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Cranbrook Academy of Art

Artist/teacher remembers the early giants

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Svea Kline — even the name touches a heartstring of many a student and collector.

The sculptor/teacher was in the Detroit metropolitan area last week to see friends and reminisce a bit about wonderful years at Cranbrook, her career as an artist and a teacher.

She now lives, works and teaches in a small city, Allingsås, near Göteborg, Sweden. And because she has retained her American citizenship, she likes to return, to renew acquaintances and visit old friends and favorite places.

One of the latter, of course, is Cranbrook where she first came as a student in 1940 and stayed on when "Milles and Saarinen saw one of my pieces and decided I should have a scholarship."

Later, she became assistant to Carl Milles and made her home with Olga and Carl Milles.

"He gave me a small corner of his studio," she said, recalling that she had a movie camera and, although Milles didn't want pictures taken of him working, she asked the maid to run the vacuum cleaner close by and make a lot of noise while she shot some footage.

WHEN MILLES and friends saw the film, Milles was urged to let her continue. Her one-of-a-kind documentary of Carl Milles at work at Cranbrook now belongs to a Swedish TV company and is still shown in Sweden.

She remembered her initial reaction to Cranbrook. "I thought it was just heaven on earth — so well-kept, so many interesting people from all over the world," she said. "There was a marvelous spirit."

"Milles and Saarinen didn't want to (just) teach. They wanted the pupils to express themselves. And they never forced their ideas on them."

And she smiled with pleasure remembering the great artists with whom she was associated — Saarinen, Milles, Malja Grotel and Bertola.

"And I must tell you one story that I haven't told before," she said. "Do you remember Hedges (a restaurant on Woodward in Royal Oak that had a wigwam motif and an oversize Indian in front)?"

"I was in the car with Saarinen and Milles when we were taking Frank Lloyd Wright to the train. We drove by Hedges and Saarinen said to Frank Lloyd Wright, 'Look, that was Carl's first commission.' And Carl said, 'Well, Frank, I had to do something to go with Elie's (Saarinen) building. And Frank Lloyd Wright said, 'I congratulate you both — you are splendid artists.'"

In a more serious vein, but still with blue eyes sparkling and a warm, ready smile, Kline said, "I'm happy that Roy Slade is bringing back — is reviving Cranbrook."

SHE WAS referring to the increased attention and importance being placed on the works of the founders, designers and faculty who shaped Cranbrook Academy of Art in the early years.

"Cranbrook is the most original art school in the world — the only place where you get crafts also. The weaving department is so terrific, silver, too — and ceramics. You don't get that combination, all working together. The architect could do ceramics — you don't get that same concept anywhere else. That's why arts and crafts are so important."

Kline taught at what was then the Bloomfield Art Association (now the BBAA), was one of the founders of the Haystack School for the Arts in Maine, committed to teach at the Flint Institute of Arts for many years and did a number of commission pieces.

In Michigan her works are in the Berkley Public Library, Flint Public

Library, Genesee Merchants Bank and Trust, Detroit Broach Co., Koebel Diamond Tool Co., Michigan Credit Union League and the First Baptist Church of Royal Oak.

For the church, she did the windows in an unusual process called gemmaux, which loosely translated means fused glass. This produces sculptural qualities that Kline combined with her substantial painterly skills.

"I loved to experiment," she said, "and each experiment leads to another. I always learned from my pupils. What I'm so happy about is that I've had so many letters from my former students."

WHILE KLINE said she would like to be here for the opening of "Design in America: the Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950" at Detroit Institute of Arts on Dec. 12, it conflicts with the Nobel Prize ceremonies in Sweden.

"All of the winners are from the United States except the one who won the literary prize who is from Great Britain. It's going to be a great thing — one of the finest things they have in Sweden. They treat them (the winners) royally."

She said she lives in a modern flat in a contemporary building overlooking a river.

"The birch trees grow over the ceiling."

She said she does a lot of volunteer work, especially teaching, and continues to make three-dimensional wall constructions of metal and wood.

"I comb the factories," she said. In her works here Kline frequently used scrap metal from factories to make sculptural assemblages.

She continues to work, to enjoy life and to share her aesthetic vision with many aspiring artists. She carries fond memories of Cranbrook and of the community she called home for almost three decades.



Svea Kline lived in one of the small townhouses on Brownell in downtown Birmingham for many years while she

worked as an artist and teacher throughout Michigan.

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— Svea Kline

EMU prof writes

suspense thriller for youngsters

By Pearl Ahnen
special writer

"A Hanging at Tyburn," Gilbert B. Cross, Atheneum, \$11.95

"A Hanging at Tyburn" is an engrossing adventure for children of all ages.

