

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, aptly show work conceived to complement 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."

Gallery sponsors small painting competition

Mullaly Galleries of Birmingham are sponsoring the fifth National Small Painting Exhibition to be held Feb. 1-28.

This biennial event is a competitive show of paintings submitted by artists throughout the United States. All entries will be juried for both acceptance and awards.

Size of paintings is limited to 10-by-10 inches maximum with a maximum frame outside dimension of 14-by-14 inches.

The juror will be Joseph DeLuca, professor of art at Western Michigan University.

The competition was started in 1973 by Mullaly Galleries (then Gallery

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 tufted 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

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 Livingstone'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 Skinerian enclosures, forming fascinating environments, while the eye traces accent designs on the surface. For the most part, Ms. Livingstone used bright color

to accent the monochromatic areas of the surface of this "village."

"ACT 8" is a contemporary silk painted and resist-dyed work by Gerhardt Knodel. The work is shown although Knodel is on a two-year sabbatical to complete commissioned work.

"Act 8" is a festive parachute-like pleated canopy in a muted fauvist color scheme. Streamers are fixed above the canopy and run through it like hanging pendulums.

Academy president Slade explained

how the accompanying Roadshow billboard exhibit was arranged.

"Seven local Michigan artists were asked to submit designs, which were approved and the billboards were fabricated by Eller Co. from the artists' conceptions. First Federal Savings of 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

mural," 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 Sloss'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 Patin on a third billboard. Jim Nawara's naturalistic offering for the urban environment is uplifting.


Stress is series topic

Sherwin T. Wine, director of the Center for New Thinking, will continue his series of lecture discussions on "Stress — How to Handle it Well," at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 14 and 2:15 in the auditorium of Somerset Mall in Troy.

The charge is \$4 for center members and \$5 for non-members for the two hour programs.

On Dec. 14, the emphasis will be on stress in work and competition. On Dec. 21, emphasis will be on stress related to change and aging.

For information on the Center for New Thinking, write to the center, P.O. Box 309, Birmingham 48012.



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