Art notes: Miss X puts out a book

From Page C4

from garbage or recycling bins is a kind of stealing, and some artists get plenty mad about it.

Frank Stella sued a man who found a roll of his discarded striped paintings back in the 1960s and was trying to sell them decades later. Stella got the paintings back and got rid of them properly.

Sometimes artists lose work and want it back. Mason is also the central figure in the best local story in that vein. Several years ago he was driving over the Aurora Bridge in a flatbed truck with paintings in the back. One blew off into the water. Somebody salvaged it by finding it and kept it, even though it had Mason’s name and his dealer’s sticker on the back.

Mason noped around the houseboat community for somebody who might have seen something unusual, a painting falling out of the sky, and came up with a witness. He got the painting back miraculously, in good shape.

Seattle takes over: Being in Minneapolis looking at art is a lot like doing it in Seattle. All three of the major exhibits on view there originated here.

Patterson Sims, curator of modern art for the Seattle Art Museum, was in Minneapolis for the opening of the Mark Tansey exhibit at the Walker Art Center (“Mark Tansey: Art and Source”), which Sims organized and will open at SAM Feb. 21. Sharing top billing at the Walker is “Art into Life: Russian Constructivism, 1914-1932,” organized by Henry Art Gallery director Richard Andrews as part of Seattle’s Goodwill Arts Festival last summer.

Across town at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is an exhibit that also opened at the Henry Art Gallery earlier this year. “Thomas Hart Benton: Drawing from Life,” organized by Henry Adams.

It’s a Seattle sweep and “something to feel good about,” reports Sims.

Henry who? While on the subject of the Henry Art Gallery, a disgruntled reader called the P-I to complain that my review of its new exhibit, “Waves and Plagues: The Art of Masami Teraoka,” gave neither the address or phone number for the Henry, and the reader couldn’t find it in the phone book. My apologies. The Henry Art Gallery is on the western edge of the University of Washington campus. Phone number: 543-2281. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., open to 9 p.m. on Thursday and free admission that day. Regular admission is $4; students and seniors, $2; members, UW students and children younger than 12, free.

Those who enjoy Teraoka’s show might want to know he’s lecturing at the Henry Gallery on his work Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m. Admission is $5 general, $3 members. Paul Berry, professor of art history at the UW, lectures Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Henry on one of the central issues in Teraoka’s work: “Edges of Ecstasy, Frontiers of Sexual Imagery and Art,” same prices.

No ego art: Seattle’s Miss X signs her drawings with a triangle pierced with a slash mark. “To attract as few labels as possible,” she explains, “I try to distance myself from my viewers to create a genderless, anonymous and almost mysteriousness about myself. What really matters is what’s in your face.”

She has a new, limited edition book out (“Discrete Ephemera”), available at Art in Form Books (2237 Second Ave, at Bell Street) for $50 in cloth and $25 in paper. In it are copies of her work, from her stranger-out, crazed comic drawings accompanied by text from local writers Stephen J. Bernstein and W.F. Pugmyre. She draws deformed fetuses who are driven crazy by consumer culture but also revel in it. She seems to be influenced by late Philip Guston and early Robert Crumb, but her line is more unrelentingly dense and tight, the visual equivalent of hysteria.

It’s the second in her series, supported by a grant from the Seattle Arts Commission, with a third book planned.

Maybe her work looks good because the culture is contracting in a spasm of uprightness and it’s a relief to find somebody who’s not ashamed of really bad, offbeat, insanely vulgar taste. Maybe, on the other hand, she’s just good and no excuses need be offered. Let the reader decide (and beware).