

# CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1994

## PERSPECTIVES



MARY KLEMIC

## Video documentary, exhibits warm heart

**W**ith the snow, ice and severe cold, this season could be a "winter of our discontent." But an exhibit to Feb. 19 at the Backdoor Gallery, 37220 Eight Mile in Farmington (call 810-474-8906), celebrates the sparkle of the season.

"Winter Spirits" presents images of winter in the non-traditional doll form. "Ice" by Carol Styles is an elegant, creamy white figure in satin or silk. Julie McCollough's whimsical, elf-like "Widgits" wear caps and shoes that are adorned with tiny snowflakes on the tips. "Ice Goddess" by Lynne Sward is dressed in pastel blue, pink and purple, soft as shadows on snowdrifts. Barbara Morrison arranges Indian beads on a figure entitled "Frosting With Sprinkles." Sandra Hoppel's "Winter Angel" is dressed in fur and has feathery, bird's wings.

"Desert Snow Dancer" by Debbie Cooper and "Winter Dance," with its string of icicles, by Kath Lathers look as though they are frolicking in the crisp air. Grace Forrest's "Woman Wind" is all in blue, offering a comforting warmth despite its cold color. Slender figures by Susan Maples stretch their arms and legs in a vague snowflake shape.

## Monumental project

Sunday was a "super" day in more ways than one. Not only was it the day of the Super Bowl, but it also was the day a one-hour documentary of famed sculptor Marshall Fredericks made its premiere.

The production by the city of Southfield's municipal cable division was shown at the Southfield Civic Center at an invitation-only event. Among those attending the show and reception were Southfield Mayor Donald Fracassi and other city officials, former Michigan governor George Romney and Detroit City Council members Maryann Mahaffey and Mel Ravitz.

Fredericks was on hand to receive a standing ovation and a birthday cake before the showing. It was the day before the artist, a Birmingham resident with a studio in Royal Oak, was to turn 86 years old.

"With best intentions there'll be a sequel to it," he told the audience.

The program, "Sculptor Marshall Fredericks," was three years in the making. It includes footage of Fredericks' "Spirit of Detroit" at the City-County Building, 18-ton "Christ on the Cross" at the Indian River Catholic Shrine upstate, "The Gazelle" at the Southfield Civic Center, "Boy and the Bear" at Northland, Levi Barbour Fountain on Belle Isle, pieces at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, 30-foot Victory Eagle on the Detroit Veterans Memorial, Cleveland war memorial fountain and sculpture gallery at Saginaw Valley State University.

See PERSPECTIVES, D1

## Dance photographs show special spirit



An exhibit of Israeli dance photographs, taken between 1936 and 1951, is on display at the Pierce Street Gallery in Birmingham. Photographer Alphonse Himmelreich captured the spirit of the pioneer as well as of the dance.

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

The graceful figures leaping in the air, stretching their arms, bending at their waists, are instruments for the music of the soul.

It's a time that comes through as you see the images. In "Mood and Movement: Israeli Dance Photographs 1936-1951" by Alphonse Himmelreich, an exhibit at the Pierce Street Gallery in Birmingham.

The energy and exuberance of the

dancers as well as the spirit of their time are captured in Himmelreich's black and white photos, on display through March 30 at the gallery, 217 Pierce.

"The freedom of the photographer to do this I find incredible," said the gallery's Marcia Boxman.

"He used the sky as his backdrop," Himmelreich, who died last year at age 88, was born in Germany and em-

See PHOTOS, 5D



Leaps and bounds: The exuberance of the dance and the importance of the land are conveyed in this Alphonse Himmelreich photo, featured in "Mood and Movement: Israeli Dance Photographs, 1936-1951" at the Pierce Street Gallery in Birmingham. In many of the images in the show, the land is included in the photo.

## Mexican art finds new home

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY  
STAFF WRITER

Millie Strong's annual jaunts to Mexico began as much-loved summer vacations. Now, they've turned into business trips for her Mexican import store, Que Pasa? at 151 S. Bates in Birmingham.

Each vacation included visits to marketplaces crammed with work by local artisans. During those shopping trips, Strong, who has an interior design background, found herself thinking, "Hey, I should sell this."

"It's been in the back of my head for a couple of years," she said.

At 28, she decided the time was right for a venture that marries art and commerce; the whimsical with the practical.

It's also driven by her desire to become involved in international business.