It's about the suspense-filled adventures of 14-year-old orphan George Found and his strange recurring nightmare of being sentenced by a blind judge and facing the hangman.

But it's more, much more. It's a remarkable book plaiting history, adventure and suspense into a memorable braid. The author, Gilbert B. Cross, a professor at Eastern Michigan University, takes the seemingly impossible task of mixing history and fiction and succeeds brilliantly.

Down through the ages novelists have said that writing children's fiction is the most challenging and the most difficult of all fiction writing, but Cross pulls it off.

Filled with heroes and villains, the novel captures the spirit and flavor of England in the middle 1700s. George, the hero, a member of Mr. Winston's troupe, is a traveling actor at a time when thespians fared badly.

WHEN THE troupe falls in performing its spectacular stunt, the audience

turns into an angry mob and the actors flee, leaving George alone to seek his fortune. George wanders through the countryside, falls into the Delph at Worsley and is rescued by the Duke of Bridgewater, who boards him at Mrs. Pendleton's while he recuperates.

Then the eccentric duke gives him a job in his coal mines. Later George is made accounts keeper. The novel is threaded with George's bad dreams, many of which are called outlandish at first, but prove feasible.

George comes to life in this delightful novel that records his adventures and misadventures.

The background of the book is the building of a major canal to transport the coal for the duke's mines at less expense. This is where history and fact are melded into the story.

To the duke, the canal was a means to an end, transporting his coal at a reasonable price. It made history because it was the first of the British cross-country canals. And the Bridgewater Canal is as heavily traveled today as it was 200 years ago.

There are many pitfalls in building the canal and the duke has a bitter opponent in Lord Strange, who, seeking revenge, has George framed for petty theft while he's in London.

In those days there was a hanging crime. There are many moving scenes of George in prison at Newgate Gaol. Soon he realizes that his never-ending nightmare might become a reality.

THE AUTHOR, who was born about a quarter of a mile from the underground canal, spent about 10 years researching the book, exploring the customs and life of 18th-century England and tracing the course of the Duke's Canal.

As a child, he often stared at the orange water slowly flowing from the underground canal into the Bridgewater Canal.

Cross says he owes a debt of gratitude to Frank Mullineux, who is the acknowledged expert on the history of Worsley and the Bridgewater family.



José Regueiro of Rochester stands with a grouping of his hand-made furniture that is on display at Highborn Gallery of Birmingham. The tambour of the bar is made of individual pieces glued to canvas and rolls up with the touch of a fingertip. The top of the bar is lacquered with 15 coats, so it is alcohol and water proof. Below is an innovatively designed stool that can serve in many functions, alone or with others of similar design.

Staff photos by Mindy Saunders

Artisan turns talents to furniture design

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

A contemporary collection of furniture from Ligne Roset of France made its American debut at Germans Gallery of Southfield last week.

Its significance to the market goes beyond style and design. Construction and functional qualities are equally impressive.

These beautifully sculpted sofas, lounge chairs, modulars and hassocks are made with 25 or more densities of foam which will hold its original shape without movement for the life of the piece.

Pierre-Yves Testier, American representative said the foam is given rigorous, scientific treatment before it is used to prevent any shrinkage or change of form.

ALL OF the well-tailored covers are slipped so they can be easily removed for cleaning. Should any of the individual covers be damaged, the included dye lot sample may be sent to the company along with order, so the match is perfect.

While all of these pieces are large and luxurious, they are light — easy to move and lift.

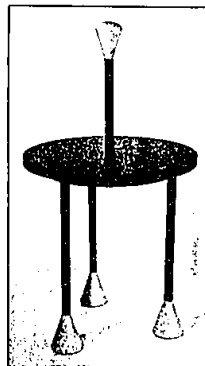
Several models convert to single or double beds. Dacron quilting softens the surface and loose feather pillows may be adjusted for comfort.

At any time, different covers can be ordered, or for some, like the "Flou-Flou," a sofa design which features a comfort-like seat cover (easily detached), the owner could have a winter cover and a summer cover.

Testier suggested cover and base could be of contrasting materials in color, texture and fiber. There are some 200 fabric choices, including a variety of glove-soft leathers.

LIGNE ROSET, more than 100 years old, began making contemporary furniture in the early 1960s. In the ensuing years it has become the largest European manufacturer of contemporary furniture.

From a staff of 30 in the 1960s, the contemporary division now has 900 employees in seven plants various parts of Europe. The newest subsidiary company was established in the United States earlier this year.



Gilbert Cross.

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