

Oliver LaGrone's And Other Work On Display

By Grace M. Cole

Sculpture Associates Unlimited, the works of Oliver LaGrone and his students, are currently being featured in the Gallery Lounge. The exhibit of sculpture in clay, bronze, wood, and metal will run till June 10.

Oliver LaGrone, sculptor, poet and educator, has combined his unique exhibit-lecture package to enrich the quality of many schools, churches, colleges and universities for the past 15 years. His range of subjects embrace art, poetry, Afro-American history and culture, and other areas of the humanities.

LaGrone's students, who study with him at the Hershey Community Center, spring from a diverse spectrum of interests and occupations. Some of his students and their works being presented in the Gallery Lounge. Bob Fowler (Robert), James McFarland (Muhammad Ali), Karl Foster (The Potter), Kent Kise (Dolphin), Ruth Sourbeer (Watusi), Cathy Hoffman (Saltwater), Carlanne Cronin (Untitled-beaten copper), Ed Costik (Flight), Bob Tobias (Chrome Abstract), Merle Easton (Sisters from hair), and Genie Pauly (Shepherd).

Oliver LaGrone is an image-maker. He defines art to be a basic need essential to mans involvement with his own experience. He is above all eclectic in realization and idea. He creates images in his sculpture and poetry and bounces them one between the other.

If there is a common characteristic in LaGrone's art, images, poetry and sculpture, it is a strength of movement releasing wholesome joy. Much of it embraces the pain, the

affirmation of hope - the peaks and valleys of the Black Experience. All of his art forms celebrate the quest of human freedom - the upward thrust. Terms like modern, abstract, or realistic cannot describe

LaGrone's work more than superficially defining his art in particulars. To him form follows function.

LaGrone's portraits of historical and contemporary figures are masterfully done.

These are perhaps rooted in his belief that art is also a teacher - biographer, with socio-cultural as well as aesthetic potential. In these portraits he captures dynamic and dramatic understatement. His sculpture por-

traits seem to spring to life with a real presence of power.

LaGrone's African art is particularly interesting. He captures a pure, rich state of movement in his sculptures in wood. He traveled to Africa at one point to explore all the facets of African Art. As LaGrone might say, "If I were to sculpt, I had to know." In this dimension of his art, LaGrone cannot help making social statements which embody the will of a man strongly dedicated to his culture.

His poems, articles, and reviews have appeared in such publications as the Saturday Review, Negro Digest, and the New York Times Sunday Book Review. His poetry has been included in several anthologies. LaGrone has served as Special Assistant to the Vice-President of Undergraduate Studies of Penn State. This particular work has carried him to the position of artist-in-residence to all 21 branches of Penn State. The lectures, which LaGrone presents along with his exhibits, are provocateurs for his audiences and incorporate his poetry for a unique illustration of his viewpoints.

LaGrone, amazing at seventy-one years old, resides with his wife Lillian at Pineford, Middletown. He and his wife will soon be moving to New Mexico.

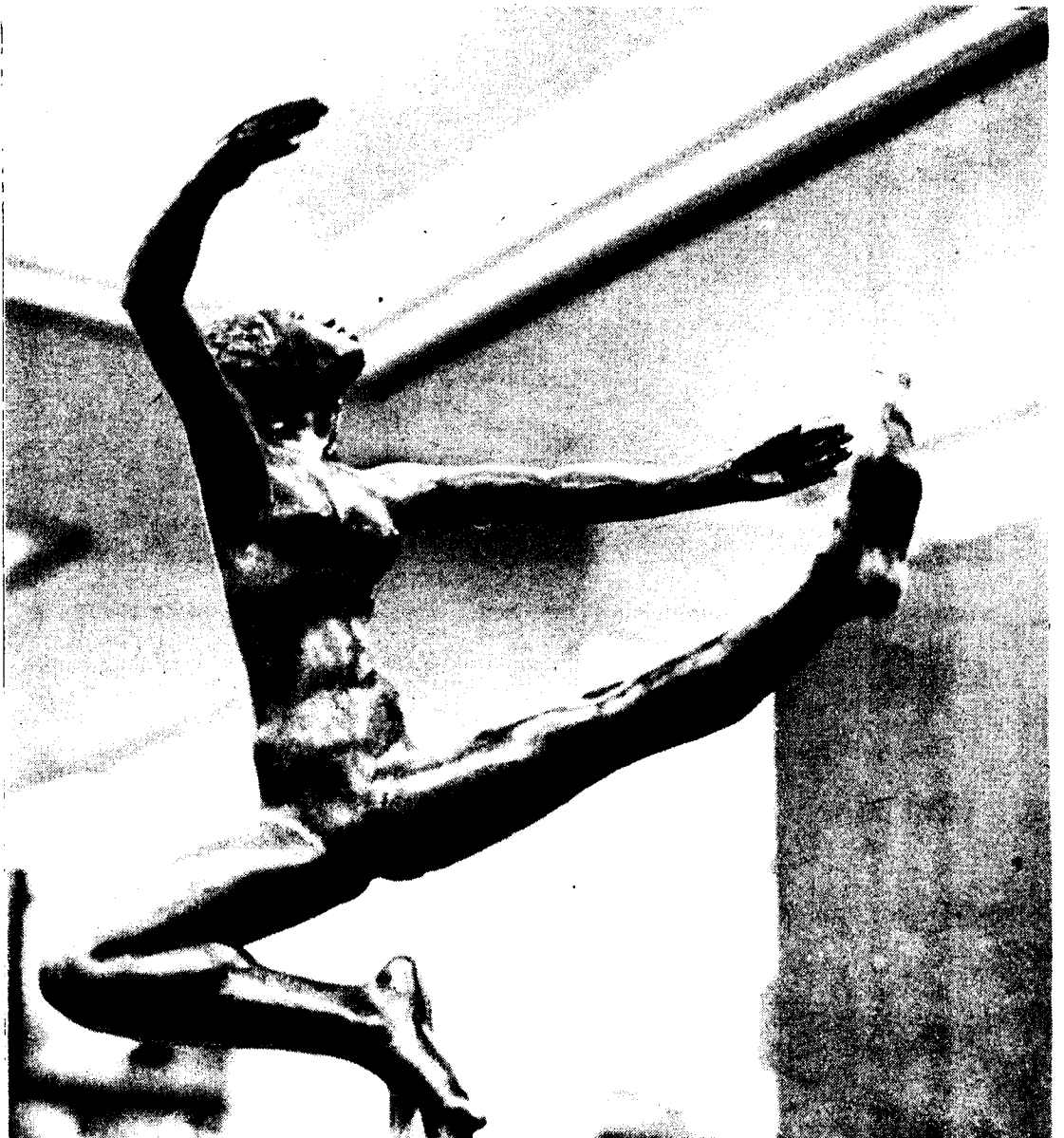
As for Sculpture Associates Unlimited, LaGrone predicts great things. He has never had a class so eager to absorb the concepts of sculpture so quickly and be able to create so steadily in so many different materials. He expects his students to continue their fine work. As LaGrone said, "They are Unlimited you know!"



When Aretha Sings



LaGrone teaching Elementary Students concepts of Sculpture



The Dancer