

Fibers, billboards fill Cranbrook museum

By JOANNE K. PSENKA

Two exhibits opened at Cranbrook Art Academy Museum last week: Cranbrook Fiber, a 50-year retrospective of weaving and fabric sculpture; and Roadshow, the billboard work of seven Michigan artists created for sites in Detroit.

Both shows will run to Jan. 11. Loja Saarinen's rug and tapestry creations, dating from 1930, apply show work conceived to compliment architecture.

Ms. Saarinen was the wife of Eliel Saarinen, first academy president and architect of most of the buildings in the Cranbrook complex.

"Loja Saarinen designed these works on the grounds, and she integrated them with the architecture, feeling there must be a harmony of art and architecture," said Roy Slade, present academy president. "Her art supplements the decor."

A peacock motif tapestry by Ms. Saarinen, dated 1929, sustains vertical geometries. Woven of wool and linen, it has the unusual muted blues associated with male and female peacocks.

In 1932, a somewhat larger tapestry was hung in the residence of the artist. In fine dark outline, it shows an Oriental inflected exotic bird. Ochre and beige form the background for the outline detail.

AN IMPOSING WORK done in 1942 uses simplified asymmetrical design in an ordered abstract pattern. Ochre was woven with earth tones of warm brown here in a non-representational integration.

In a circa 1932 piece, pale yellow rose silhouettes adorn the darkly edged symmetrical box pattern of a wool and linen rug. The flower motif is atypical of the weaver.

A wool and linen piece copies the design in altered colors from one intended

ed for Kingswood School. It is about 11-by-23 feet in earth tones with primary color contrasts such as ochre, magenta and cyanic blue.

Contemporary fabric design was represented in the exhibit by Joan Livingston's "Lamia Lemures II, III, IV, V." Magic inspired these fantastic totem areas supported by frameworks of wood and steel.

The shapes are free-form Skinnerian enclosures, forming fascinating environments, while the eye traces accent designs on the surface. For the most part, Ms. Livingston used bright color to accent the monochromatic areas of the surface of this "village."

Symphony presents program for children

By JOANNE K. PSENKA

A special children's concert per-

formed by the Rochester Symphony earlier this month was designed to focus the attention of youth on the wonders of the symphony orchestra. Sheila Stephenson and Caroline J. Anderson played twin grand pianos. Conductor James Hohnmeyer led the orchestra in a stirring rendition of "The American Salute" by Martin Gould, along with variations on "When Johnnie Comes Marchin' Home."

"The American Salute" brought to

Detroit financed this effort," Slade said.

THE FINISHED billboards were put at suitable locations around Detroit. "These were not ads," Slade said. "There was no lettering; these were purely works of art."

"The billboards are basically like murals," he said. "The artists sought to enrich the urban environment and enliven our cities with color, shape and form."

Two of the billboards, now installed in the gallery, depict Kurt Novak's "Now Generation" and Victoria Stoll's "Natural Reminiscence."

The billboards are not totally abstract. Familiar forms emerge and float to amuse the viewer.

Five familiar objects in silhouette on a bristle background were well-chosen by Rosa Pailin on a third billboard. Jim Nawara's naturalistic offering for the urban environment is uplifting. Mel Rosa's Riviera-like mural depicts a city scene realistically. He proved there is beauty in his composition of city sights.

Faces seem to peep through the abstract billboard of Allie McGhee. This cubist-inspired abstraction was composed of blue and ochre on a beige background.

Barry Kahn asked a question on his billboard: "What is art?" The question was framed against convoluted right angles in almost a Celtic or Aztec mosaic.

review

the fore outstanding percussion work — as well as brass assertiveness. The illusion of symphonic band was satisfying.

The symphony showed technical mastery and disciplined control of the

band score and the effect was delightful.

ANOTHER BRILLIANT GROUP effort was the 12 expert works appropriately titled "The Amazing Symphony." This work explored the sounds characteristic of various symphonic composers.

A brief section from Tchaikovsky was a moving declaration of the aural strength of symphonic music and introduced the young to his Symphony No. 4. The orchestral effects of Wagner's "Die Meistersinger" was demonstrated by the young, as orchestra members donned crowns.

BIZET'S "CARMEN" brought romance and mystery in a Spanish mood to the stage. The symphony performed this opening march with striking precision. The rhythms were strictly observed, and many instruments merged as one.

Beethoven's masterwork, his Symphony No. 3, brought the melancholy of a sad and sombre mood. The conductor set a sedate pace for this mournful, dreamy music.

In a different mood, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 3 is a Slavic statement of strong power in chord patterns making dissonance pleasant. Here, martial cadences were observed by the conductor and precision was blended with intriguing nuance.

Opera auditions set

The preliminary auditions, sponsored by the scholarship committee of the Detroit Grand Opera Association will be held beginning at 10 a.m. Jan. 24 in Varner Hall, Oakland University, Rochester. Semi-finals will begin at 10 a.m. Jan. 25 in Varner Hall. The finals will be held at 2 p.m. Jan. 26 at Masonic Temple, Detroit.

Scholarships to be awarded are the Samuel J. Lang scholarship award,

\$3,000; the Elizabeth Hodges Donovan memorial award, \$1,000; and the Henry E. Wenger memorial award, \$1,000.

Write for application forms to Mrs. Sam B. Williams, scholarship chairman, C/O Lang, Donovan, Wenger Award, Detroit Grand Opera Association, 509 Temple, Masonic Temple, Detroit, 48201.

Christmas fair planned

University of Michigan Artist and Craftsman Guild will hold its annual Christmas Art Fair, Dec. 6-7. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 6 and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 7.

Original pieces, functional and decorative, will be in the fair and exhibitors will include more than 150 national and Michigan artists and craftsman who are members of the guild.

The events also include live entertainment and demonstrations. A chil-

dren's area will focus on art activities for youngsters. Hot food and other refreshments will be available. The fair will be held at University of Michigan Coliseum, corner of Hill and Fifth Street, Ann Arbor.

To benefit art foundation

The Farmington Art Foundation is supported by members of Farmington Artists Club who donate original works to be raffled off during the group's exhibit. The donated paintings for the weekend show come from Anne X. George (at left), Audrey Dimar-

co and Gwen Tomkow. The show runs from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday in Mercy Center's formal lounge. Admission is free and refreshments are complimentary. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

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