

Creative Living

CLASSIFIED REAL ESTATE



Bob Sklar editor/591-2300

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"The Balloon Lady," a painting done in mixed media, is the Livonia artist's personal favorite. The artist pays close attention to detail, making the painting as clear and sharp as a photograph.

Dream come true

Artist delivers telling message with a distinctive social theme



An untitled portrait, done in mixed media, is one of artist Ed Ferguson's favorite pieces. Proper shading and attention to detail show every detail of the rumpled clothing of the aging man portrayed.

By Janice Tiger-Kramer
special writer

WHEN ED Ferguson learned that two of his paintings were accepted by the Detroit Artists Market, his reaction was genuine.

The Livonia resident simply clutched the acceptance letter with tears in his eyes and, out loud, said, "Thanks." Then he called his mother and wife, Beverly, to say, "My work's hanging downtown."

Not an unexpected reaction from a man who dreamed of becoming an artist when growing up on Detroit's east side and even while serving two tours in Vietnam.

Ferguson's work, titled "Who Cares, Rocky?" and "Pleasant Dreams," is on display through Dec. 22 at the Detroit Artists Market, 1452 Randolph, in Harmonie Park. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.



An acrylic, poster-sized painting, "The Yuppies," shows the so-called yuppie generation and its indulgence in clothing and jewelry.

photos by GUY WARREN/staff photographer

Tuesday-Saturday. Admission is free.

The paintings, the first in a series of work using a social theme, illustrate the public's passiveness toward violence in society.

"Who Cares, Rocky?", which illustrates society's reaction to a senseless, inner city murder, sells for \$800. "Pleasant Dreams," which depicts an attack on a woman, is priced at \$700. Both acrylic paintings include three separate scenes and are about 5 by 2 1/2 feet.

"I've wanted to be an artist all of my life," Ferguson said. "When I told people that as a boy, I'm sure they were thinking, 'Now what's he really going to do?'"

FORMERLY THE advertising and public relations director for Michigan-based Sibley Shoes, where he was chief copywriter, art director and designer, Ferguson left the steady job after 12 years to respond to an "overwhelming urge" to become a full-time artist-illustrator.

"Artists and other creative people have an urge that grows inside. As you get older, the urge to create (your own kind of art) becomes overwhelming," said Ferguson, 43.

A diversified artist whose realistic and impressionistic work is done in acrylic, watercolors and mixed media, he plans to free-lance his work. He also plans to do consulting, pro-

duction work and copywriting for corporate and independent shops.

THOUGH HIS natural painting and drawing style is light and realistic, he enjoys an artistic challenge and a departure from the commercial art he has been required to do in the past.

The paintings on display at the Detroit Artists Market, for example, "came from within." They were done to raise the public's social consciousness.

"I'm tired of reading and hearing about murder and other violence and wondered what contribution I could

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Selections from 'Messiah' in spotlight

By Linda Ann Chomin
special writer

The Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, under Russell Reed's direction, will present the third concert of the 1990-91 season, "Messiah plus," at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14, in the Plymouth-Salem High School Auditorium, Canton Township.

Guest artists for this special holiday concert are the Plymouth Community Chorus, under musical director Michael Gross.

On the program are selections from George Frideric Handel's "Messiah," "Christmas Favorites"

by Chase, "Christmas Fantasy" by Herman, and an audience sing-along.

"We like to involve as much of the community as we can in our concerts," Reed said.

He was referring to the Plymouth Community Chorus, featured artists in "Messiah plus." Reed believes strongly in supporting the community.

This is Reed's fourth season as music director and conductor of the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra. He recently signed a three-year contract extension with the orchestra through 1994.

Reed has conducted groups for 34

years. He is professor of music and director of the symphony orchestra at Eastern Michigan University. This is his last year at Eastern, after which he will retire.

"I've always worked in music education," Reed said. "After this year, I'll be able to devote full time to the Plymouth Symphony."

