

Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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Numerous entries for Our Town show

The second "Our Town" exhibition at the Community House of Birmingham, Friday through Sunday, Oct. 30, 31 and Nov. 1, is attracting artists from all over the state.

Mary Dennison, juror, selected 290 entries from 150 artists to be in the exhibition. Dennison, former director of the Detroit Artists Market, is a corporate art consultant. Because of the quality of last year's show and the \$10,000 in prize money offered by the sponsor, Carson Business Interiors Inc. of Southfield, a number of nationally recognized artists are represented.

The event opens with a \$125 per person benefit at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, and is open to the

public 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 30, 31, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 1. There will be programs on corporate and private art collecting on Friday and Saturday. The speakers include Preston Burke of Preston Burke Galleries, Ray Frost Fleming, director of Robert Kidd Gallery, Ruth Rattner, art historian, consultant and critic, Patience Young of Detroit Institute of Art and Julie Dawson artist and lecturer.

The awards ceremony is 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 1. All art is for sale. The Community House is at 380 S. Bates, Birmingham.



Fran Nicolson of Birmingham, who works in watercolor, pen and ink and as a printmaker, found the inspiration for her painting in the detailing of a Victorian house.



"Threshold" by Charles S. Gillies of Berkley is indicative of his professional training in design. He continues to work as an illustrator in Troy.



Woody's Tavern is by Christopher J. Bocklage of Ann Arbor, who specializes in drawing. At right is a photograph by Christine Seari of Marquette, which is part of a series she did on windows and intimate spaces in old houses near where she lives in the Upper Peninsula.



Last year's top prize winner, Harry Ahn of Barrien Springs, submitted this portrait for another shot at the gold.

Fiber artist pulling her own strings

By Barbara Ziemba
special writer

FAIRIES and elves are supposed to dwell under crumbling country bridges and other remote places well concealed from the prying eyes of ordinary mortals.

Yet, as the witching time of year draws nigh, another place has been discovered as the site of their revels and ancient rituals.

Could this place be a secret cave or an old abandoned ruin long thought forsaken by these tiny legendary beings?

Not to disappoint you, but actually it's a cozy home on a tree-lined Plymouth street. And these tiny legendary beings are really dolls created by Plymouth artist Ingrid Dijkers.

Dijkers, BORN in the Netherlands, became enchanted with doll making about three years ago while visiting Europe. "I have a marionette that I picked up while I was there," she explained, getting up to retrieve the figure from a corner of her workshop-basement.

The doll's exaggerated facial features, kindly described as highly unusual, made Dijkers' friends question her taste in souvenirs. "Everybody said, 'Ugh, you like that?'" laughed Dijkers, wrinkling her nose in imitation of friends' reactions. "But I just loved him."

The young artist, who is also skilled in the arts of ceramics, weaving, clothing design, soft sculpture and contemporary quilt-making, wasn't content with one lonely marionette, however. She decided to design more figures and

add a new craft to her impressive repertoire.

TO DO THIS, SHE had to acquire another skill she had no experience with — sculpting. The dolls' heads, feet and hands are made from clay.

"I had a kiln for years. It was just a part of life. You know, one has a kiln . . ." she laughed, shrugging her shoulders. "Anyway, I decided to experiment since I didn't have sculpting experience."

It's the only part of the design process that remotely resembles an assembly line. Dijkers sculpts her original pieces from clay, then makes molds of the pieces so that she can reproduce them again later. It's her way of getting around her inexperience with sculpting.

"I'M NOT REALLY fast, and anyway, I'm not trying to make perfect pieces. It just speeds everything up because I don't want to get too involved in making the parts. I like dressing them. That's the fun part," she explained, her brown eyes dancing.

Indulging in her lifelong love of antique and other unusual textiles is one reason why she chose this creative path with such enthusiasm. "I'd been collecting fabrics, lace and ribbons for years and years, doing a lot of collage work — a variety of things — and this (dollmaking) just seemed perfect," commented Dijkers.

