

Creative Living

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Artist uses light, color for outstanding effects

By Corinne Abett
staff writer

It's easy to like Robert Wilbert's art — the colors are wonderfully rich, the imagery easily recognizable and the technique outstanding. A peony looks like a peony and a mime like a mime. His one-man show at Donald Morris Gallery of Birmingham continuing through Saturday lights up the whole space.

Wilbert, who teaches art at Wayne State University, has signature items that show up in his paintings again and again over the years — mimes, a light bulb, a drum, a trumpet and chairs of various kinds.

His highly sophisticated arrangements of favorite items have always provided the artist with a variety of challenges which he obviously relishes such as spatial, light and color relationships and the gentle fracturing and reuniting of the picture plane. Paintings of these subjects are scholarly in their acute attention to these challenges; in this sense, they have little relationship to realism.

This time, as in the past, he has included a live model in mime white face in these groupings of elements. And while such have long brought him wide admiration, the portraits of the model or models, or of the artist himself, where the elements are integrated more subtly into the painting create more excitement.

WILBERT CARRIES on a love affair with color, relationships that bring great beauty in his work. He is a true pro who understands the effects of color on the mind as well as the eye.

In a masterful still life of a vase of peonies, the pink flowers in a red vase are on a carnelian cloth against an apricot background. In his painting of a vase of brilliant red sinias, he works the green/red aspect of the color spectrum, placing them in front of dark taupe, charcoal and a bit of olive green in a corner section. It's hazardous to put names on his color mixtures, the shades are far more interesting than simple names suggest. In the portrait of a woman dressed in a rather elaborate sea green and cream outfit, with a lavender/mauve background, the colors define the mood and leave a lasting impression of quiet, elegant beauty. There is a timelessness about this portrait that is particularly intriguing.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

In Robert Wilbert's large painting, the mime holds one of the artist's signature elements, a horn.

Holiday tables aid Cranbrook House

"Holiday Tables — 1989" will be held at Cranbrook House, 380 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills Friday-Sunday, Dec. 1-3. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

There will be 18 holiday tables created by 18 individuals plus Cranbrook House and Cranbrook Garden auxiliaries. Each table will have a special holiday theme and will incorporate the individual maker's personal collections of china, tableware and accessories.

Included are an old-fashioned Christmas dinner, New Year's Eve celebrations, accents with jewels and orchids, an Easter luncheon, a Victorian musical tete-a-tete and a surprise reunion.

Highlight will be a French "Belle Epoque" style evening.

Tickets are \$6 at the door. For information and group information, call 645-3149.

ish red and cobalt blue table dressing, the Whitney's pastry chef, Elwin Greenwald, will produce French and Viennese desserts such as buche de Noel (holiday yule log), croquembouche (small cream puffs shaped into Christmas trees), plus Dobos and Sacher tortes. There will be a \$50 donation patrons tea 2-4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30. Tickets for this will be available at the door or call, 645-3149.

Marion Poling is honorary chairman and Jerry Rush of Bloomfield Hills and Edith Bozell of Birmingham are co-chairmen. The activities will include a gift boutique, prizes, refreshments and music.

Parking is in the Christ Church Cranbrook parking lot with shuttle bus service to Cranbrook House.

Tickets are \$6 at the door. For information and group information, call 645-3149.

French hornist is Kaleidoscope guest

International award-winning French hornist, Eric Ruske, will appear on Kaleidoscope Concerts at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, at St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield Hills.

As a winner of the 1985 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Ruske 26, made his New York recital debut in the Young Concert Artists Series at the 92nd Street Y in 1987. He won first prize in the American Horn Competition and won the highest prize in the 1988 Concours International d'Interpretation Musicale in Reims, France. He made his Kennedy Center debut last May.

Ruske was associate principal horn of the Cleveland Orchestra from age 20-24 and was concerto soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1988 and soloist with the World Youth Symphony in Interlochen and the Orchestra National de Chambre de Toulouse in France.

He is from LaGrange, Ill., and is a 1985 graduate of Northwestern University. He lives in Boston and is on faculty at the New England Conservatory of Music.

He will perform the Persichetti Solo for solo horn, the Adagio and Allegro by Schumann and will join Detroit Symphony principals, Donald Baker, oboe, Theodore Oien, clari-



Eric Ruske

net, Robert Williams, bassoon, Muriel Kilby, piano and harpsichord and artistic director, Johanna Beth Bowers, flute, in a variety of ensembles including the Telemann Concerto a tre, Barokout's Esquisses, the Mozart Quintet in E Flat and the Poulenc Sextour.

The concert will be in the new church building at St. Hugo of the Hills, 2215 Opdyke, Bloomfield Hills, north of Long Lake and east of Woodward.

For ticket information, call 855-9299 or 855-0458.

Graphics designer tells students put a little fun into their work

By Corinne Abett
staff writer

When Bradbury Thompson, a foremost graphics designer, talks and shows slides of his work covering some 50 years, graphics and art become a single entity. In essence, type faces and letters are his symbols, as circles and wiggly lines were for Miro, geometric figures for LeCorbusier and squares for Joseph Albers. Thompson, however, has always been concerned with mass communication and the others were involved in a much more personal statement.

