

FINE ARTS

Dutch artist communicates energy in his works

PERSPECTIVES



MARY KLEMIC

"You feel that there is more between heaven and earth... You must bring this out through

...art," van Oel (pronounced van OOL) said at the opening of his exhibit at the Posner Gallery in Birmingham last week.

The Dutch artist's display continues to June 18 at the gallery, 523 N. Woodward (call (810) 647-2552).

Works in van Oel's show are like sculptural paintings. They are rich in texture, tempting to be touched. Their raised surfaces seem to be pushed out from behind the canvas. The paint, which the artist makes himself, is thick and shouts to the viewer from vigorous strokes.

Many of the pieces are large,

almost looking like rooms for the viewer to enter or windows to be examined.

The surfaces bear a variety of images, such as forms resembling an alphabet or ancient figures. Some feature a coat of gold leaf and suggest icons. Dots and area dance across some canvases like bursts of electricity.

Many of the works, such as "Eve Under the Tree of Forbidden Fruits," feature luscious red, blue and yellow. "De Vrouw Met" bears red X's in squares on a blue background; a center square is open.

An exception is "Coptic Cross-

es," with tones that look like rust or verdigris. This large piece bears grid-like arrangements in silver leaf. "Golden Queen" is a woodcut with gold leaf.

"Mental Warrior" shows a figure with geometric parts: a body made up of a square torso and a diamond head, with a downward arc for legs and an upward arc for a helmet. A triangle on the side forms a sleeve or a hand, with a vertical arrangement of a square between two diamonds forming a weapon.

Also on display are glass pieces by van Oel, as bold and rich in texture as the paintings.

"Field in Harmony" presents a red background with three bars: one in a bubbly black, one in blue and one in rough gold. A large fused glass and silver leaf bowl sings in red, blue and yellow.

Painting is what van Oel likes best.

"When I'm making glass, I don't see that I'm a glass artist. I'm a painter, I'm just using different material."

The artist, 54, has liked to paint since he was a child. His father was a musician.

Some sculpture by van Oel not in the Posner show resemble

giant tuning forks, with long and short U shapes balanced on each other. He has been commissioned by a Dutch software company to create a garden of walk-through sculptures at their corporate headquarters.

He speaks of another artist from The Netherlands, Willem de Kooning: "I would like to step in his steps but in my own shoes."

Mary Klemic writes about Oakland County arts. Her phone number is (810) 301-2569. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

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fought the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the United Farm Workers of America to ban the spraying of grapes with Dinoseb, a pesticide causing birth defects.

Chavez commissioned Mendez to design six greeting cards depicting children and farm workers. Proceeds from sales went to the Children of the Fields program of the United Farm Workers.

Last year's travels took her to Germany to do a commissioned mural as a project which

involved children. Also last year, she was one of seven artists who did decorative painting to restore Music Hall to its former splendor.

As an artist active within the community, Mendez frequently gives art workshops to elementary school children as part of Omni Arts which brings artists into inner city classrooms. She brings along the posters created for Hispanic and Latino conferences held annually at Michigan State University. The images demonstrate the influence of

Aztec and Spanish as well as relay the Chicano history of ancestors who worked in fields and mines and built railroads.

"The posters are good teaching tools. It gives them a sense of pride of who they are," said Mendez.

Earth colors dominate her paintings, which are at once light and dark. Strong, energetic lines created by pouring paint directly onto the canvas give movement to the women featured in large scale works.

Symbols such as a torn shawl

denote poverty. Best known for her hidden form within the abstract Mendoza, in many instances, blends figure and landscape.

One of the paintings done for a documentary film about poet Naomi Long Madgett spotlight a young Naomi looking out a window on the streets of Detroit. Security bars obstruct her view in this dark sepi painting.

The paintings from "Poet's Voice" will be featured in September at an exhibit and film debut at the National Confer-

ence of Arts Gallery in the Fisher Building in downtown Detroit.

During her 20 years as an artist, Mendez has earned many awards including:

The University of Michigan Award of Artistic Excellence, the Michigan Women's Foundation Woman in the Arts-1988.

Museum of Science and Industry Award of Recognition (Chicago), the Michigan 150 First Lady Award, State of Michigan on Spanish Speaking Affairs Certificate of Leadership and Achievement.

A Certificate of Achievement for Casa de Unidos's barrier project in Southwest Detroit.

Wayne County Artistic Excellence and Community Commitment Award, and New Detroit's Latino Caucus Award.

Her work is in the collections of Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, Aretha Franklin, the Budd Co. in Troy and Detroit, and Ford Motor Co. in Rockefeller Center in New York City and World Headquarters in Dearborn.

Bloomfield Hills graduate shines in jewelry exhibits

"Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Mary Klemic, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them at (810) 644-1314.

TOP OF THE CLASS

Staci Kerman of Bloomfield Hills graduated at the top of her class with a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Michigan School of Art and Design in Ann Arbor last month.

Her work was recently featured at the Janice Chareh Epstein Museum/Gallery in West Bloomfield, the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association in Birmingham and the Slusser Gallery in Ann Arbor, where she

won the Student Choice Award and Heers Memorial Award for her jewelry series.

Kerman is one of 10 people from 37 countries whose work was selected to be part of the Laponia International Travel-

ing Jewelry Design Exhibition, based in Helsinki, Finland. Her 14-karat gold and sterling silver collection is traveling throughout Europe.

She won first and second place in the Michigan Jewellers Association Design Competition. Her work will be shown at the Aaron Faber Gallery in New York beginning June 27.

CARS AND 'MAN-TIQUES'

Rochester's First Friday Art and Antiques will focus on Father's Day 6-9 p.m. June 7. Fifteen art and antique shops will strut their stuff for Father's Day. Re-live exciting racing history of the 1960s at Gallery Automania, 308 East St. (call (810) 656-8571). An artist presentation, "Great Lakes Light-houses," will be hosted by local artist Margaret (Muggs) Glinke 7:30 p.m. at Eugenia's Hair and Art Gallery, 212 W. Third (call (810) 656-0560). Her presentation will include 22 ink drawings of the 155 lighthouses found on the Great Lakes, a study encompassing six years. Tally Ho! Antiques, 404 Main, features "man-tiques," furniture and accessories for the gentleman, including elements of "the hunt."

Look for balloons to guide your tour to these and other galleries and businesses.

ART CALL

Artists are invited to submit works for the Swann Gallery ceramics show invitational. Deadline is Wednesday, June 26. Call gallery director Theresa Swann at (313) 965-4826 for more information. The gallery is at 1250 Library, Detroit.

ART ACTIVITIES

ArtVentures, the hands-on drop-in art activity space at the Ann Arbor Art Center, will provide an art activities tent at Food Gatherer's annual fundraiser, "Grillin'," 4-8 p.m. Sunday, June 9. Children will be able to make floppy fruit hats or paint their faces with vegetable shapes while their parents dine on food donated by area restaurants. Call (313) 994-8004 for more information.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

The Point Creek Center for the Arts seeks entries from Michigan artists for the 10th Annual Celebrate Michigan Artists exhibit, taking place Aug. 23 to Sept. 27. For more information, call PCCA (810) 651-4110.

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