



Two views of hands are entries in "Fazart," an exhibit at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Gallery 400.

## Artists fax stacks of works for show

By Mary Gillespie

Love letters, lunch notes, missives to Maine and Moscow—such are the fax of life in the '90s.

Now, a group of Chicago-based artists is transforming the business-bound facsimile machine into a tool of technique: the art of fax. At 5 p.m. today, the first exhibit entirely composed of artwork transmitted via fax—chubbed, naturally, "Fazart"—will open to the public at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Gallery 400.

The gallery's single fax machine has been humming 24 hours a day since July 2, when visitors began accepting hundreds of works of technologically presented art from around the world. The exhibit, co-sponsored by UIC's School of Art and the School of the Art Institute, exclusively features the work of their alumni.

"We averaged 11 call . . . we're receiving one every 13 seconds," said an exhilarated but frazzled Kacey Inaki of Gallery 400.

"We're flabbergasted at the response . . .

never thought it would be such a hit," said co-curator Mary Min, an alumna of both UIC and the School of the Art Institute. "The machine keeps running out of paper."

Impaired by continuous-feed paper and an outdated by the 14-in. and wider format and 8 1/2-inch width limitation, many artists are sending either long, narrow works (up to 10 feet) or 5 1/2-inch by 11-inch pieces that are being assembled for display. The works include photos, drawings, comic strips, paintings and word-driven pieces, all created especially for, or adapted to, fax technology.

Although the two art schools mailed out 11,000 invitations to submit work, none of the show's curators knew whether the fax art idea would take off. But from all over the globe village, alumni are leaving the assembly modern buzz signal on the gallery's fax in droves, some sending their work in the middle of the night, to ensure their inclusion in the show.

The UIC-SAI team didn't leave home. Last year, internationally known artist David Hockney faxed one of his works from California to a Notting, England art gallery. It

arrived in 144 sheets and was pasted together into a 15-foot by 54-foot picture of a tennis match. But the combined effort of the Chicago schools is by all accounts the first all-fax exhibition.

The experimental show of the '90s was hatched in January, when Min—who runs a North Side culture news business—bought a fax machine. With her artist's bent, she soon began to perceive it as not just a message medium but a medium with a message.

"Faxes are temporary by nature. They take art out of the range of collectibles and put it in the range of ideas," she said.

Inaki, who has produced a series of shows devoted to technology at Gallery 400, shares Min's fax fascination. "This is not precious art," she said. "It's not meant to be framed. It will fade in about six months. The planned obsolescence, the immediate, temporary communication, is the point."

"Fazart" will be on display at Gallery 400 weekdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through August 17. Admission is free for today's reception and for the run of the exhibition.