



Russel Kilix's large acrylic painting of Greenville has a soft color and the gentle Impressionistic style that was an important element in his recent one-man exhibit at GMB Gallery of Birmingham.

Versatile

Artist makes the most of many talents

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

The name KLEX is squared off, printed in fine, clear, slightly elongated lines. You can find it in the lower right hand corner of the full color illustrations in "Corvette News."

It's there in many a landscape painting of birch trees. And it can be found in the lower right hand corner of a number of paintings at GMB Gallery, 344 Hamilton Birmingham — only these aren't birch trees.

Trouble is, artist Russel Kilix does too many things too well.

He's a professional artist with General Motors, based at the Tech Center.

As the staff artist he does everything from cartoons and large paintings to the attractive illustrations for that slick mag for Corvette owners.

But, then after a hard day over the drawing board, Kilix goes home, has supper with his family and paints from about 9 p.m. until midnight.

He said, "I did birch trees for years and I did a lot of watercolor. All I ever painted was birch trees — the only reason I did was people liked them."

Translated, that means they sold well.

But, now, Kilix is venturing into new areas of fine arts with his after-hours endeavors.



Russel Kilix found out a few years ago that there are artists in many generations of his family.

Consequently, he said, "It's hard to get loose . . . I think color's exciting and painting is exciting too. The most scary thing is seeing a blank canvas. Once you start putting the color on you lose your fear."

KILIX, who is familiar with practically all art techniques, recently did a limited edition silk screen print. From start to finish, it was all his.

His subject was the figure of an American Indian, a theme he's researched extensively at the Detroit Public Library.

"My Indians are all done in brilliant colors — not in native color. I had done a whole series on Indians on paper," he said adding that he has also done a series on Indians on canvas.

"This is the first time I've done silk screening and it was really exciting — more exciting than doing the paintings. I made it in 12 colors and painted each screen. I made a color chart and marked each screen and then I pulled them."

Now, he is working with a palette knife and enjoying the textural effects he is getting. "There is tremendous excitement in (even) a little square of solid color."

While Kilix didn't encourage any of his children to pursue careers in art, he knows that he himself had no choice.

"I don't think I'll ever quit. I'll probably always be painting. It's ex-



Titled "Green River," this abandoned farmhouse has the age and look which particularly appeal to the artist. The side in the foreground has an almost luminous quality to it.

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— Russel Kilix

figures, others with adults and children. These are in stronger colors than the Michigan landscapes and closer in style to the illustrations, but still within the realm of fine art.

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cutting, I don't think I could do anything else."

And a strange thing happened to him several years ago which could explain his lifetime involvement with art.

A letter from a Richard Kilix of New Paltz, N.Y., a well-known painter who had been researching this family, revealed that there are artists over several generations of the family. Since the family is rather small and, Russel Kilix said, all are probably related, it is interesting to speculate about the strength of inherited traits.

Big business supports arts

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Among the things which Merrill Lynch is bullish about is the arts.

David Komansky, regional director for the widely diversified firm that is best known as a brokerage house, said the company's heavy investment in the arts, in terms of both people and dollars, is good business.

"It's more than that as be quickly explained, "I feel very strongly that we have to put things back in the community in which we live."

The recent announcement that Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith will sponsor the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's "Weekender Pops" for the 1983-84 season is one in a long list of community projects which they have subsidized.

In his second floor Southfield office, Komansky relaxed in an easy chair and talked readily and enthusiastically about his firm's involvement in everything from Detroit Metropolitan Opera Week, Channel 56, to the mayor's relief fund, multiple sclerosis and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

As he described various projects as examples, it was obvious there are more than pure arts which he and other regional directors deem worthy of support.

KOMANSKY aims for more than pure dollar involvement.

"What we're trying to do is get our people involved along with money. It's not enough to throw money. We prefer to perform rather than talk."

He paused and then said positively, "One thing I won't do, I won't say to somebody, I'll give you X number of dollars."

He used the phrase "quid pro quo" as he spoke of the benefits the firm derives from its community participation and questioned why some fund raisers still shy away from working with corporate donors on that kind of a basis — seeing that the corporation gets something in return for its donation.

