

CREATIVE LIVING

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MARY KLEMIC

Art finds new space around community

THE city of Birmingham will be one large art gallery later this month. That's when four artists with ties to Birmingham galleries will be the first in a new project to have their work displayed at outdoor sites. The idea is to put art in public places and change the pieces every six to 12 months. Signs installed at the base of the works will tell who the artist is, the name of the work and the materials used.

"It should all be in place for the May 15 dedication," said Corinne Abbott, who is chairing the project. "It looks like it's gonna go."

Just as public art is more than decoration, this project has more value to Birmingham than ornamentation. For one thing, the display can spark communication as viewers analyze the works.

"It's more than just the placement of an object in the environment," said Kenneth Gross, executive director of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. "It has to do with starting a dialogue with the artist."

The project shows that art is an integral part of our lives, Gross said.

"So many artists really do want to do something for their communities," he said.

And Birmingham is rich in art -- not just in the number of galleries.

A recent study, "Bronze Ladies, Corporate Giants, Saints and Sinners: Public Art in Oakland County," by Charlotte Stokes, professor of art history at Oakland University in Rochester, examined public art in municipal, religious, educational and business sites. The study, the result of five years of research by Stokes and her students, praised Birmingham for its public art.

"Although the presence of public art does not guarantee a vital city center, it is a good indicator of civic health," the study read.

"Birmingham has maintained a true center and a unified sense of heritage... Birmingham will have what many cities are trying to regain: the sense of the whole."

"We've always kind of taken it for granted," Gross said. "So many homeowners have major works in their yards."

Elsewhere in Oakland County, the Art in Public Places program has been in place since 1985, sponsored by the Paint Creek Center for the Arts in Rochester. As part of the program, the Rochester Hills City Hall hosts six art exhibits a year, changing the shows every two months.

"We try to get Rochester artists," said Joyce Rolf of the PCCA. "It's a chance to show their pieces."

A woman who called the PCCA to ask where she could take her students to look at art was told about the city hall show, Rolf said.

In Birmingham, the island area on Oakland Avenue, just east of North Woodward, will be the location of a steel sculpture by Todd Erickson of Bedford. An assistant professor at the Center for Creative Studies, he is represented by the Lemberg Gallery. Erickson is a Senohm High School graduate who earned a master of fine arts degree at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

"Dilemma," a steel sculpture by Robert Sestock of Detroit, will be placed on the northeast corner of Brown and Pierce. Sestock is represented by the Preston/Feigenson Gallery. He is a Senohm graduate who attended the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

"The southeast corner of Maple and Southfield will be the site of 'Shapescapade III' by Joy Lebowitz, who studied in Italy and teaches at the HBAA. He is represented by the Robert Kidd Gallery.

"Habitat Man," a white metal sculpture by James Clover, will stand on Martin Street near the Baldwin Public Library. Clover, an associate professor of art and design at Grand Valley State University, is represented by the Robert Kidd Gallery.

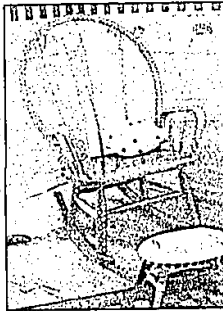
Pioneer on parade

Chances are you've seen works by William Hentschel, even if his name isn't familiar. That's what you'll think after a visit to the Duke Gallery, 185 N. Woodward in Birmingham.

Hentschel established himself as one of America's premiere commercial designers during the 1920s and early 1930s. He went on to pioneer the use of airbrush beyond its commercial applications. Praised for his use of color and form, he introduced "layer painting," a process of applying oil points using printers' rollers (brayers) and as many as 10 stencils.

A retrospective of more than 100 of his works -- including airbrush, aquatone, oils, ink, tempera, casein, brayer prints and textiles -- is on exhibit at the gallery through May 14.

Hentschel knew no limits. His art fit any medium, any subject. Silk, velvet, ceramics, figures, mysterious images -- his work shows all of them. The colors are deep, the images and moods vivid.



Water wonderland: Such touches as a chair painted seafoam green, fish shapes along the wall and striped wallpaper to suggest seaweed helped create an underwater motif.



Designing women: Marcia Doolin (left) and Kim Curran add more than a splash of color. The mural behind them, which they painted on a kitchen wall, fit the resident's fondness for Southwestern style as well as picked up the colors in the house.

They make decorating an art



BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

The walls are alive with colorful painting and faux accents, the work of two Birmingham women in their own decorating business.

To Kim Curran and Marcia Doolin, decorating is truly an art.

In their own business, Haus Works, the two Birmingham women have painted murals or faux finishes to bring a special look to a room. They have made a splash with an underwater theme, had visitors marveling at what looks like marble or added a festive scene for a festive touch.

In the past, wealthy people had their walls painted by artists, which led to wallpaper, the women said.

"It's art in your house," Doolin said.

"We think it's fun to have a little creativity. We want to have creativity in our homes and we want to share."

