

Artist tears into his work

BY MARY KALEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Arthur Secunda pointed out the sad irony in the last line of an introduction in a brochure at Bloomfield Hills' Galerie Internationale, where works by the artist are now featured.

"Important reflections of an earlier time, let us hope these works are not prophetic as well," it read.

The introduction was about Secunda's "Watts Series" of 1965-72, his paintings, collages, sculptures and graphics, commenting on the Watts Riots and similar disturbances in the 1960s.

The irony was that the riots were being read at Secunda's opening last week, a couple of days after rioting erupted after four white Los Angeles police officers were acquitted of the beating of a black motorist.

Secunda was asked if he would make a similar series based on the recent events.

"I don't think so because I'm not there," he replied. "My life is basically in Paris right now."

Is he more optimistic?

"The pessimism has changed. I'm more concerned with humanity in general rather than specific political (cases)."

These days the artist is enjoying the special challenge that paper presents. It is a more objective, more contemporary medium, he said.

"I can manipulate it, fold or bend it. Oil on canvas deals with illusion."

Using torn paper, Secunda rearranges the spectrum to make a dynamic prism, forming a horizon or an optical effect. The torn paper is in different widths and shapes — sometimes ragged, sometimes almost straight like the strings of an instrument.

Such images as large, dancing figures, geometric shapes or landscape imagery, sometimes with suns or moons, may be outlined in white. Colors stand out like neon or gilt.

"He is one of the best colorists," Galerie Internationale owner Garille Zennedjian said.

Secunda, who was born in New Jersey and lived in the Detroit area (he attended Case Tech), is now exploring new cast paper techniques in France and the United States. He works in Amberg, France, at the oldest paper mill in the world, where paper is still made the way it was in the 15th century.

One of the people he works with is the great-grandson of Toulouse-Lautrec's printer. A roller used is so heavy, it takes four men to push it.

"There's something about artists working together that's exciting. . . I enjoy that," Secunda said.

He also likes the "cave life" in France, where artists discuss their work and give each other feedback.

The artist likes tradition but at the same time wants to change it.

"You straddle the past and the present."

Secunda may start with a general idea and make it more specific.

"I usually have an idea which has its basis in philosophy or storytelling."

For example, he has been working on a series of jazz musicians for several years.

"I may start with an idea of jazz, may evolve into a particular musician."

Secunda has produced more than 300 graphic editions during the last 40 years. He has also held a variety of jobs, including museum curator of education, university instructor and lecturer, radio and TV personality, art critic, illustrator and scenic designer.

How did he decide his current career?

"It decided on me; I didn't decide on it. I like being an artist. You're your own boss."

Galerie Internationale is at 4066 Telegraph. Call 614-8670.

Wildflower outing days picked

The Cranbrook Institute of Science is planning a special outing, Friday-Saturday, May 8-9, for lovers of the outdoors.

Wildflower enthusiasts will have a chance to visit a variety of Michigan locations — marshes, wet forests and formal gardens — where wildflowers abound in the spring.

The weekend event will begin Friday with an illustrated lecture featuring some of the wildflowers likely to be discovered on the walks. Saturday, activities will include half-day walks to seven wildflower preserves. Participants may choose a morning walk, an afternoon walk or one of each.

Pre-registration is required. Groups will be limited to 25 each. All events are \$4 each. For more information, call 645-3230.

Groups will meet at the Institute of Science to arrange car pools, or at the designated site. Maps will be provided. Transportation won't be furnished.

Institute botanist James Wells will lecture on "Stalking Our Native Wildflowers" 7:30 p.m. Friday in the Cranbrook Institute of Science auditorium. Light refreshments will be served.

The groups on the guided wildflower walks will leave from the institute at 9 a.m. or 1 p.m. Bringing a bag lunch is recommended.

The walk sites are the Bald Mountain Recreation Area, about 30 minutes from Cranbrook; the Lloyd A. Stang Outdoor Recreation Center, about 15 minutes from Cranbrook; Cranbrook Gardens; the Scholten Wildflower Garden three miles from Cranbrook, combined with the Cranbrook Gardens for a full morning or afternoon trip; the Highland Recreation Area, about 40 minutes from Cranbrook; Indian Springs Metropark, about 45 minutes from Cranbrook; and the Rochester Utica Recreation Area, about 30 minutes from Cranbrook.

Alive from page 1D

"The purpose of that caucus is to get the topic of arts and cultural and arts education on the priorities and agendas of more of our elected officials."

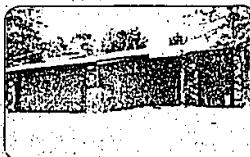
Those attending the rally can add their names to a declaration of arts support, a visual symbol of the strength of arts supporters in Michigan. Also new this year is the "What the Arts Mean to Me" awards presentation by the Detroit Newspaper Agency.

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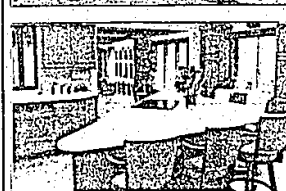
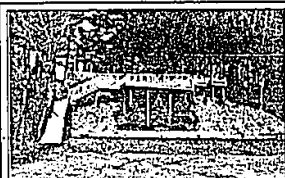
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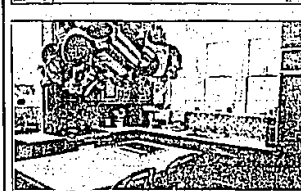
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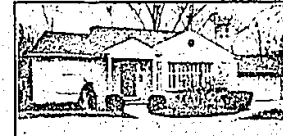
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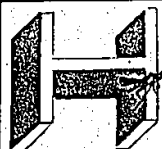
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