

Galleries show women artists

By Manon Melgaard
special writer

By some chance happening, older, distinguished, major women artists seem to be very much in the picture at several Birmingham galleries.

Painter and sculptor Ida Kohlmeier, now in her 70s, was featured in a recent show at the Robert Kidd Gallery. Currently on exhibit are works by two exciting women painters, both born in 1917.

At the Donald Morris Gallery is Louisa Mathiasdottir, who was born in Reykjavik, Iceland, and lives part of the year in New York.

A memorial exhibition at the Sheldon Ross Gallery is being held for Claire Moore, who was born in New York and died last August. These are two artists with intensely personal, but highly divergent styles.

Mathiasdottir's oils and pastel paintings are as calm and beautiful as the slow movement of a Sibelius symphony. She takes full advantage of the bright, clear palette of the French Impressionists, together with flat areas of color, to create a three-dimensional effect in her Icelandic

landscapes.

SHEEP, WHICH HAVE an almost sculptured quality, graze on undulating, untended grassland in foregrounds of brilliant greens. These merge into cobalt lakes overlooked by mountains with snowy, volcanic peaks and horizons of pink-streaked Nordic sky. Many of the land/seascapes are dotted with the small, white houses and vivid red rooftops that are integral to this fascinating island of changing colors and geographic contrasts, where the lowland coasts are deeply cut by fjords and bays. Mathiasdottir captures all these facets in her Icelandic paintings, which are as strong as they are poetic.

The artist studied in Denmark, in Paris with Marcel Gromaire, and, like Ida Kohlmeier, with Hans Hoffmann in New York. Included in the exhibit are two uncluttered still-lives of bottles and gourds and a full-length self portrait, painted with the same clarity and sureness of brushstrokes as the landscapes.

"THE LAST YEARS: 1985-1988" is a collection of small acrylics on paper in which Claire Moore's char-

review

acters portray the human condition in a surreal-comic manner, based in equal parts on visual and verbal expression.

In fact, the stenciled or scribbled legends accompanying the paintings are a signature of Moore's bold and energetic situations that imply a multitude of feelings. Not all these situations are as comical or satirical as they first appear. There is a universal feeling of loneliness as well as a sharp wit in the depiction of these contemporary characters.

A rather disoriented young woman stands in an arid, urban-like setting, and the caption reads, "If only I were more in control."

There is something dejected rather than funny about the woman who sits resignedly in a chair, with the caption, "Why did I wait up for him so often," as he (the man) is about to appear through the door in a hurry.

Moore's men and women, clothed

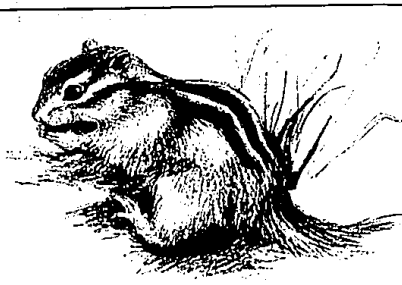
and unclothed, frequently stand with their backs to us, gazing into space or out to sea in attitudes that suggest alienation and/or a longing for something tangible to happen.

The artist studied with Werner Drewes, who was trained by the Bauhaus, and with David Siqueiros and Fernand Leger in New York. Her style has been compared to German Expressionism, which could be true, although the angst is less obvious. Very much an American artist, there is a degree of hope in these witty, analytic and sometimes enigmatic paintings which were done in the last three years of her life.

Of her latest "Space Paintings" she said, "There is certainly a kind of release in projecting myself out into space, and also a kind of hope."

Louisa Mathiasdottir's paintings are on display at the Donald Morris Gallery, 105 Townsend, Birmingham, through Nov. 26.

The Claire Moore exhibit will continue at the Sheldon Ross Gallery, 250 Martin Street, Birmingham, through Dec. 3. Hours for both galleries 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.



Animals and art

"Animals in Art II," repeat of a popular theme is at the County Galleria through Dec. 15. Pictured is a drawing, "Chipmunk," by Carolyn Vosburg Hall of Beverly Hills. This show of original paintings, photographs, textiles and sculpture includes works on loan from area collections. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, Executive Office Building, Oakland County complex, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

Holiday gift show opens

The Paint Creek Center for the Arts (POCA), Rochester, will host a Holiday Gift Gallery Tuesday, Nov. 22, to Friday, Dec. 23.

The opening preview party with an auction of wreaths designed by the artists, entertainment, refreshments and door prizes, will be 7-10 p.m. Saturday. Tickets are \$7 for members and \$10 for non-members. Proceeds will benefit art center programs.

The art works will include painting, mixed media, fiber, photography, glass, wood, jewelry, paper, basketry and clay. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 407 Pine, Rochester.

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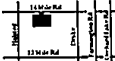


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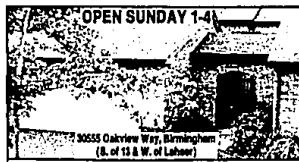
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