WHEN REED speaks, you sense the pride in the orchestra.

"I think we've made improvements in the scores, the orchestra and the programs," Reed said. "We're currently in negotiations for next season."

Reed said when planning the new

season, he "explores a lot of possibilities, then throws the ideas out, at the board meetings."

"The last symphony, I really enjoyed all of it, the classical, the jazz," Reed said.

He was elated, remembering the orchestra's November concert, "Jazz It Up" with flutist, Alexander Zonjic.

"I'm sure that Zonjic wouldn't mind being quoted," Reed said. "After the performance, Zonjic said the Plymouth Symphony is one of the best symphony orchestras in the area."

The music for the overture, "Messiah," was written by Handel in 24 days. When Handel finished writing

Part II, the "Hallelujah Chorus," he said, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself."

Handel's universally popular "Hallelujah Chorus" ascends to a triumphant climax, which has been compared to the finale of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It was Beethoven who said of Handel, "He is the greatest of us all." In any regard, the "Hallelujah Chorus" is a masterpiece.

IN THE past, it has been said of Handel's Messiah that to an English-

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Russell Reed
PSO conductor

Historic mill site a terrific place for an arts center

BLINK AND you may miss it. Wilcox Lake across the road presents a nice view. But with a little imagination and a lot of TLC, the aging building has the potential to be something special.

Like a full-fledged community arts center.

Right now, the 67-year-old, Wayne County-owned building at Wilcox Road and Edward Hines Drive in Plymouth is used as a parks system maintenance garage.

Seventy years ago, the site was home to Plymouth (Wilcox) Mill, one of Henry Ford's village mill industries.

The design of these waterpower plants, many adaptive restorations of 19th-century gristmills, reflected Ford's love for nature, history and technology.

A master innovator, Ford offered farmers jobs at small branch plants within their communities "to ensure the values and experiences of the rural way of life." Ford fiddlers served up country tunes at community square dances.

Ever the naturalist, Ford encouraged the building of birdhouses in the villages to attract birds for insect control.

THE PLYMOUTH Mill started out in 1923 making generator cutouts. Thirty men each earned \$6 a day. The plant later produced screw



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taps and, during World War II, bomber parts.

Wilcox Lake is the byproduct of a mill-race dam that the Wayne County Road Commission and Ford Motor Co. built in 1933 to boost water power.

art, Plymouth Historical Museum director. "I'd really like to see it happen."

SO WOULD Susan Froelich, Plymouth Community Arts Council interim director.

The arts council is hammering out a 20-year, \$1-a-year lease with the county to renovate the 4,200-square-foot building into an arts center at a cost of upwards of \$200,000.

In 1948, Henry Ford's widow, Clara, donated the then-closed Plymouth Mill to the county, which owns the surrounding Middle Rouge Parkway.

"We'd like to have some kind of history in there that would respect the history of the site and allow us to develop around that program and not be in conflict," said Hurley Coleman, Wayne County parks director.

"We're eager to be working with the arts council. We feel it's a very good marriage."

"We're working with an architect to develop a renovation plan," Froelich said. "Structurally, the building is strong and solid. We're upbeat."

A RENOVATION fund-raising plan also must be developed. Wayne County will assist with improvement and upkeep of the grounds. An optimistic timetable would put the nonprofit arts council in new digs by late 1991.

it a much more handsome entryway to Plymouth."

The arts council envisions offices, classrooms, an exhibit gallery and a rental consignment shop. The gallery would be flexible enough to allow for chamber concerts.

What's especially appealing about the building is its potential for easy accessibility from the Wilcox Road side for disabled or elderly residents.

Incidentally, the small barn between the mill and the Greek Revival-style miller's house on nearby Hardenberg Road is nearly 100 years old.

The mill site was first developed as the Hardenberg Mill, built about 1850 and later run by David Wilcox and his sons, George and John.

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