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EXHIBIT PREVIEW

DATE: June 29, 1990

PUBLICATION: The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution

EDITION: The Atlanta Constitution

The Atlanta Journal

SECTION: PREVIEW

PAGE: D/2

Works by **Todd Murphy**

Studio reception tonight at 7:30 (one night only). 500 Bishop St., Suite D-1. 352-9143

An artist confronts his heroes

By **Catherine Fox** Staff writer

So much art produced today is either cynical or sad that **Todd Murphy's** paintings are something of an anomaly. Working in a vast brick warehouse crowned with a ribbed, barrel vault, the 28-year-old Atlanta artist applies abstract expressionist scale and gesture to figurative images that dominate his 10-foot-tall, layered canvas and plexiglass paintings. They are often portraits of his personal heroes, among them Samuel Beckett and Sam Shepherd - whose work he views as odes to life, despite unblinking acknowledgment of its misery. After gallery experiences convinced him that the size of his paintings inhibited dealers from pushing them, Mr. **Murphy** decided to handle his career himself. Hence, tonight's open studio and exhibit.

- On the scale of his painting: "As I see it, there are three sizes in art: The one you can fit in your hand, the one you can hold and the one that holds you. I like the third. It's a world of its own. You walk up to one of my paintings and you are engulfed in it."

- On the genesis of his layered approach: "I started off doing very traditional oil paintings. I would take slides of them, and one day I picked up the slides and put one in front of the other. I liked the way they created an abstract narrative. So I started creating the same effect with plexiglass."

- On living in Atlanta: "I got a BFA at the University of Georgia and stayed in Athens for two years. Then I decided to move to New York. Once I got there, I realized I was there only because I wanted to be `a New York artist.' I realized it was more important to be a painter. I couldn't paint like this in New York; I would be a full-time waiter. [In Atlanta] I'm almost surviving on my art."

- On art and life: "Robert Motherwell once said painting is the culmination of 10,000 brushstrokes. I was watching `Crimes and Misdemeanors' recently, and Woody Allen said the same thing: What defines you is your decisions. Your life is a culmination of 10,000 decisions."

photo: **Todd Murphy** with his work, "Mona Mona." / Dwight Ross Jr. / Staff