

Creative Living

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(F1E)

Art show goer shares secret

By Ellen E. Mason
special writer

"Van Gogh in Saint-Remy and Auvers" has attracted about 5,000 people a day since the exhibit opened to rave reviews at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

To date, more than 350,000 people have crowded into the Metropolitan to view the paintings of van Gogh's turbulent and productive last 15 months — a period which encompasses his voluntary commitment to the asylum at Saint-Remy in May 1889 to his suicide in the wheat fields of Auvers, France, in July 1890.

Museum officials expect crowds to swell each day as the show approaches its closing date of March 22.

What the museum hasn't advertised, and what it doesn't tell you unless you persist, is that every Monday, 600 or so people view the show "privately" at leisure and without massive numbers of other people jostling for prime positions in front of favored canvases.

You don't have to be a VIP or know anyone in particular to get in. Simply reserve a spot for any Monday (except Feb. 16). The museum is usually closed on Mondays. But during the van Gogh exhibition, it is open 1-3 p.m. for anyone with a reservation. Tickets are \$15, instead of the usual \$4.50 admittance fee for Tuesday through Sunday.

RESERVATIONS may be made by telephone (212-570-3711) or by writing to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Admissions Department, 5th Ave. at 82nd St., New York, NY 10028. To date, the museum hasn't had a sold-out Monday, because it has refused to publicize the Monday opening.

The exhibition, a magnificently mounted compilation of Van Gogh's last major works, include some of his most famous canvases, notably, "The Starry Night" and "Crows over the Wheat Field."

Perhaps, even more interesting though are the van Gogh works which are less well known, but also included in the show, "Blossoming Almond Tree" and "Rain," for example.

The show includes works gathered from museums and private collections from around the world. "View of the Church of Saint-Paul-de-Mau-

sole," for example, is owned by actress Elizabeth Taylor.

One looks at the work, wondering why this unsigned canvas, devoid of people and rather barren in subject matter, appeals to a very public actress.

One can't help stopping and puzzling at each canvas for clues as to what went through the artist's mind as he painted first the asylum, then the asylum garden, then the grounds beyond the asylum's walls, then street scenes and then, over and over again, gardens and fields. The exhibit moves us powerfully, visually and mentally through van Gogh's last days.

An absolute must for anyone attending the show, is to rent the cassette tape tour of the exhibit for \$3. ON THE TAPE, Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan, authoritatively comments on most of the works and reads from van Gogh's letters about several of the works.

The tape can also be purchased at the end of the exhibition for use with the show's catalogue.

If you go, be sure to check your coat before buying your ticket or before ascending the great staircase. No coat check is available otherwise.

Besides avoiding the crowds, another reason to see the exhibit on Monday is a chance to see the museum or "housekeeping day." Walls are painted, fresh flowers are arranged, potted greenery is being watered and moved about.

YOU CAN PASS through many of the museum's galleries alone and unhurried. It's best to know where you're going or where you want to go, instead of asking a guard, because if you ask, chances are you'll be told the museum is closed and you cannot enter. But if you simply walk around without asking directions, you'll probably be able to go wherever you like.

In connection with the exhibition, the museum is offering a bookstore full of items. Some of the most useful, even for those who don't attend the show, are video cassettes (\$34.95), audio cassettes (\$7.95) and the show's catalogue (\$16.50 or \$24.95 all plus postage). All are available by writing the M Museum Bookstore, 5th Ave. at 82nd St., New York 10028.

Happy 4685

Year of the rabbit starts today



Jerry Zolynsky/staff photographer

One of a pair of 19th century lanterns to be loaned for the Chinese New Year celebration in Southfield on Feb. 14 shows the beautiful "hundred children" theme designs which are painted on them. The pictures have a lot of meaning that goes

beyond decoration. The lanterns, made of rhino horn, are being loaned by Virginia Hyman of Bloomfield Hills, former art dealer and author of books on Chinese rugs and art.

While there are many holidays on the Chinese calendar, none are more important than the 15-day New Year's festival.

It begins on the first day of the new moon after the sun enters Aquarius. That means that 4685, the year of the rabbit, begins today and the celebration continues through Sunday, Feb. 14.

One of the most colorful celebrations in this time of goodwill, gift-giving and visiting family and friends is the Lantern Festival or the Feast of the First Full Moon.

The Chinese American Educational and Cultural Center of Michigan is sponsoring a Chinese New Year celebration 2-5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Southfield Civic Center.

Two large, 19th century, rhino horn lanterns, loaned by Virginia Hyman of Bloomfield Hills, will add an aura of color, mystery and excitement to the celebration.