"Not a bull charging across the stage . . . but, we're in a business. We have to impact a sector of the market."

In the case of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Weekender Pops is now called the Merrill Lynch Weekender Pops — and that means higher visibility.

WHEN MERRILL Lynch staffers take leadership roles in local activities, they become a part of community life. They know the people.

They have a stronger identity. And while all that may help business, it also benefits the individual. Those in the company working together on projects develop a common-goal camaraderie among themselves and with the community at large.

"I don't want to be the front man for all these things," said Komansky. "My job is to involve the firm, and we try to assign all these different functions to our different managers and they become involved."



MINDY SAUNDERS/STAFF photographer

David H. Komansky, regional director for Merrill Lynch in Detroit, encourages his employees to participate in community projects.

But, many more than managers participate. A large group took over the bank of phones during the recent Channel 56 auction. Others worked in other capacities during the PBS station's benefit.

Komansky said Merrill Lynch employees raised \$15,000 for the mayor's relief fund. "We said whatever they raised, we would match."

"There are a lot of reasons we do it. A lot of us benefit — and it makes our employees feel good. We just get a lot of benefit from doing all these things."

IT MAKES Komansky feel good when he remembers that Merrill Lynch was responsible for many senior citizens being able to attend the Metropolitan Opera on its recent visit here, a lot for the first time in their lives.

He hopes also to provide tickets for inner city school children to attend symphony orchestra concerts. And it is this kind of "putting back into the community" that he particularly enjoys.

Merrill Lynch's participation in the arts and community projects stretches to many of its regional offices. Among them are Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Chicago.

Komansky said the idea to do this began three or four years ago with Herb Rubin, national sales director, north, Merrill Lynch.

"Firm wide, he had more to do with setting direction and I more or less used that as a guideline," said Komansky reiterating his belief in giving to as well as taking from a community. And for other businesses who say they've nothing budgeted for such purposes, Komansky has a solution. "Frankly, I divert money from the advertising and sales promotion budget."

He agrees that what he creates is word-of-mouth advertising — and as everybody knows, that's the best kind.

Concert lacked that extra spice

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

The guest conductor at the Meadow Brook Festival last week was Italian-born maestro Gaetano Delogu.

Currently music director of the Denver Symphony Orchestra, Delogu has appeared with many major orchestras in this country and abroad. It is reported that his 1978 New Zealand tour left critics there "gasping for superlatives."

Not being the gasping type, I am contemplating the undertaking of a massive shipment of superlatives to my gasping colleagues in New Zealand.

This isn't to diminish the talent and potential of Delogu. His program, which consisted mostly of works by Ravel, demonstrated a level of competence that was pleasing in some respects. But it didn't have those extra ingredients that are necessary to make it outstanding.

The Ravel works on the program consisted of "Alborada del Gracioso," the Daphnis and Chloe Suite No. 2 and the popular "Bolero." The only non-Ravel work on the program was the Piano Concerto No. 3 in A Major by Liszt, with guest pianist Russell Sherman. Why not a piano concerto by Ravel as well? That's because his G Major Piano Concerto is scheduled to be performed this week.

THE RAVEL compositions were enhanced by the abilities of the various soloists, who proved to be very capable. But the brightness and color were somewhat inhibited by the rigid, and occasionally hurried, tempo, especially in the "Alborada" and the suite.

In the first of these, credit should be given to principal bassoonist Robert Williams for his impressive solo. He is known to local audiences also as a member of the Bassoon Quartet, exhibiting a mixture of music and humor. This occasion portrayed his more serious aspect.

Pianist Sherman, who was born in New York and has appeared and recorded with major orchestras, proved to be an extremely talented pianist. His rendition of the Liszt concerto, which is regarded by many as a showpiece, showed artistic insight and delicacy.

Even the most technically demanding segments were presented with grace and apparent ease. There was none of the shaking of hands into the air or leaping off the bench.

His refined playing occasionally was overshadowed by the orchestra. But the major drawback was the composition itself, which, with its fragmented themes, isn't one of my favorites. The first concerto, in E flat major, is much more rich in musical content.