

Creative Living

Marie McGeo editor/591-2300

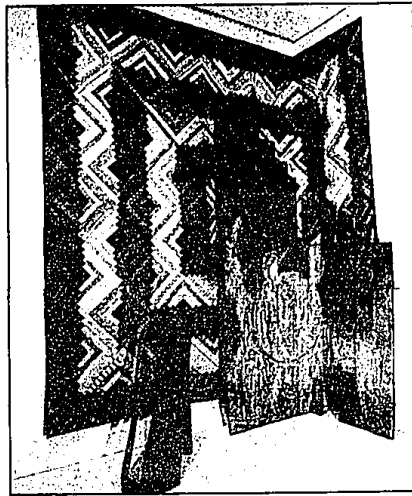


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Kempf Hogan pays as much attention to how his collection is displayed as a painter or sculptor would to making a work of art.



The interaction of the fence from the pig farm, an antique log cabin pattern quilt and a contemporary sculptor by Michael Hall creates a powerful force. Below, textile curator for the show, Merry Silber, checks a display of contemporary American Indian pottery from the Southwest

Collector's magic

By Corinno Abatt
staff writer

WARNING: SEEING "MAGIC in the Mind's Eye" at Meadow Brook Art Gallery could be hazardous to your complacency.

This is one show you won't forget easily. This highly unlikely assortment of art literally vibrates with energy.

Actually, the exhibition, on through Dec. 27, is the second of two parts because this collection, which belongs to Birmingham lawyer Kempf Hogan, is too extensive for a single show. Some of the pieces from Part I are also in this one, because they worked well with the quilts.

As Merry Silber, Birmingham quilt expert and textile curator for Part II, began assemble her ideas for the display of Hogan's quilts, she discovered some exciting associations that crossed media, time and geographical boundaries.

"I put things together for color — how well they looked color-wise," Silber said. "I think magic is the best word — how are you going to describe what the connection is? Usually there's a theme, this was a challenge."

THE ONLY THREAD that links this collection of paintings, quilts and textiles, sculpture, ceramics, farm implements, toys, folk art scenes, whirligigs and wind toys, tribal objects, furniture and decorative objects is that they all caught Hogan's eye.

"It's all through the eye," he said as he supervised the installation of Part II. "If it isn't magic, it's merchandise."

Hogan said what makes him choose a piece is "an undefinable, gut reaction."

Hogan doesn't like to have people try to categorize or describe his collection in esoteric terms, he said. "That's not what it's about." "It's like a duplicate bridge hand — you can play it in an endless variety of ways and still have a lot of fun."

Hogan becomes an artist creating a gigantic, changing assemblage as he chooses works for his collection, which he keeps artfully displayed in his apartment, or for this brief interval, at Meadow Brook Gallery.

Silber stood back to look at one section of wall where a blue-and-white windmill pattern (contemporary variation) quilt from the 1920s

was hanging beside two beaded, hide shirts from the Hidatsa (American) Indian tribe. The interaction caused her to comment, "We find it very open — the juxtaposition of the white-and-blue quilt with the beading."

EVEN MORE STARTLING to Silber, Hogan and gallery curator Kitchi Usui was the visual excitement created when they placed a group of pots by Ann Arbor artist Susanne Stephenson beneath a large, shaped painting, "Procession," by Ron Gorchev.

An outstanding corner was created when a large, terra-cotta-painted wood, Connecticut pig farm trade sign was placed in front of a brown-and-earth-tone quilt in the log cabin pattern. Silber and Hogan deliberated about whether Michael Hall's sculpture "Transtar" should be placed near the quilt.

Usui said he was amazed at this collection in which the only common denominator is the "visual affinity."

"I was very impressed with the quality of each piece — each has a quality of its own. I am very impressed with the 19th-century Amish quilts — many contemporary American painters are dying to get that

kind of rich color into their painting." Hogan enjoyed unrolling the long scroll, which Cranbrook-trained artist Terrance Main did on his honeymoon with Impressions of the places they stopped and the people they saw.

Hogan looked at the series of individual paintings as if he was seeing it for the first time, commenting on the beauty of the colors and the wonders of the impressions.