"This gives me hands-on experience in the international business field. I'm more valuable to a company (after having run an import business) than if I studied in school," says Strong, of Birmingham.

"I wouldn't go back to interior design. It's more of a hobby to me. I don't want to make it a career."

Her buying strategy combines Strong's personal taste with her experience in the fields of design and retail.

"I buy if I like it and think it will sell. I don't want to carry things people buy on vacation. I want accessories, not reminders of a trip."

Que Pasa? is stocked with gifts and furniture priced from \$15 to \$4,000. Its walls are lined with Mexican folk art masks mixing human and animal features delineated in vibrant reds with strong black lines.

There are Christmas ornaments, dark, luminous bulbs decorated with fluid patterns in yellow. Some are done in embroidered bead work, reminiscent of American Indian quill work.

Substantial wooden furniture shores space with whimsical iron benches and chairs. A painted wooden armchair features folk art visions of country scenes. Iron furniture offers whimsy in the form of backs shaped to resemble people or the rising sun.

"Things that are really different go the fastest."

But she's savvy enough to realize that an affection for Mexico and a feel for design don't in themselves make for a successful business.

First, she did her homework. High school Spanish helped by college Italian are still being honed into conversational skills with the aid of a Spanish tutor.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLYNSKY

South of border: Millie Strong's Mexican import store, Que Pasa? in Birmingham, combines the whimsical and the practical. Colorful works of art (below) are featured with furniture for the home.

Strong read all she could on conducting business south of the border. Using a list supplied by the Chicago office of BancoMex, the Mexican trade office, she began visiting manufacturers and buying furniture and accessories. Strong hired U.S. and Mexican brokers to help shepherd her purchases across the border.

Things really began to fall into place when she rented warehouse space in Guadalajara, northwest of Mexico City.

"All of my big pieces are bought within five or six hours of there. I fly to the different states within Mexico for folk art and accessories."

One of the warehouse's biggest assets is not its location but its owner. "The woman whose warehouse I use is a great source of information. She's helped me find the manufacturers of the pieces I liked."

## Class offered

The Paint Creek Center for the Arts will offer a four-session adult workshop, "Cathedrals in England," 7-9 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 14 to March 7.

Students will be transported to England via slides to view many of its finest cathedrals. The class will culminate with an authentic English tea. For more information, call the PCCA at 810-651-4110 between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.



'Ice': This figure by Carol Styles projects a cool, elegant image. It is featured in "Winter Spirits," an exhibit at the Backdoor Gallery in Farmington.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Creative Living next week:

- A look at how Birmingham artist Robert Dempster produced healing paintings for a Seattle hospital.
- Marty Figley's Garden Spot column.
- Exhibitions, art gallery event listings.

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to *Creative Living*, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 8025 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 810-644-1314.

## SPECIAL SHOWCASE

Furniture and art enthusiasts alike will be interested in a showcase of fresh creative talent as Scott Shuptrine Furniture, PPG Industries and the Center for Creative Studies join forces 6-9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, in the second annual Student Furniture Design Competition.

The event is a special evening presentation of 29 one-of-a-kind student furniture creations at Scott Shuptrine's Troy showroom, 977 E. 14 Mile, just east of John R. It is a one-time opportunity to preview as well as buy original furniture pieces by CCS industrial design students as

## Art Beat

part of a scholarship competition. John Mascheroni, Swaim Furniture's leading designer and fashion trendsetter, will serve as special guest host. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Dress is business attire.

Admission per person is \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Proceeds will benefit the CCS Student Scholarship Fund, to which Scott Shuptrine and PPG Industries are both contributors. For reservations, call CCS at 313-872-9463, or send a check (made payable to the Center for Creative Studies) to CCS, Office of External Affairs, 201 E. Kirby, Detroit 48202-4034.

## DEDICATION

Detroit Country Day Junior School, 3600 Broadway Blvd., east of Lahar and between Quanton Road and Maple in Birmingham, will dedicate its Impressionist Art Gallery 8:15 a.m. Tuesday. The gallery was created by the school's young artists, who were inspired by the vibrant colors and light of the Impressionist period. The gallery was made possible by the efforts and funding of the Detroit Country Day Friends of the Arts Association.

## ON THE AIR

Magdalena Schuster, owner of Tomorrow's Gift in Franklin Village, the subject of a Creative Living story last month, is featured on Bloomfield Community Television this week on "Bottom Line." The show is on Channel 11 (Boch Communications) throughout Bloomfield Township and the city of Bloomfield Hills.