nice was to have the chance to have a whole gallery to myself in a couple of years."

Details of the exhibit haven't been finalized yet, so Stanley isn't certain how many of his artworks will be displayed. He also hasn't been told if he should be creating new pieces for the show or should just include selections from the works that the jury saw. "Artists kind of go through styles," he noted. "So, of course, I've got tons of work that is contemporary to what I'm doing now."



Stanley used a computer to create his winning works. "Sometimes I put some of my own artwork in — I scan some of my previous drawings or paintings," he noted. Other times, he will "do things that only a computer can do."

For those who question the value of art created using a computer, Stanley asserted, "I think computers are just another medium, like watercolor. What's important to me is the feeling of how the spaces and the music of the spaces work together. It just looks different when I do acrylic paintings. The ideas are still there — they're about space and separation."

In these pieces of our lives there's a kind of an ordering. I'm really interested in the fact that nature goes on for literally billions of years, and we all just kind of fit into this thing."

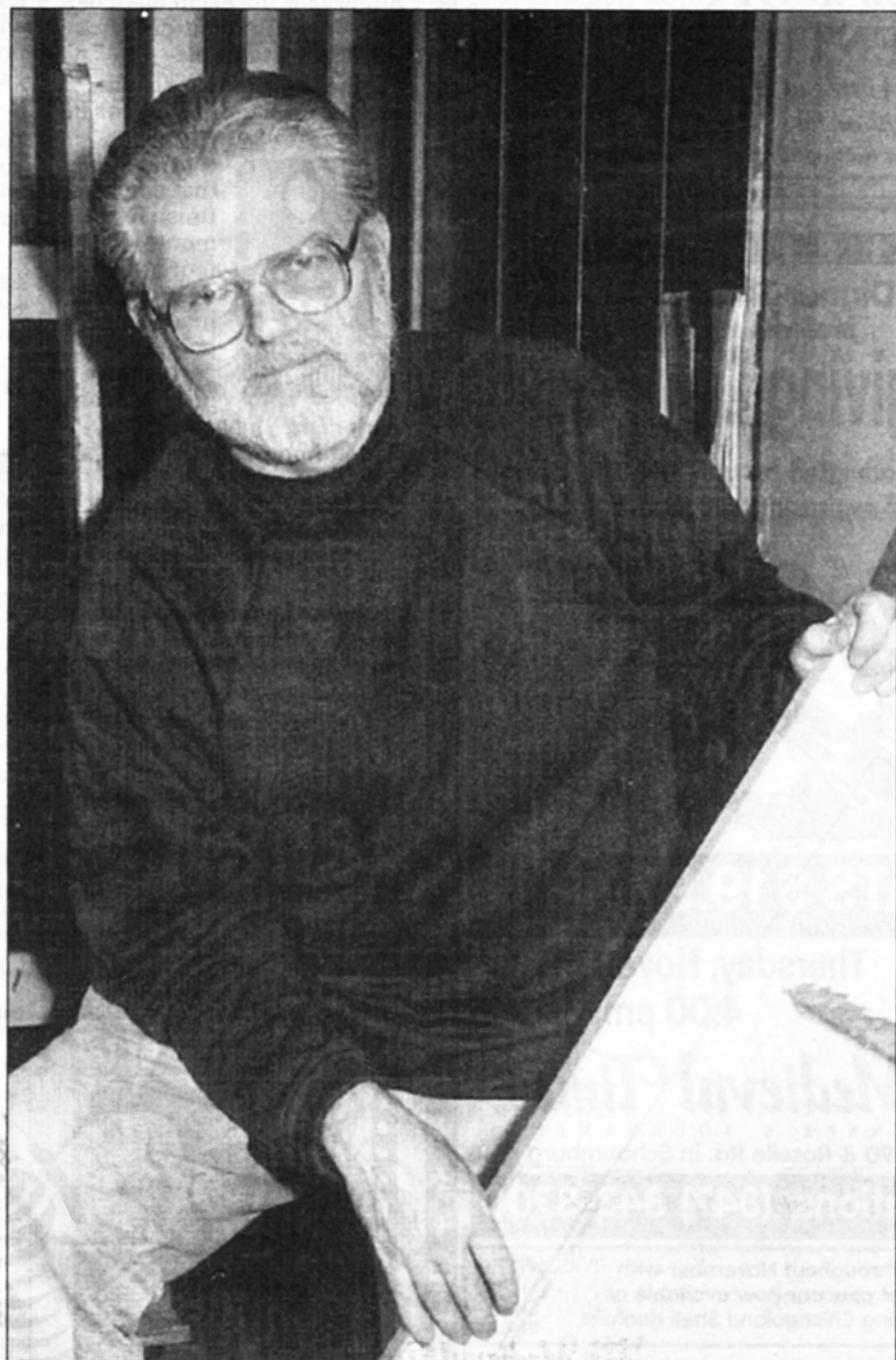
In addition to his computer art, Stanley also currently works with acrylics. And, he said, "Almost every day I sketch in my sketchbook, usually with pencils. Sometimes I use pen and ink." Stanley encourages his art students at Oakton to work on their skills that way, too, telling them, "On days, even when you're not doing a serious or a big piece, I think it's good to keep your hand in."

Stanley has been sharing his

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**Robert Stanley**



Computer artist Robert Stanley: sharing what he knows.

wisdom with Oakton students since he started the school's art department in 1971 — designing the space, ordering supplies and writing the curriculum. Initially, the staff consisted of Stanley and one part-time instructor. Currently, the art department faculty numbers four full-time and eight to 10 part-time teachers.

He teaches two drawing courses and one painting course, which he calls "just fun." Stanley said that students are periodically asked to evaluate their teacher, but the best feedback he ever received came through a less formal channel. "One time, a student looked up at me from her drawing and said, 'You really like what you're doing, don't you?'" he reported. "It's fun to share what you know and watch people surprise themselves."

Stanley considers pursuing his own artistic endeavors vital to his teaching role. "It's part of my job as a college professor to make art and to show art, and to put yourself into exhibitions, so you can tell students, 'This is what's going to happen when you apply to get into a gallery or an exhibition.'"

Stanley, who holds a master's degree from Pratt Institute in New York, exhibited at the Joy Horwich Gallery in Chicago for about 15 years. The gallery closed this month, though, so Stanley is currently seeking a new venue for his work. His creations have been exhibited in Indiana, New York, Oregon

and Pennsylvania, including a one-person show at the John G. Blank Arts Center in Michigan City, Indiana, last summer.

In October, Stanley spoke at the 1997 Mid-America College Art Association Conference, in Richmond, Virginia. The other

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exciting news in his life is the recent marriage of his 29-year-old daughter, the oldest of his three children.

Next on the exhibition agenda for Stanley is "Digital Art," a four-person show in January at the Northern Indiana Arts Center. And, when he's not teaching, lecturing or planning future exhibits, Stanley will continue to put in about 20 hours weekly at his home studio, creating works of art.

With that type of schedule, the new millennium will be here before he knows it.