USUI WAS PARTICULARLY pleased with the row of dresses from Afghanistan, which were hung high on the back wall.

This exhibition is so stimulating that it takes time to digest. It is, as Usui suggested, a profile of the collector. The catalog is well put together and helps immeasurably in understanding the scope and sweep of the collection and the collector.

It continues through Sunday, Dec. 27. Hours are 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 2-6:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and 7:30 p.m. through the first intermission when there is a Meadow Brook Theatre performance.

Staff photos by
Camille McCoy



OU chorus celebrates silver anniversary



Mary Jardine Bennett drives from Windsor to sing with her mother, June Jardine of Troy, in the Oakland University Community Chorus.

By Cathie Broidenbach
special writer

The Oakland University Community Chorus is celebrating its silver anniversary this year with 134 enthusiastic members. A quarter century ago when the chorus was started as a gesture to the community, only 12 people showed up for the first meeting.

June Jardine of Troy remembers the early years when the group met in churches and gymnasiums before Varner Hall was built. She and her daughter Mary joined together 20 years ago and have been returning faithfully each year.

Although she married and moved to Windsor last March, Mary Jardine Bennett still comes home every week to sing. She crosses the Detroit River to meet her mother and drive to Rochester for the regular Tuesday evening rehearsal of the chorus.

Like many others, June and Mary are drawn back year after year by the challenge of the music and by the "vim and vigor" of director John Dovaras who "inspires it all." "Sometimes he dances around up there. He lets you know when he's pleased with how you've done; sometimes he'll wink."

Twenty two years ago, Dovaras, associate professor of music at Oakland University, began directing the chorus and selecting challenging music for the group to perform.

He says, "The works we choose aren't too grand and pompous. The chorus sings the great, large choral masterpieces of the centuries. We seldom repeat pieces. The Bach



John Dovaras

Magnificent is the most repeated work and we've only done it three times. We've sung in Hebrew, German, French, Italian, Latin and even Greek."

THROUGH THE YEARS, the group has sung at numerous churches and temples, at the Music Hall and at the Meadow Brook Pavilion. They've performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, with Aaron Copeland and with Dave Brubeck for the premier of his work, "The Gates of Justice."

The major concert of this fall term takes place Dec. 11 at Varner

'Once you know the music, it never leaves you. After you've sung with people for a few rehearsals, you feel you've known them all your life.'

— Michael Kollins

Hall and will feature Honegger's Christmas Cantata sung by the Community Chorus merged with the University Student Chorus.

"The mature voices and rich vocal experiences of the Community Chorus complement the youthful singers," says Dovaras, who teaches music, history and music theory at the University. He also directs the Student Chorus and off campus serves as music director for Kirk in the Hills Church in Bloomfield Hills.

On Sunday, April 10, as climax of the winter term, the Chorus will perform Verdi's "Requiem" with the Pontiac Oakland Symphony in the Pontiac Central High School auditorium.

To celebrate the Chorus's silver anniversary, Dovaras has gone through the roster for the past 12 years and invited alumni to return for the celebration. In addition to its traditional concerts, the mixed chorus will hold special concert receptions and an annual dinner.

ADULTS REGISTER TO SING with the chorus through the University Continuing Education Office and pay \$30 each semester plus the cost

of music. Auditions are "painless," Dovaras promises. They primarily give him an opportunity to check vocal ranges. Only occasionally does he reject a singer.

"We have people from all walks of life and all professions — university deans, bigwigs in the auto industry, doctors, lawyers, architects," he said. He estimates the average age to be about 46 and says most people sing with the group for three or four years.

At 75, Michael Kollins of Bloomfield Hills proves the rule. He joined 21 years ago when his oldest son started at Oakland University. He says, "I felt I could learn so much about music from him. When we sing in other languages, he inspires us to learn the meaning of the words so we can give the necessary feeling to it."

Ask Kollins for highlights of his years with the chorus years and the anecdotal flow. He remembers working under Sixten Ehrling when the Meadow Brook Chorus (the name for the summer semester