Cupboards full of velvets, brocades, satins and other sumptuous textiles line one wall of the Dijkers' basement, part of which is fitted up as a workshop for Ingrid. Plain and patterned, the fabrics form a rainbow of colors.

A large, old-fashioned keymaker's cabinet takes up the better part of another wall. Inside each small drawer are a myriad of buttons of every shape, color and size imaginable. Transparent jars show off their contents of ribbons and lace on open wooden shelves against a third, smaller wall. Under a large, overhead light, a wooden worktable occupies centerstage.

ONCE DIJKERS BEGINS working, this table is swamped with textiles and trims. As she pours over her selection, she pairs color and textures until a particular combination strikes her fancy and excites her imagination. It's as simple as that. There are no rough sketches or complicated diagrams. "I just start pulling out fabrics that seem to work well together and then just kind of drape them, cutting here and there until it comes together," Dijkers explained.

Some inspiration for styles come from ethnic designs, but the figures' costumes are a melding of ideas Dijkers has culled from diverse sources, with her own ideas added for a twist of originality. Some dolls look like what William Shakespeare probably had in mind for his fairy king and queen, Oberon and Titania, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," while others could be an Impish Fock.

How does she know when she's finished with a figure? "They just look completed to me," she said thoughtfully. "I try very carefully to avoid having them overworked, although I'm afraid I'm getting into trouble with this one," she said, indicating a doll-in-progress. "I may have used too many elements in it. The trim, the feathers — they

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— Ingrid Dijkers

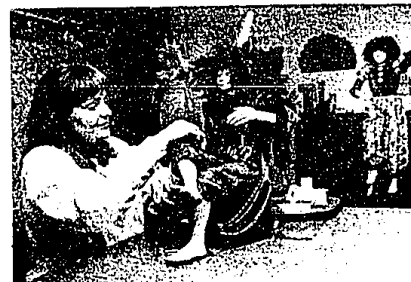
can end up fighting each other if I'm not careful."

THE TERM "DOLL" may be a little misleading. While most of the figures are suspended marionette-style, with fine nylon line attached to wooden slats, Dijkers cautions that the figures aren't functional but works of art.

On the average, the figures can cost approximately \$265, so any parents entertaining ideas that they would make wonderful Christmas gifts for little Johnny or Sally would be well advised to look elsewhere for gift ideas.

Art enthusiasts aren't the only ones snapping up Dijkers' creations. Some interior decorators approached her to use the figures for display purposes, but she declined. "I'm not really interested in becoming involved in all that. I'm just happy to make them for Folkways (a Plymouth shop) and do a few (art) shows. I don't want to be involved in selling them. I want to concentrate on making them," Dijkers said firmly.

It's difficult for the young artist to estimate how long it takes her to complete a figure. Married and the mother of a 3-year-old girl named Tricia, Dijkers has to work her designing around her family, which has top priority.



BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Ingrid Dijkers works on one of her creations in her basement workshop, flanked by cupboards full of velvets, brocades, satins and lace she's been collecting.

"I can't just come down here and spend a whole day on it. It's difficult to work when she's (Tricia's) around, and I feel guilty if I do," she observed with a rueful smile.

FOLKWAYS HAS CARRIED Dijkers art work since 1980, and she has participated in several local art shows, such as the Birmingham Temple Annual Invitational Art Show in Farmington Hills and the Arts at la Carte Art and Gift Show at the Detroit Country Day School. This month, "Fiberarts Magazine's Design Book Three" will feature Dijkers' figures. The book, according to a press release, "illustrates in lavish photography the degree of sophistication and level of skill that have been

achieved in today's world of textile arts." Dijkers wasn't sure if her marionettes fell under the category of textile arts, but she decided to submit photographs of them anyway. For this edition, artists around the world submitted to Fiberarts more than 5,000 slides and photographs for possible inclusion in the design book.

Now that she's found her niche in the art world, Dijkers plans on staying with it indefinitely. "It's so totally consuming," she explained. All through the years while I was doing all kinds of different things — weaving, pottery, quilting — I was searching for that niche, and this is it," said Dijkers with conviction.