

It's a world of color, shapes and lines

Aesthetics shape perceptions

By LYNN ORR

Farmington Hills artist Louise Rkts Gaddis likes to work with the unpredictable, which is why watercolors dominate her artistic productions of 20 years.

"I started with oils, then went to acrylics, but I always had a soft spot for watercolors," says Ms. Gaddis, whose one-woman exhibit is on display at the Farmington Hills Library through the month of March.

"With watercolors, once you put it down, it's there, and that's a challenge. It's like raising a child," says the mother of four and grandmother of three.

"You give the paint a little bit of guidance and see how the paper accepts it, and you work back and forth."

Ms. Gaddis has never totaled her canvas output—"I've sold quite a few and rented quite a few, but I guess I should sit down some time and try to figure it out."

Taking the time to do the calculating might be a problem, however. In addition to her painting, Ms. Gaddis enjoys gardening, sewing, being with her family, and her memberships in the Farmington Artists' Club and the Palette and Brush Club, an established Detroit club now meeting at Botsford Inn.

"MOST OF THE TIME I'm active in art clubs," she says. She also studies continually by taking classes from local artists. Presently she's studying with Sophie Fordon of Oakland Community College, sketching live figures.

"I enjoy working with live models so much," she says enthusiastically. "It's difficult to get anyone to pose for you, especially someone in your family."

Recently, she's found herself working more with colors than she had done in the past. "Once in a while I get quite impressionistic," she says. "It's interesting to do something like a Monet in watercolors."

Although her work is concentrated in landscapes, she often takes up a stick rather than a brush to do ink portraits, usually working from photographs but sometimes using a model.

She recently did an ink sketch of a child, and it took 40 sketches before she was satisfied that she had caught the "dreamy" quality of the child, Carrie, whose name titles the drawing.

Ms. Gaddis' children favor an early painting of a Chinese man. My kids argue about who's going to get in the will. Of course I can see a lot of defects in it, but it means something to the family."

THE MOST IMPORTANT aspect of an artistic career for Ms. Gaddis is the awareness of beauty one acquires. "Art is a constant thing," she says. "You think colors, shapes and forms, and you feel like you're seeing much more than you ever saw before."

Her son Dan, a Farmington Senior High student, is an avid photographer and has commandeered one of the bathrooms as a darkroom in the Gaddis home.

"My kids have become more aware of things around them," she explains. "Dan and I went driving around after the ice storm, and he took four or five rolls of film. He said to me 'Everybody's hassled but they don't see the beauty of it all.' I think he's learned not to just walk by but to really see what's around."

And Ms. Gaddis doesn't worry about being over-influenced by the work of others. She enjoys perusing her extensive art library, as well as reading as much as she can.

"I think we're a composite of everything we think and feel," she says. "From day one you're influenced by millions of things. You're not a single soul but a little bit of everybody you know."

"For me, that comes out in my work."

A pretty picture herself is Farmington artist Louise Rkts Gaddis, whose work is represented here.

Staff photos by
Harry Mauthe



"Spicer's Barn"



"Carrie"

Art abounds in Farmington

The awareness of art in nature as spring approaches usually coincides with an upsurge in local artistic endeavors, and this year is without exception to the rule.

In addition to Louise Gaddis' one-woman show at the Farmington Hills Library on Twelve Mile, Westlander Anne Xanthippe George is currently displaying her original oil paintings at the downtown Farmington Library through the end of March.

By displaying the work of local artists every month, the libraries provide an invaluable service, says Ms. Gaddis, since they receive no commission, and many paintings are rented or sold while on display.

Farmington Artists Club members are chosen each month for the displays. Residency in the Farmington area, however, is not required for club members.

In other circles, the Palette and Brush Club is gearing up for the spring show at Botsford Inn, a first for the group which draws members from all over the metropolitan area.

And elementary children have a chance to shine this March, as the Farmington Arts Commission has displayed art representative of 17 Farmington schools in various locations.

Both libraries, the Administration building of the board of education, and Botsford Hospital are all currently displaying student art.

One of the many interesting pieces is a giant Big Mac constructed of paper mache and complete with trimmings, a project of Eagle Elementary School students.

The oversize burger, reminiscent of Andy Warhol's work, is currently on display in the Farmington Hills Library lobby.

Sensuous sleepwear... Hudson's

SLEEPWEAR MEANT FOR MORE THAN JUST SLEEPING. SIMPLE. SEDUCTIVE. VASSARETTE'S FOR YOU™ COLLECTION.

It's your private nightlife collection. Done simply, sensuously in soft acrylic knit. With a subtle awareness of the body beautiful. Here, the slit-bodice gown, baring nothing, suggesting everything. In intense pink. Sizes S-M, \$25. In Hudson's Contemporary Sleepwear.

hudson's