

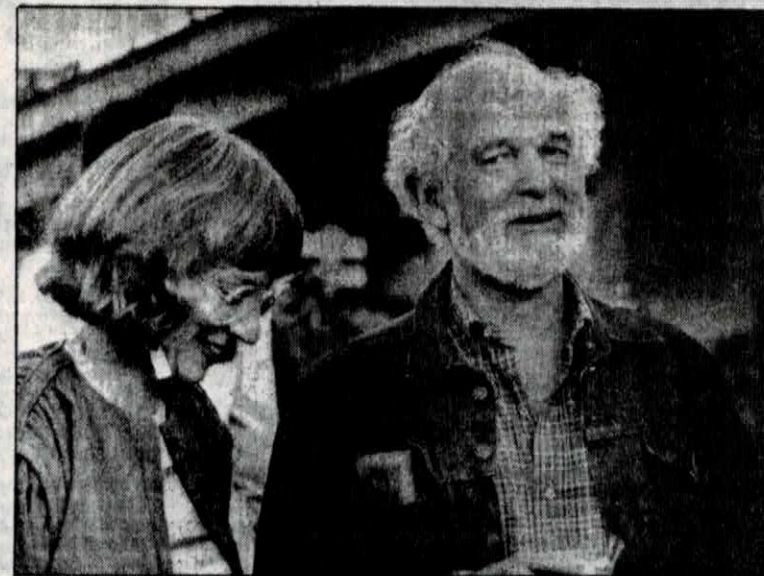
**SOCIAL SCENE**

PAT STEGER

# Art Lovers Go Partying In a Park

**T**HE ESPRIT of the moment: No one checked invitations or names at the reception given Tuesday by gallery owner John Berggruen at the Esprit Park at Minnesota and 19th Streets. The event celebrated the installation of sculptor Mark di Suvero's two new massive creations in the park owned by Esprit de Corps owners Doug and Susie Tompkins, which is adjacent to the firm's headquarters and factory. The sculptures are for sale (the 30-foot "Miwok," \$250,000; the 60-foot "Molecule," \$375,000); John quipped, "We may end up selling them to an industrialist in Dusseldorf or to an oilman in Midland."

The Tompkinses, who made their name in junior sportswear, put in the beautifully maintained park — trees, walks, a par course and a grass tennis court — last year on a lot that, according to Doug, "was the ugliest thing you've ever seen." Esprit landscape architect Drew Detsch, who also did a park for the Tompkinses near their plant in India, designed it; he's now working on something similar for the Esprit complex in Australia. Doug, dressed in denims and Top-Siders for the party, said neighborhood response has been great. "When people see that something is well cared for, people



Photos by Susan Gilbert

Sandra Shannonhouse, Robert Arneson at the party in Esprit Park

are quite nice." Also quite nice were the people at the reception — both the invited and the uninvited (who were more thrilled with the free bar than the di Suveros) — and quite excited about seeing, as jewelry designer Kathleen Mailliard said, "art where it should be."

It is difficult to imagine the huge pieces anywhere but outdoors. Banker Don Stephens joked, "They'd be fine if you had the right kind of house."

The installation celebration drew an

interesting mix: The gallery-gallopers who never miss an opening, a few artists (including Mark Adams), some glamorous jet-set women hoping to see a new face (male and able to afford a di Suvero), a sprinkling of socialites, a few children, a half dozen hippies, two punks and one dog accompanied by owner Barry Nelson. Barry felt that "instead of showing just two very expensive pieces, more pieces should be shown by lots of different artists. In other words, spread the wealth." Barry happens to be an artist.

It was a happy event; people enjoyed looking at the di Suveros — some with reverence (like the young man who knelt on the grass, absorbing both what he was seeing and a gin and tonic) and some with playful irreverence (like Serena Ventura, her daughter, Sabrina, and Gretchen Cebrian's daughter, Cairo, climbing on one of "Molecule's" girders.)

Also there: Frances Bowes with her sisters, Victoria Leonard, and Dorothy Robinson of New York; Alex Mehran, Diana Fuller, Edwina Evers, Jeffrey Thomas, Betsy Dohrmann and sculptor Robert Arneson with his wife, ceramist Sandra Shannonhouse. When someone wondered what Arneson thought of di Suvero's work, a friend asided, "He wouldn't be here if he didn't like it. He's such an art snob."

Psychiatrist Francis Rigney studied the works intently and then allowed himself to enthuse, recklessly, "I like it." The di Suveros will be on display at the Esprit Park for the next three months. John Berggruen is then planning to install another outdoor exhibit there featuring artist George Rickey.



Alex Mehran with gallery owner John Berggruen; Esprit owner Doug Tompkins