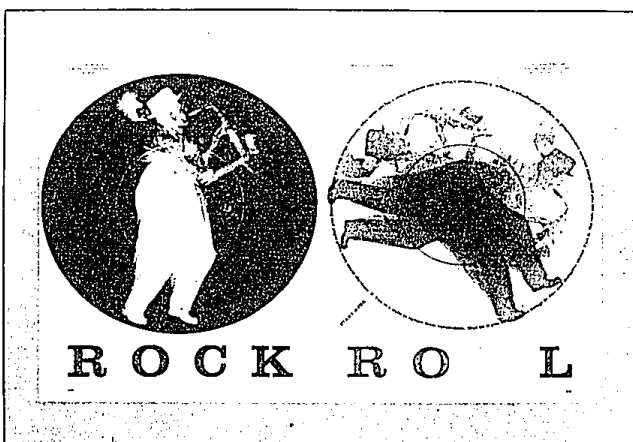
Thompson, a soft spoken person, who teaches at Yale, was at Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum for the opening of his retrospective, "Bradbury Thompson Design." It will continue there through Sunday, Dec. 3. It coincides with the publication of his new book, "Bradbury Thompson: The Art of Graphic Design," Yale University Press, \$65.

The exhibit, which opened in New York City and has been in Boston and Pittsburgh before coming here, is sponsored by Westvaco, where Thompson has been design consultant for more than 50 years.

He was art director for Mademoiselle, Art News, Art News Annual and designed the format for more than three dozen other magazines including Smithsonian. Among his many credits are more than 80 stamps for the United States Postal Service.

HIS RESPECT and use of historical references and elements in his work — paintings, drawings, type faces — he credited to long association with Art News and its knowledgeable staff. He said he did every layout for Art News for 27 years and that while he didn't make a great amount of money, the experience was invaluable.

In his presentation he said, "I am inspired by everyday things, children, family, friends . . . and things that happen to all of us." His design for Westvaco, using all of the letters in the name for a face, the O for the mouth full of words, was inspired by a drawing done by his 6-year old daughter. In one design of a woman



Bradbury Thompson did the Rock and Roll graphic for Westvaco's publication, Inspirations, in 1958. The left slide is in gray tones. The

musician comes to life on the right side as the illusion of motion is created by the printing of three colors, red, blue and yellow.

in a raincoat, vertical lines of type are the rain, in another a vertical line of type is a fishing line.

After he moved from New York City to rural Connecticut, he did an outstanding graphic design using a croquet wicket, balls and mallet.

At one point he told his largely graduate student audience, "Things like this can be so much fun, if you let yourself have fun."

As he showed specific examples of symmetry and asymmetry, he issued a qualifier, "There has to be principles to our design. On page 154 of my book are age old principles — three are especially important, commitment, perseverance and patience." The exhibit is a comprehensive amount of work. His clever turn of

mind and eye are everywhere evident. In each place in the show there is an inordinate sense of good taste and a high level of excitement. In many he pays tribute to the past and links the viewer to the future. Consequently, even his early work appears fresh and timeless.

Cranbrook Museum, 500 Lone Pine, Bloomfield Hills, is open 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

Bradbury Thompson's innovative use of letters is illustrated in this logo he created for his longtime client, Westvaco. The O, on its side, for a mouth, was inspired by a drawing done by his little daughter.

Bradbury Thompson



Dancers are shown in a scene from "In Time of Solitude," choreographed by Paula Kramer

College is hosting a holiday arts weekend

The Holiday Arts Festival at the Oakland Community College Royal Oak campus will include two dance performances by Detroit Dance Collective, a piano concert by Maria Meirelles and an art show and sale.

The dance presentations, at 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, will include the premiere of two works by Barbara Selinger and Paul Kramer, artistic directors.

Selinger's quintet is "Other Places" and Kramer's is "Twenty-six." Other dances include Selinger's "Unnatural Selection" and "Jour-

ney" and Kramer's "In Time of Solitude." In addition to Selinger, the dancers will be Jo Frederiksen of Rochester, Kay David and David Williams of Royal Oak and David Guzman of Southgate.

The concert by Meirelles will be at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1. A special attraction will be "A Taste of Royal Oak" 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3. For this benefit for The Sanctuary, Royal Oak restaurants will set up their best bill of fare for Arts Festival goers.

For information, call 548-9664.

Musicales will sponsor matinee for scholarship

Birmingham Musicale is sponsoring a performance of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," by The Village Players at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, 752 Chestnut, Birmingham. Proceeds from this benefit will help finance student musician scholarships.

Refreshments and afterglow will follow the play.

This is an unfinished play by Charles Dickens. The ending — who

the murderer is and who sings the final solo — is decided by the audience.

Birmingham Musical member, Joan Bowers, is the musical director of this play within a play.

Tickets are \$12.50 general admission and \$20 for patrons who will be seated in a reserved section. For ticket information, call 535-6317.