Arty ‘Outside’ So In It’s Way Out

By CLAIRE PLUNGUIAN

The Outside, an ultra-arty coffee shop rapidly getting a reputation as the Beatnik palace of Houston, is an interesting place to visit — once.

After wandering through the first floor, inspecting little suggestive cubbyholes with titles of “Paranoia Corner” or “Sick Sick Room” inscribed above the door with careful casualness, one proceeds to the second floor where even wierder things may be found.

For Starving Artists

The second floor consists of studios rented out to various starving artists, and if you’re really in luck, as we were, you will find a silent group playing chess and kibitzing, and at least one thoroughly beat character who says nothing to anyone, but sits with his back to the room looking profoundly out the window.

Word-Jazz Sessions

Word-jazz sessions, at which poetry is read to the fitful accompaniment of some off-beat jazz, are held on the third floor, which looks awfully much like what it is: a beat-up attic hastily cleared of its trunks. There you can have the privilege of paying $2.00 to hear what the beats are saying.

Spotty Show

Last Monday night, this was a spotty performance. Some of the poetry was good, but most of it astonishingly poorly delivered. The sax player seemed to be the poorest member of the combo, but he had contributed, as had the other players, by writing an original piece of music, and the base player had written one of the poems.

Attempts at Art

The first two floors are liberally sprinkled with paintings and attempts at art of all descriptions, shocking only by their price tags (although it’s been said that if you actually wave cash around, any amount, the artists are quite likely to grab it).

For those interested in exploring the sordid side of life, the club at 3618 Fannin offers memberships at $3 each, and standard price for poetry readings seems to be $2.00. Oh yes, and very good coffee is 25 cents a cup.