



'FRILLA' AND 'MOSA'— Sculptor Heidi Bucher, left, rests inside "Frilla" and Florence Karant crawls into "Mosa" at Miss Bucher's body shells exhibit at County Museum. Times photo by Harry Chase.

Stunning Departure in Body Covering

BY BETH ANN KRIER

Times Staff Writer

A soft black room. A bell. Ten seconds to scramble into position. Schlop. You are art. And you can stand back and look at yourself.

The scene is not that of a 50-cent funhouse but the fourth level of the Ahmanson Gallery at the County Museum of Art. The costume and textiles corner usually reserved for Eleanor Roosevelt's petticoats, vegetable-dyed needlepoint and hairnets of the pioneers.

Yes, just around the bend from Durer's engravings there is a stunning departure from what is traditionally thought of as textiles or body cover-

ings. "Body Shells and Shadows," as the divergence is called, invites the human form literally to put it on.

It stands quite remarkably on its own as serious sculpture, a series of white forms, solid or inflated, covered with a phosphorescent polyurethane vinyl invented and patented by Swiss artist Carl Lander. The bonus is that viewer-participants may lie upon, jump onto or roll around in Lander's various pieces, wait for strobe lights to flash, get up and observe the shadows they left behind as parts of the works.

Every minute and 15 seconds the strobe wipes out the old images and, participants willing, re-

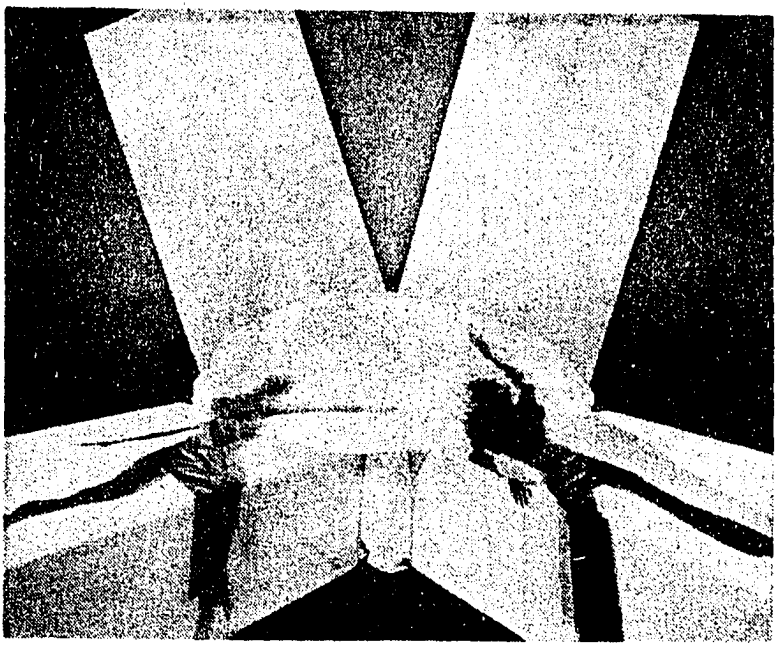
places them with new. It is a shadow boxer's freeze-frame paradise.

Tuesday evening as the exhibit opened, the room with its five forms became something of a stop-action carnival. "A fair," as Lander put it, describing precisely what he didn't want to happen.

Children, his own in particular, were running about, freezing handstands and mock free-for-alls in front of what he calls the Landing Panel. The form resembling twin beds joined only at the head ("Landing PH-LA 1, 1972") was continually occupied with petrified fetal positions.

The enthusiasm was too much for Lander, who

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YOU ARE ART. -Shadows of Mary Hunt Kahlenberg, left, County Museum of Art's curator of textiles and costumes, and visitor Barbara Noi on Carl Lander's "Landing PH-LA 1, 1972." Viewer-participants recline on forms, a strobe flashes, they get up and then can study their images as part of the art work. Times photo by Harry Chase

Stunning Departure in Attire

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has become so involved with the pieces he recently changed his name to identify with the "landing" shapes his forms are invariably called.

He wanted people not merely to experience themselves in portions of his art, but to stand back and take in the whole of it. To loll in the relationships of each piece to all the others. To notice perhaps that his arrangement concept was taken from the position of security light which had to remain static.

Lander said, in fact, that "Landing PH-LA 2, 1972" (an inflated piece not too far removed from an octopus with globes on its tentacles) looked better to him when it was taken to the beach for photographs than it did in the dark with shadows all over it.

In the next room, his wife Heidi Bucher held forth in the daylight with a complementary showing of body shells manned by graduate dance students. A talented dressmaker whose clothing based on her husband's landing forms has been splashed all over European fashion magazines, Miss Bucher has gone garments a step further and produced marvelously impractical experiences for the body.

Like her husband's, Miss Bucher's forms work whether they are inhabited or not. (The museum will periodically supply people inside her forms during the exhibit). A few are intentionally immobile to provide contrast to the active shells.

Treated with the gray-pink-gold-blue colors that emerge as mother of pearl, the shells are rounded and smooth and sometimes embellished with ornate detail carved into their form. Two of the pieces contain the word "mosa," as in "Trimosa" and "Mosa," which Miss Bucher coined to mean soft and gentle, like moss.

"They're very sensuous," she said, "maybe your own weight or a little lighter. They're like a very heavy coat." A little more bulky perhaps, but think of the protection from muggers.

"Body Shells and, Shadows" arranged by Mary Hunt Kahlenberg, curator of textiles and costumes, will be on display in the Ahmanson Gallery until June 11.