Hyman, collector of orientalia and former nationally known dealer, said her two lanterns probably belonged to a wealthy family because rhino horn is highly valued for its purported, medicinal properties.

Hyman said, "The process (of making the horn into semitransparent shade) came from India and Sumatra. The lanterns were a demagogue. And that came from what was painted on them as well as the light light from the candle inside."

She said that in addition to warding off evil spirits, the pictures on the lanterns have many meanings. Each of the two she is loaning for the Lantern Festival and celebration are painted with the "hundred children" design.

"Each of the one hundred children is doing something that has a meaning," Hyman said. For instance, a child with a very old man's face is a form of protest.

The children, dressed in brightly colored clothing, are carrying flags, flying kites and supporting a big green and yellow paper lion on long poles. One very mysterious ceremony depicted is the transformation on a table of a child into a dragon after taking a pill.

The many other lanterns in the Southfield festival will be constructed by donors or sponsored by people making a donation of \$10, \$25, \$50 or more.

Included in the festivities will be a Lion's Dance, classical and folk dances, demonstrations and exhibits of calligraphy, painting and folk art, films, singalongs and refreshments. Tickets are \$2, 50 children, \$4 adults. For information, contact Southfield Parks and Recreation, 394-9608. The Civic Center is at 26500 Evergreen, Southfield.

Highlighting Israel's rich, cultural mix

By Shirloo Ross Iden
staff writer

Cryll Miles, water-colorist and designer, and Benny Schwartz, architect and artist, generations apart if years count, are together in an upcoming cultural project planned to reach thousands of metro area people.

Detroit, Miles, and Southfield, Schwartz, are putting the finishing touches on a comprehensive exhibit on Israel for the International Institute. The show will open Sunday, Feb. 1, and continue for six months.

"The message we're trying to get across is that diverse cultures have migrated from many continents to places such as Israel," she said. "Israel is a crossroads of three continents, a passageway."

"We're trying to link Christian, Jewish, Islamic culture so that people can gain some understanding and we won't blow each other up."

A NATIVE of Boston, Miles was brought to Detroit as a 5-year-old. With her husband, Arnold, she lives in a rambling Palmer Woods home with her art, her memorabilia, and her collections.

Half a century ago or more, as a noted water-colorist, Miles exhibited her work in a show that also featured two, 20th-century masters, Picasso and Chagall. At one crossroads in her career, she decided her work was worthless because it said nothing so she set out to create art with philosophy as well as technique.

Her steadfast love of art has never waned, as evidenced by the works that grace her home, as well as the books, and the archeological artifacts.

Another deep interest of the petite, loquacious woman, is the International Institute, which she has helped since 1978.

Schwartz, whose job it is to guide people who may want to move to Israel, came to Michigan more than two years ago with his family. Some-



Israel, a crossroads of three continents, is the focus of a comprehensive exhibit at the International Institute of Detroit.

time this summer, they will go home, but Schwartz said "not without leaving a piece of ourselves here."

FOR THE ISRAELI working on the Israel exhibit affords him the chance to help people understand his land, his people.

The audience for the show will be a mixed bag of youngsters, primarily non-Jewish children, who come to the Institute for an in-depth ethnic experience from schools in the metro area.

"The first group will be a kindergarten class," said Jan Jeffries, spokeswoman for the International Institute.

Elizabeth Stanhope, ethnic experience coordinator for the Institute,

pointed out that three of the world's major religions consider Israel holy.

"In order to emphasize this, the children will work with their own map of Israel and do group work with globes. This will tie into the six display cases used as reference for the program."

Stanhope said the cases include examples of ethnic crafts, art, and literature, a timeline of Israel's history and an ancient mosaic zodiac discovered at the Bet Alpha Kibbutz in Israel which was important in determining festivals and religious holidays.

"Children will find out the similarities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and that the places mentioned with their respective holy books actually exist," said Stanhope.



Cryll Miles, artist, and Benny Schwartz, architect, discuss the ancient mosaic zodiac found at Bet Alpha Kibbutz in Israel.

"What I would like children to get out of this, is an awareness of countries and customs outside of the U.S. They could then approach a foreign people and places with an open mind and curiosity rather than distaste. I would like children to become aware of Israel and its multi-ethnic population as real rather than a news item."

Israeli Ethnic Sunday will be the

opener for the six-month program. A two-hour program on Israeli culture will include a short film, performances by Israeli folk dancers, and songs by Judy Goldstein, folk singer.

A traveling exhibit of posters "Children of the World Paint Jerusalem" will be on display. Michael Kerem from the Israeli consulate in Chicago, will speak.

The program begins at 3 p.m. A \$3

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

admission fee includes Israeli refreshments. For information or tickets, call 871-8600.