Since it started in July, Haus Works has worked at houses in several communities, including Birmingham, Troy, Rochester and Franklin. Its jobs have ranged from a big family room (36 by 16 by 9 feet) to a bathroom "the size of a phone booth."

"That's when you can do something really fun. Why not do something different?" Curran said.

"It works very well in a traditional home or in a contemporary home. It depends on the style you use and the colors," Doolin said.

Both Curran and Doolin have art backgrounds. Their success with painting furniture led them to the Haus Works venture.

The Haus Works touch has decorated both new and old rooms. Curran and Doolin will discuss ideas with the client and make preliminary sketches.

First they'll meet with the client to get a feel for the house, and his or her style and taste. They'll bring test tiles or other samples to a second meeting.

The length of time for a job depends on the room -- usually two or three days. The price, ranging from "a couple hundred" to "a couple thousand," depends on the size of the room.

When planning a room for her new baby, Birmingham resident Katie Prior wanted something special. The result? The walls, furniture, accessories and rugs go along swimmingly to create a room with fish and other underwater motifs.

"I love it. It was really important that it be equally nice for a girl or boy," Prior said.

"They made it look easy but I couldn't do it."

The colors in the room are soft -- periwinkle, seafoam green, "coral" peach. Striped wallpaper on the upper half of the wall suggests seaweed. Instead of a brush, different fabrics were used to dab paint into the fish shapes, bubbles and seaweed that border the room and appear on a tiny stool. A speckled chair and crib also give the feeling of the sea. And a fish-shaped pillow is just the right accent.

For the living room in a bachelor's house in Birmingham, the decorators



Classic look: Faux marble on the fireplace, as well as faux pilasters on the wall above, result in a classic look. The colors go well with those of the accents and carpeting in the room.

made a classic move with a faux marble fireplace and four faux pilasters projecting from the wall.

"I think the move... to a classic look is so important," said Birmingham interior designer Jean J. Comb-Meador.

The "marble" at the fireplace is white with gold veins. On the wall above the mantel, "cracks" in the columns make them look ancient or antique. Colors in

the carpet and accents pick up those in the faux decorations.

A mural the team painted in the kitchen in Susan Nuton's house adds to the room's sunny disposition. The Birmingham house, with its colorful tiles and accessories, reflects Nuton's enjoyment of Mexican and Southwestern art.

Rally to celebrate survival of arts

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

The song is still one of concern, but the tone is more upbeat.

For the third year in a row, art lovers, supporters and practitioners will rally on the lawn of the state capital next week to demonstrate their support for the arts.

Last year's gathering was called "Art Attack." This year's event, taking place Wednesday, May 13, is called "Arts Alive."

The rally will celebrate that the arts are alive and well in Michigan, and that people find them so important they will make their opinions known.

"(The name) is kind of symbolic of the fact that we may be in a little different state this year and a whole different attitude," said Cheryl Natmer of Michigan Festival.

"(Things last year were) pretty dire. We were more or less fighting to hang on by the skin of our teeth."

"It's probably more of a happy

mood," said Marilyn Wheaton of Concerned Citizens for the Arts/Michigan Advocates for the Arts. "We had been (attacked) and survived."

"I would say last year's was a success. It was rainy, it was cold, and more than 1,000 people showed up. One person, a Gov. Engler supporter, staged his own Anti-Art Attack."

The Arts Alive committee is made up of volunteers from Concerned Citizens for the Arts in Michigan and Michigan Advocates for the Arts. The program it

has planned for Wednesday includes a chance to meet with state legislators, musical performances and presentations.

New on the program this year is the introduction of the Legislative Arts Caucus members, which had its first meeting Thursday.

"It's (the caucus) something that we have hoped for a long time would happen," Wheaton said.

See **ALIVE**, 4D

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

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

SHOWS EVENT

The Graphic Arts Council had a chance to shine Saturday, April 25, as it celebrated its silver anniversary at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Phoebe Goldstein of Bloomfield Hills, chairman for the evening, was thanked for her and her committee's work on the event. It featured an exhibition preview and a dinner in honor of Ellen Sharp, curator

Art Beat

of graphic arts at the DIA for 25 years.

DIA director Samuel Sachs II delighted those in attendance as he presented a "Sharp cake" for dessert, a delicious chocolate work of art bearing an S on every slice. Pioneer printer Nathan Brown and artist Judy Pfaff answered questions from the audience earlier in the evening.

EASTERN TOUR

Professor Richard Stamps of Oakland University, an authority on China, will take the audience on

"Silk Tour Road," a slide presentation, Thursday, May 21. Stamps will discuss his travels along the road that connected the East with the West. His travels took him through China in 1990 and Soviet Central Asia in 1991.

The presentation is part of the Oakland County Cultural Council's Brown Bag Lunch Series. Call the cultural affairs office at 858-0415 for more information.

JEWELRY SHOW

Mesa Arts, 32800 Franklin Road in Franklin, will present its fifth annual jewelry show Friday-Saturday, May 8-9.

The show will feature American Indian and Southwestern styles. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Call 851-9949.