

Artist's advice to realists: Go west, young painters

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You could say that Bloomfield Hills artist Joe Maniscalco and the West discovered each other at about the same time.

Maniscalco, primarily a portrait painter and ardent arts advocate, went to Tubac, Ariz., last year for his one-man show at a gallery there. Then he took time to go to the rodeos, visit ranches, talk with the people and in the process almost fell down in Grand Canyon and got stuck in the desert.

During his show he picked up several commissions and a good feeling about the way his work was received. He's been back several times since, always with camera and sketchbook in hand.

"When I was in high school I was always doing cowboys and Indians, but who cared about them then? Now, with this boom in cowboys and Indians, I'm in my glory."

And with this new boom, the quiet-spoken artist has had his share of Western style of thrills. Three times in one afternoon when he was taking pictures in the rodeo ring, he had to leap the fence to get out of the way of the bulls — and twice they came close enough so Maniscalco could feel the backbone as he went up and over to safety.

BUT, THE pictures were good and he has used them for several watercolor studies on the walls of his Scarab Club studio.

Stressing that Western art buyers

like to know what they're looking at, Maniscalco said with a smile, "The realist artists should go West and the abstract painters, East."

He happens to like both kinds and has occasionally done both, but speaking about his portraits he said, "This is what I do best . . . you can't go jumping around too much or you won't establish yourself."

Maniscalco is about as firmly established in this area as one of the most respected portrait painters as a person could be. He has been commissioned to do business leaders, bank presidents, governors, corporate leaders, sports figures (Jack Nicklaus and Gordie Howe), leaders in the arts (Fred Cummings, director of the Detroit Institute of Art), women, children, family groups, even horses, which he happens to love doing.

A DISPLAY of his portraits, including one of the Western series, is in the Yamasaki Gallery at the Center for Creative Studies through April 14-15.

Possibly the most immediately noticeable thing in the show is the varieties of ways in which Maniscalco approaches his subjects. The portrait of Nicholas is a clean, well-defined foreground figure. The portrait of a friend in the costume of an actor is completely different. Here the artist has concentrated on face, hands and costume and left the outline of the figure to the viewer's imagination.

His children are treated gently — the artist manages to convey the beginning of life, the curiosity they feel and their attachment to the security of small, loved things.

His executives are often strong, message conveyed in the slashing brush strokes, the bold, but beautifully controlled play of light and shadow and the strong line of design.

LIKE THOMAS Eakins, he often uses something to give a clue about the person, vocation or avocation. There

are several objet d'art in the Cummings portrait. He holds a catalog, possibly one for one of the museum shows.

Maniscalco makes it clear that he calls the shots — he won't make his subjects into movie stars or include strengths he doesn't see. Often he will do three or four portraits of a subject, and let his clients make the choice. The others he keeps for himself because he likes them.

When he isn't painting or traveling, Maniscalco may be giving lectures or judging shows or participating in theater or musical performances.

He has lots of advice for young people thinking of careers in the arts.

Some of it, like the song, "Never,

Never Be An Artist" from the musical "Can Can" he may sing to make his point.

THE END of this light, bit of musical fluff leaves the impression that artists do have fun.

To young women embarking on an art career, he suggests education and training in art first, then marriage and family.

"I tell them don't fall in love. Get the training first, establish themselves then get married, have kids. After that they can go back and start working again and live happily ever after."

He also is stern when speaking of the proper training for an artist and puts strong emphasis on the basics — drawing and design. If that is neglected and

the person starts right in on abstracts, he can't go back to realism because he's had no training for it.

Although Maniscalco is quick to say about his choice of careers, "It's really a tough way to make a living," he is encouraged by what he sees happening, particularly in the West.

A price of \$40,000 for a painting by his friend and former fellow student at the Art Student's League, John Clymer, isn't unusual. In fact, Western art buyers vie for the opportunity to buy at these prices.

On April 12, Maniscalco will be giving the second of two all day seminars on portrait painting at the Center for Creative Studies. The seminar is open to all artists.



Children are among the artist's favorite subjects.



Joe Maniscalco has painted portraits of major figures in government, the arts and business.

Holocaust book author will speak at luncheon

A luncheon and lecture by David Bergman, author of a recent book on the Holocaust, will be at 12:30 p.m. April 10 in the library of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, 6500 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. Simultaneously, an exhibit of Holocaust sculptures by Bergman and Henry Friedman will be on display in the Hamburger Lobby of the JCC through April 11.

Friedman, born in Germany, and a survivor of Mauthausen and other concentration camps, has been machining and welding metal scrap into a unique art form for a number of years. The theme of his work deals with Judaism and some of his sculptures are memorials to the Holocaust.

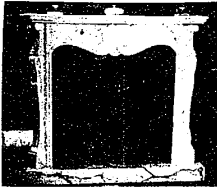
Bergman's sculptures depict the bitter and painful memories of his 14 months in captivity during the Holocaust, and his works took four years to complete.

Both artists' works in copper and bronze will be exhibited. Bergman's book-cassette, "Never Forget And Never Forgive," has recently been accepted by major school systems in Michigan for use in classroom study, and has also been shown in many educational facilities throughout the United States along with a one-hour TV special on ABC.

The price of the luncheon is \$3.50, and reservations are required. For luncheon reservations call the JCC library, 661-1000, ext. 163.

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