

CREATIVE LIVING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1992



MARY KLEMIC

Subjects on display sparkle in many ways

A fragile silence slowly dispersed as the long, black curtains were pulled apart. The waiting audience oohed and aahed and then applauded as what was behind the curtains was revealed.

The dramatic event took place Sunday afternoon at the Baldwin Public Library, 300 W. Merrill in Birmingham. It was the unveiling and dedication of "Medieval Tapestry," a 14-by-8-foot mural by noted artist Glen Michaels of Troy.

"Celebration" was a good word for the day. Those attending the ceremony were celebrating the mural and the spirit behind it. And the mural itself celebrates the variety of the community.

The work is a glowing, flowing piece that adorns the wall at the library's front stairway proudly like a medal of honor. It features many different materials — cement, gold leaf, industrial glass, tile, metals, woods, peacock feathers and wire, among others. Gothic, medieval, Chinese and primitive symbols are interwoven to represent many phases of the human family.

An S shape appears again and again in the mural. This shape also reoccurs in the library gate. A sense of movement and characteristics of cloth weaving are suggested.

Jan Bird, president of the Baldwin board of directors, called the day one of "dedication and celebration," of "enrichment and enjoyment."

The project took slightly more than one year to accomplish. Bird said the donor who financed the project said, "I want Glen Michaels to do something and I want it to be in the front lobby where everyone can see it."

Claudia Ireland, a 40-year resident of Birmingham who served four terms as president of the Friends of the Library, was identified as the until then anonymous donor.

"The Baldwin Library has been a very important part of my life here," Ireland said. Ireland appreciated the cooperation and enthusiasm of the staff, she said.

"For me it was a very exciting and pleasant experience."

The project will continue the "welcoming mood that has always been characteristic of this library and its staff," said Michaels, who has a master of fine arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills.

Sparkling show

A horse is a horse, of course, of course. But a horse can be part of a beautiful piece of jewelry.

For examples, visit Yanke Designs, 32611 Franklin Road in Franklin, this week or next. The studio, run by Frank and Kim Yanke, is presenting pieces from the Diamond Horse Collection Oct. 1-10. An open house will take place at the studio 6-9 p.m. Thursday-Friday, Oct. 1-2.

The tiny works include pins, buckles, necklaces and bracelets. The featured horses may eat diamond apples, wear jeweled ribbons and have manes of white gold and eyes of diamonds. Among the works is a bolo tie by Yanke Designs, with a horse head of diamonds, gold and carved ivory.

"He has worn (the tie) with a T-shirt or a tuxedo," Kim Yanke said.

The collection of works by designers from around the United States was at the Bloomfield Open House last week. It is touring the country in connection with the Kentucky Derby and other prestigious horse events.

Speaking of diamonds, David Wachler and Sons in Birmingham will host the Diamonds International Awards Collection as a benefit for the Michigan Opera Theatre Oct. 7-11. The competition, in its 39th year, is the most prestigious design competition in the world. It drew more than 2,000 entries from all over the world. The Wachler firm had a winning design in 1971, the only Michigan firm ever to win the contest.

Getting in gear

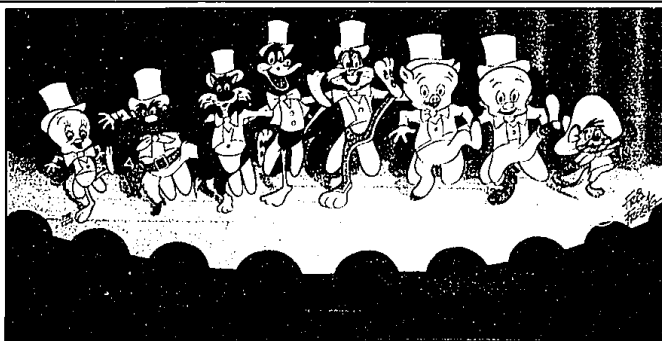
Machines can have a beauty of their own, even though they don't glitter like jewels. A show of photographs by engineer John Bush at the Pierce Street Gallery, 217 Pierce in Birmingham, through Nov. 14 puts this on display.

Bush took the photos at Greenfield Village with natural lighting. They were shot up close, free from distracting backgrounds.

"These machines by themselves are blah and mundane," Bush said at the opening reception Saturday afternoon. "But when you focus on certain parts) . . . the texture of the metal draws your attention."

A fixed tool bit, a steam engine valve, any mechanical device takes on a special, quiet esthetic power. Gears become strange stairways. A flywheel with a connecting arm could be a record on an old record player. Nicks and chips in the metal form a sculpted image.

Other photos by Bush look at cars in new perspectives. Up close, on angles, the fenders and headlights of the vehicles almost look like faces.



DAVID F. STEIN
STAFF WRITER

Front line: These familiar figures frolic in the limited edition "Chorus Line" by Friz Freleng.

STILL LIFE Art gallery keeps in 'toon

BY DAVID F. STEIN
STAFF WRITER

They're snapshots of childhood magic. Artifacts of American pop culture. Just plain fun.

Production cells from animated cartoons are also a new rage of the collecting world, with scarcer original Disney cells from the '30s and '40s valued as high as \$100,000 at auction.

At Michigan's first gallery devoted exclusively to animation art, for the most part, the emphasis is on fun. "It brings you back to your childhood," said Elaine Manor Athey, 28, co-owner with husband Robert of Gallery Animato, 574 N. Woodward in Birmingham.

"When I look at cells, I always think of 4 o'clock, after class, or Saturday morning. Those were great times in childhood; everybody has a favorite character."

