

Artist thinks big; works small

By DIANE ABRAMS

When Steve Grant of Southfield decided to move on to bigger things, his artistic endeavors became smaller.

The contemplative artist uses pen and ink to create miniature drawings and images. With technical drafting pens and special equipment, Grant produces abstract pieces that probe the minds of his viewers.

"A lot of people try to attach specific meaning to my work, but most of it is done without any particular message in mind," said Grant. "I don't want to portray simple messages, what I strive to do is emit certain feelings and emotional responses."

The tiny colored drawings are frequently divided into separate squares containing individual illustrations or designs. As many as 16 squares, or as few as three, are filled with precisely shaped, mechanical elements.

"I use single square units to compose a larger picture," said Grant. "Each square is independent to a degree, but they must also be inter-dependent."

MANY OF THE images Grant has created are repeated throughout his work; tiny circles that appear as luminous bubbles can be found in several pieces. An unfolding bird, that can also be interpreted as a seashell, also appears in more than a few of the drawings.

"My work is always evolving. I'm continually expanding upon the individual elements," said Grant. "I think I cover the spectrum of my medium. I frequently go back and re-do things."

Grant also incorporates biological aspects of his work. An expressive eye appears in one square, isolated from diminutive abstract figures found in another unit.

The backgrounds of these unusual pieces are predominantly black. Darkness adds a new dimension to the work, giving the drawings depth.

The surrealist world Grant creates brings thoughts of Salvador Dali to mind. However, unlike the art of Dali, Grant's pieces contain a gentle quality that encompass an aura of animated fantasy.

"There's a best size to every aspect of this medium," said Grant. "Since I implement a lot of solid black areas, I think that if things became too much bigger they would lose their cuteness and become too powerful for what I want to convey."

However, Grant is aware that his work is subject to varying interpretations.

"The surrealist element is not as attractive to most people as other motifs," he said. "It (surrealism) makes them think and most people don't want to think."

If people are conditioned to expect certain aesthetic qualities from art, then it's the fault of critics who refuse to acknowledge new styles and innovations, according to Grant.

"If I were a critic I would encourage people to see things that I didn't like, as well as the things that I did like," he said. "We always have to realize that we may not understand everything. Drawing conclusions is a dangerous thing."

A drawing Grant did a few years ago proves that the thoughtful artist practices what he preaches.

"I took all the color combinations that I don't like and put them together in one piece," he said. "I surprised myself by really liking the results. It looks kind of like a tapestry with intricate woven designs."

Since he was a child, Grant had an appreciation of the diverse things that can be done with pen and ink. Although he didn't utilize sophisticated equipment until the '70s, he began creating his artistic world much sooner.

"As a kid, I used whatever equipment was laying around. All I really needed was a piece of paper and a pen to keep me happy," he said. "When my brother bought me my first colored pencil set, I started taking art more seriously."

WHERE GRANT ONCE thought three days was a long time to spend on one piece, he now spends at least 10 days or more on a drawing.

Reflecting on previous endeavors, he amuses himself while studying what he calls his primitive work. These drawings were done free-hand, a number of years ago. The microscopic details reveal an unusually steady hand. Since his first art show in 1972, Grant has implemented a variety of technical devices in his work.

"I try to take people into other realities when I draw," he said. "I've found that people don't always like to think of new realities, though. They have a hard enough time with this one."

Down to earth

Garlic's a loveable stinker

by ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME



Little projects can be fun for an indoor gardener. As an illustration I went to the Ramzi Cacao grocery, 407 W. Brown, and said, "I want a large, plump, garlic bulb with healthy cloves (sections)." When you buy them in a little package they dry out so fast, but not fresh ones.

A six-inch flower pot was prepared with good soil up to the collar of the pot. Six cloves were planted. A large garlic bulb has many, many cloves. They were spaced in the pot with the white tip of the clove exposed above the surface. What fun. When I need a wee nip of garlic taste in soup, etc., I just cut off a bit of the green as the taste goes a long way to upgrade a cooking dish.

The other day I took part of the remainder of the garlic bulb to a patient on crutches and had him plant some of these cloves. Garlic is a new taste to him. He will have a surprise if he gets too big a taste at one time. These cloves can be separated and still planted outdoors for a harvest of large bulbs for your spring use. I would cover them with leaves at this late date.

HERE IS a recent booklet which you should have in your garden library, "Gardening Without Pests," Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, 1000 Washington, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11225; 88 pages, \$1.95, plus 60 cents postage. It is written in sections by top drawer experts in this country as a service by the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.

A few of the topics discussed with current approaches are "Pest Control in Your Garden," "About Slugs," "Questions and Answers on Tree Decline," "Recognizing Air Pollution Damage," and "Disease and Insect Control on All Categories of Plants."

An inquiry came in from a couple who had purchased a home on 10 acres. They want to reforest the area, allowing privacy. This winter is a good time for them to take a large piece of paper and begin to draw structures on the property, to scale if possible. I suggested they stroll around this fall, maybe there is a view they wish to preserve for the future. The Japanese borrow views from their neighbors. With that amount of space they would probably like to have a small meadow — the in-

thing these days — to enjoy their space. To enjoy their space to the maximum they would like to plan a path with perhaps three benches made from logs.

The Brooklyn Botanic Gardens has a handbook called "100 Finest Trees and Shrubs," same price as mentioned before. It would be a wise purchase. Remember, new landowners, your forest will have lots of shade so select shrubs to give accents where appropriate for birds. An elegant entrance to a path could have two dogwoods (Cornus Florida) as well as two at the exit.

EVERY SPRING the Soil Conservation Service sells seedling trees and shrubs. Call 656-2232 for further information. Our Extension Horticultural Agent, Greg Patchan, 858-0880, will have many helpful ideas. Many of our established nurseries will sell seedlings. The landowners who called me might well enjoy setting up a nursery for seedlings. They will get a rapid start with feeding, watering, and mulching. Then move them at an appropriate time.

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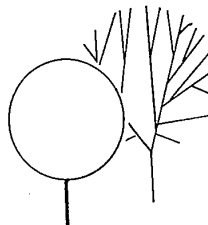
Here's Why: Trees enter a state of dormancy in the winter season; their vascular systems are frozen and inactive. Careful digging and moving at this time of year is much easier on the tree than when it has foliage and an active vascular system. In general, trees dug in the winter will produce more foliage the following summer.

Our tree farm will be open to the public Saturday, Nov. 10th and 17th. Hurry! After Nov. 17th, an appointment will be required.



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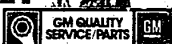
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