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has a gift for graffiti, he attempts to go mainstream by taking his art off the wall and placing it on canvas. In Sund's case, he transforms a time-honored subject and form — the ideal, classical torso — into a contemporary image of the Man of Iron.

Gloria Masse and Kathy Venter (at the Diane Farris Gallery, 1565 West Seventh, to June 13) are both as concerned with spiritual values and the human figure as the artists above. Innocence is one theme that unites the work executed in two very different media.

Masse's technically exciting paintings are remarkable for their brilliant color and interlaced, intricate brushwork. She has managed to retain these qualities despite her recent switch from oil to acrylics.

As is typical of her work, Masse's most recent series brings together two images one would not expect to find in conjunction. Last year it was wolves and lupins; this year it's cedar stumps and children who enact roles from fairy tales, fantasy or personal history.

Masse's mother, Ivy Anderson, appears

as Guardian of the Fallen Log. Ivy, in this apparition dated 1911, is a child dressed, improbably, in a Second World War nursing costume. She stands bravely near an abyss at the foot of a weather-beaten stump.

In Night Howl to a Stump, a small boy in Victorian costume sings a lonely song in the forest. These images are touched with sadness that mourns the passage of time and expresses regret for lost innocence.

Strange birds cradled on careful hands, babies and birds swimming under water are among the unusual images Masse presents in this show.

Kathy Venter's portion of the exhibition has a single focus. King David's Song of Songs is the inspiration for her sculpture. This psalm from the Old Testament is, at one level, an erotic celebration of King David's love for his mistress who is his perfect, open-hearted consort. But for centuries the church has asked its followers to interpret it in another light: as a symbol for the love Christ shows to the believer who is fully receptive to His teaching.

Venter's sturdy, introspective women rendered in clay are almost life-size. Their innocence is palpable. A little anx-

iously, some hint of the heat of the Song of Songs might have made them more persuasive figures.

Ron Eckert's show at the Atelier Gallery (3084 Granville to June 16) proves that the well-executed still life can still bring pleasure to those who make them.

Again and again in this show, Eckert examines an iris or two in a simple glass vase. Each time he creates slightly different compositions and slightly altered

relationships between figure and background.

Delicate shifts of color and sensitive brushwork are hallmark's of Eckert's Cezanne-inspired approach.

I see the validity of such still-lives; like the British watercolor landscape style, it brings a long-established form into the present. At the same time I wish that Eckert were able to incorporate into his art some more recent stylistic and thematic concerns. ♦

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Gloria Masse
Kathy Venter

Portrait of the Bride

May 26 - June 13, 1990

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