

Builder playing leading role in current arts renaissance

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Gil Silverman of Southfield, as a builder and civil engineer, understands plans and blueprints. When he became part of a new awareness of the arts, he also became a collector of instructions for art.

"Between the time an artist gets his idea or inspiration, and the moment when he actually begins to execute it, any sketch, plan or written documentation of his thinking is called an instruction," he explained. "I'm used to working with blue prints and plans and the instructions interest me."

Silverman is working with far more than instructions these days. As member of the board of directors of the Michigan Foundation for the Arts, he is also heading up their "Campaign for the 80s," a five-year plan for raising some \$500,000.

"Each year there is a drive for funds," he said. "Now we've set a goal of \$160,000 for each of five years. We're looking for five year pledges. Some people like to budget that way."

For Silverman and his board, their chore is to find people who understand that today's artists need the same kind of support, encouragement and inspiration as did renaissance artists.

Michigan pointed out that unlike the Michigan Council for the Arts, the foundation receives no governmental support.

"We're trying to evolve as a private patron of the arts not restricted by government," he said.

"We're careful, judicious but also expeditious and can go ahead and move on a project without consulting bureaucracy."

Ann Rosch, executive director of the foundation, said the group's first project was the Michigan Arttrain, a great success.

"We cooperate with the Michigan Council for the Arts and try not to compete," she said.

Silverman maintains that selling the arts and the campaign are not difficult.

"It's not a hard thing to sell because it's fantastically worthwhile," he said. "About 15 years ago, something happened in our society—a new appreciation for the arts. I find most business people quite sympathetic."

Ms. Rosch said major banks, utility companies, major corporations and many business entities have already contributed.

"Foundations are our biggest contributors and the big three auto companies have given generously each year," she said.

The most visible evidence of the foundation's generosity to those who would be creative, is their annual awards program which will take place this year on Wednesday, April 4 at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Five Michigan artists will receive grants of \$2500 each at a Champagne reception, which is by invitation only.

AS USUAL, the winning artists are from various disciplines.

Receiving grants will be: Carol Morrisseau, dancer; Diana Spodarek, video artist; Gerhardt Knodel, head of the fiber department at Cranbrook; Gyorgy Syndor, concert pianist; and Jack Hagoly, theater arts.

Patron awards will go to Mische Kottler, Mrs. Allen Sheldon, and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Gilmore. Mrs. Edsel Ford was the first to receive this prestigious citation.

"We make some grants that the Michigan Council for the Arts can't make," Silverman said. "They cannot, for instance, give a grant to an individual."

He said a great strength of the foundation is their broadly based board of directors.

"We sit, some 20 around the table, all very intelligent and dedicated, and decide how to award the money," he said. "There are very few unanimous decisions."

"We're all very different. The arts is the glue that ties us together."

Chairman of the board of the Foundation for the Arts is Philip H. Power of Ann Arbor. Oakland County members who serve include Sherwin Wine of Farmington Hills, Louis Redstone of Southfield, Nancy Boos, Ivabell Harlan, Ernest Jones, Lois P. Pincus, and Lois Stulberg of Bloomfield Hills, and Carl Luckenbach of Birmingham.

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Michael D. Hall, a Cranbrook sculptor, was awarded a grant from the Michigan Foundation for the Arts in 1978.



Potter John Glick is one of the state's foremost artists. In 1977, he was awarded a grant from the Michigan Foundation for the Arts. Glick, who lives and works in Farmington, is well known in art circles much more wide. He is the head of Plum Tree Pottery. One of the first Michigan artists to be able to support himself by means of his art, he achieved his dream of having his own studio workshop some 15 years ago. He studied with William Pitney at Wayne State University and later with Majia Grotell at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Today he shows extensively all over the country. Glick's ceramic pieces are meant to be enjoyed both aesthetically and in practical use.

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