



Art Beat

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Bloomfield Hills resident Valerie Yova, administrator of the Lyric Chamber Ensemble and noted soprano, will be the guest host on WQRS-FM's "Guess Who's Playing the Classics!" program, 9-10 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21.

Yova, music director for St. George Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in Southfield, made her debut with the Michigan Opera Theatre last November in the role of the Countess Ceprano in a production of "Rigoletto."

An exhibition and sale to benefit the Michigan Metro Girl Scout Council has been scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 5, at Ross Roy Inc. in Bloomfield Hills.

Available for purchase will be dolls by Tracy Gallup, sculpture by Rose Brown, fabrics by Carol Harris, watercolors by Julie Dawson and jewelry by Lola Sonnenschein. For information, call 964-4475, Ext. 208.

The Artists' Gallery Holiday Show and Boutique opens Monday, Nov. 23, featuring original gift items created by artists. Paintings, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, glass and hand-painted wearables will be offered at the gallery, 29673 Northwestern Hwy in Southfield. Holiday hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, to 8 p.m. Thursday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Harold Linton, professor and assistant dean of architecture at Lawrence Technological University, is the author of "Color Consulting: A Survey of International Color Design," recently published by the Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. in New York.

Linton has served on the LTU faculty since 1974, and is the College of Architecture and Design's director of freshman studies. He also leads the pre-college program in architecture and design, which he founded in 1976. This is his fourth textbook published by Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Linton is also a practicing artist. His work hangs in galleries, museums and many private collections. He has degrees from Syracuse University and Yale University.

Professionally crafted gifts of art to give, use or wear will be featured in the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association Holiday Sales Show, Dec. 2-14 at the BBAA, 1516 S. Cranbrook Road, Birmingham.

Hours will be 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Friday, to 4 p.m. Saturday, noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free.

A preview sales reception has been scheduled for 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1. Call 644-0866 for information.

Phillip Bloyer of Birmingham is among the "Second 100" winners in the Arts for the Parks contest, the National Park Academy of Art and the National Park Foundation have announced.

Bloyer's entry was an acrylic titled "Only God Can Make a Tree."

Gallery shows smiles

Exhibitions, 8D

By Mary Klemic
staff writer

The low, round table at the Robert Kidd Gallery has been a real conversation piece over the years.

Visitors and artists at the gallery, 107 Townsend in Birmingham, have easily settled into the soft chairs around the table and talked with staffers. Others have asked what the table is doing there.

It's there to help make visiting the gallery comfortable. That was one of the features Birmingham residents Robert Kidd and Ray Frost Fleming had in mind when they opened the establishment.

"We decided that our gallery was going to be very open and friendly," Fleming said. "We always try to be helpful and friendly. We want people to feel comfortable when they come in."

The Robert Kidd Gallery is marking its 15th anniversary this year. It has planned a gala champagne reception tonight to open its new exhibition, a retrospective showing of paintings, sculpture, ceramics and glass by 120 artists who have been featured by the gallery from 1976 to 1991.

"I've always felt that the Kidd Gallery is a tremendous asset to



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Ray Frost Fleming, director of the Robert Kidd Gallery in Birmingham, is proud of the extra exhibition space and comfort-

able atmosphere presented there. The gallery is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year.

our community," said one of the artists, Cranbrook Academy of Art president Roy Slade. "It has enriched our community (with the) opportunity to see so many different artists and so many different works."

ITS AMOUNT of space --

larger than that of other galleries -- and less intimidating atmosphere are among the reasons behind the gallery's success, Fleming said.

Both Kidd and Fleming attended Cranbrook. Kidd studied weaving and Fleming studied

painting. They were practicing artists when they started a lower-level showroom to display their work and that of their friends.

"People really encouraged us. People were excited about what we were doing. Initially we just thought of ourselves as a

showroom. One thing would lead to another and word would go out."

They started looking around the country for "exciting, innovative art, new ideas. That just kind of caught on."

Please turn to Page 3

These greeting cards stand alone

By Mary Klemic
staff writer

"You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em. . . . Those words from a popular song refer to playing cards. But they could also refer to another type of card: the tiny works of art created by former West Bloomfield resident Scott Withers.

Withers, 26, has developed three-dimensional cards that unfold into recognizable objects or abstract designs.

"It's magical," said Withers, who grew up in Redford Township and went to high school at Cranbrook. "I like things that are well-designed. I like the challenge of a concept and breaking it down and making it work."

But when the (card) is done, it doesn't look like the mathematical solution to a problem. It's art."

WITHERS WAS a senior at West Bloomfield High School in 1983 when he designed what was chosen as the logo for the West Bloomfield sesquicentennial.

Now a Royal Oak resident, he has worked as an architectural interior designer and a graphic designer since he graduated from the University of Michigan School of Art in 1987.