Cells are the individual drawings of characters or scenes, when photographed in combination with backgrounds, that make up a cartoon or animated feature. Today, an outline is photo-copied on a piece of celluloid, a clear plastic. Prior to 1960, this task was done by lithography or by hand. In all cases, the colors are then handpainted on the reverse side of the cel. The translucent cel is usually sold with a background as a combination. (See related story.)

Animated discussion

Gallery Animato opened this April, an idea borne out of the St. Clair Shores couple's love of collecting animation cells.

"We'd been collecting for four to five years and always had to buy our pieces out of state," said Robert Athey, 31. "Over the years we got to know a lot of the brokers and a lot of the galleries and they said Michigan could use an animated art gallery."

Admittedly, the financial potential was also apparent.

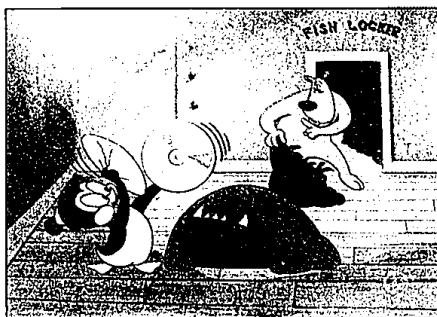
"We first saw animation cells in 1983. Then, when we bought our first ones in 1987, the same ones that were selling for \$200 in 1983 were selling for \$600 to \$1,000," Robert Athey said.

"Production cells have been increasing at a rate of 20-40 percent each year."

The couple's first purchase was an



Name that 'toon: Gallery Animato co-owners Robert and Elaine Manor Athey display one of their featured works, a production cell of Hanna-Barbera's "The Jetsons."



Cool cut-up: These arctic antics came from Walter Lantz Productions.

original production cel featuring six characters from the Hanna-Barbera 5th Anniversary Cartoon. Now they are joined on the Athey's gallery walls by quite a colorful cast of characters. Fred and Wilma Flintstone. The Jetsons. Yosemite Sam, alter ego of animator Fritz Freleng. Sylvester and Tweety. Fat Albert. Even Betty Boop and Magilla Gorilla. They all get along.

See ANIMATION, 5D

State art in 'Town'

■ The seventh annual Our Town exhibit and events will take place this month. The show features works by artists from all over Michigan.

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER



Elvis is coming. Well, maybe it won't be the type of Elvis Presley sighting usually heard about. But the rock and roll legend's face will be one of the images to be seen in this year's Our Town Exhibition and Sale at The Community House, 380 S. Bates in Birmingham.

This year's event, the seventh annual, will feature 356 pieces of art in a wide range of media by 248 artists from around Michigan. It will start with a gala preview Wednesday, Oct. 21, and be open to the public 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 22-25.

Admission is free. For more information, call Leslie Drollet at 644-5832.

"The entire building is transformed into a magnificent art gallery," Birmingham artist Julie Dawson, a member of the Our Town steering committee, said of the exhibit.

"It's grand and glorious and fun and we just have a wonderful week."

Many stars

Architectural sculptor Glen Michaels of Troy, the juror for the 1992 show, praised the works as a "feast of color."

"Singing out a few for awards will be a very difficult job," he said.

"Somebody asked if I was tired (viewing 1,250 slide entries in 8 1/2 hours). I wasn't tired. . . It's like MGM trying to find its favorite stars. There are a lot of stars in this show."

Our Town fills a void for the state's artists since the Detroit Institute of Arts discontinued its juried Michigan artists show, Michaels said. It also is one of the features in the area that encourages talent, he said.

Final judging will take place Oct. 20. At the artists awards ceremony Oct. 25, \$100,000 in prize money will be distributed.

All the art work is for sale. Proceeds from sales and special events will benefit The Community House. Franklin Bank is sponsoring this year's exhibit.

Special events

Representative student art from the Birmingham-Bloomfield area public, private and parochial schools, grades 1-12, will be exhibited Oct. 6-16. An award ceremony will take place 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12, for elementary school students and 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 13, for middle and high school students.

Our Town subjects, in both humorous and somber works, include landscapes, people, plants and fruits. Among the media are watercolor, sculpture, mixed media, pencil, oil, pastel and photography. Quilts and beaded animal skulls will be featured as well. Reservations are required for special events. Call Chris Nightingale at 644-5832. The events are:

■ Gala preview, 7-9 p.m. Oct. 21. Begins at 6 p.m. for Benefactors. Cost per person is \$175 for Benefactors, \$100 for

See TOWN, 5D

Artbeat 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.

■ FIRST THURSDAY

The Townsend Street Art Galleries will be open the first Thursday evening of each month throughout the coming year, beginning tonight. Art patrons and the general public may visit the Robert Kidd Gallery, Donald Morris Gallery, G.R. N'Namdi Gallery and Hill Gallery 5:30-8:30 p.m. each first Thursday.

Art Beat

■ CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Final registration is being taken for the 31st annual writers conference at Oakland University in Rochester. The conference, Friday-Saturday, Oct. 9-10, is co-sponsored by Detroit Women Writers. For details, call the OU Division of Continuing Education at 370-3120 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Registration will be taken through Friday, Oct. 2, for the Oct. 9 afternoon auditing workshops and dinner reception program, featuring award-winning sci-fi writer James K. Morrow speaking on "Science

■ OPEN HOUSE

The Colorworks Studio of Interior Design, 32506 Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills, will have a special open house 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 10. The event will feature one-of-a-kind accessory pieces for the home. Cappuccino and croissants will be served. For more information, call Colorworks at 851-7540.