He started "fooling around" with cut-and-folded paper designs three years ago, eventually accumulating more than two dozen original greeting cards. Last Christmas, he sent out one of the cards -- one featuring a tiny Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph in a three-dimensional manger scene.

RESPONSE FROM family and friends was so positive, Withers picked that design to start produc-

"I'll just think of something and think of a way I can turn it into a card."

— Scott Withers

tion of his own line of greeting cards, S.A.W. Creations.

"I'm excited. A lot of people . . . like 'em and say 'What's next?'"

The cards are now available in the area, including at Orthogonally in Birmingham, the Cranbrook Art Museum bookstore, Sutton Maison in Grosse Pointe Village and The Peaceable Kingdom and The Conservatory in Ann Arbor. They are also sold in California.

WITHERS DESCRIBES his cards as "origami-architectural."

Among the designs is a grand piano, complete with bench and music rest. The manger scene features a star that allows light to shine through. One design consists of a series of half circles of increasing size that could be a tree steps.

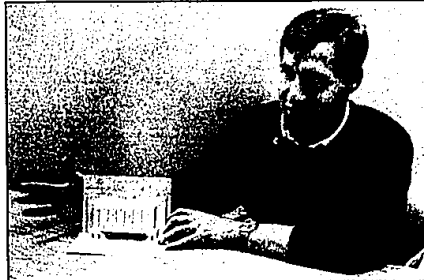
"I'll just think of something and think of a way I can turn it into a card."

Withers, who works at GM Argonaut, sticks to simpler themes, "objects that people would feel free to use."

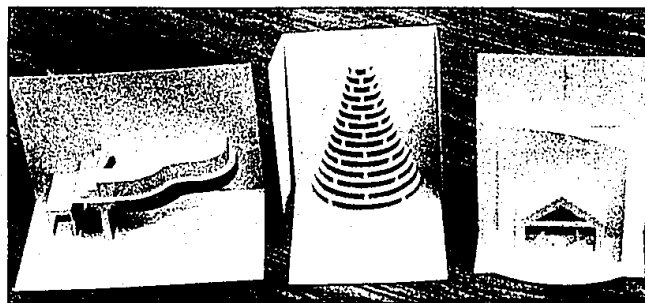
"A lot of these things can be whatever you like."

SOME DESIGNS don't fold flat at all and require fine tuning. A computer drawing program helps. "It just happens. The challenge is making it work when you open it -- when you do it just stings."

Please turn to Page 3



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Withers' greeting cards can feature almost anything, from a grand piano to an abstract design to a manger scene.

You can get a real feel for art by pulling up a chair

WITH SOME artists, every room has a view -- looking in.

Take, for example,

those who design furniture -- specifically, chairs.

The chair poses a variety of challenges. Scientifically and geometrically, it must feature legs that are balanced to support a level seat. Functionally, it must be able to hold any number of different weights each day. Artistically, it must be attractive and/or unusual, complementing the decor or making its own statement. And from a historic point of view, it can use traditional tech-

niques.

Jefferson and Saarinen are among the famous who tried their hand at designing a chair.

THE Wettsman Collection invites visitors to pull up many an unusual chair in its current exhibit at Art-park Services, 31505 Grand River in Farmington. The exhibit, "Preferred Seating," continues to Saturday.

Artists in the show combined the traditional definition of a chair with not-so-traditional designs and materials. The results are chairs that are functional, with an emphasis on "fun."



Mary Klemic

John McNaughton of Indiana created a high-back chair "house" -- the back resembles a tall building, the needlepoint seat looks like a street, complete with center lines and a hydrant. Frank Gehry produced chairs made of corrugated cardboard.

WHY DESIGN a chair? Another featured artist, Clifton Monteth, explains by referring to a commercial. You know how they say "Reach out and touch someone," he says. Well, a chair lets you reach out and touch someone in a special way.

Monteth gathers inspiration and materials, including twigs, from the area around his home in Lake Ann, Mich., where he has a studio.

Paul Simon sang of a man who "sees angels in the architecture." You don't have to look too closely to see the outline of an angel in the pattern formed by the twigs in Monteth's chairs.

LOOK AROUND for subtle touches in furniture designed by artists and architects.

One such talent was Charles Renie Mackintosh of Scotland, whose designs in the late 1890s and early 1900s included the Glasgow School of Art. He designed the furnishings as well as the buildings themselves to make a totally integrated work of art. Anthony Jones, president of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, gave a talk on Mackintosh on Nov. 13 at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Mackintosh and his wife, Margaret, who was also a designer, sent lit-

tle messages to each other in their projects, such as hearts carved on the furniture. He stenciled a design on chairs in a room to match flowers on the mantelpiece there.

For his own house, Mackintosh designed dining room chairs with very tall backs. This was so when guests sat at the high-back chairs and pulled up to the table, they enclosed themselves in a private room within the room.

To Mackintosh, the overall impact of a room was more important than the individual pieces; you could go back and examine those on your own.