

ARTS & LEISURE

KEELY WYGONIK, EDITOR • 313-953-2105

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1997 • PAGE 1 SECTION C

PERSPECTIVES



MARY KLEMIC

Strong photos, words, describe plantation life

The power of the simple words still resonates, many years after they were spoken.

They accompany equally strong photos in "The Cultural Landscape of the Plantation," a traveling exhibit from the Library of Congress. It is making its only Midwestern stop on a national tour in the Marcotte Room of the Southfield Public Library, 26000 Evergreen (at 10 1/2 Mile).

The exhibit brings history to life. Photos—from the late 1800s to mid-1900s—show splendor and splendor, rough slave quarters and magnificent mansions. The display also points out the contributions African-Americans made to history, and that the slaves were able to create their own culture.

Details touch the heart and stir the spirit. Examine the rags wrapped around a woman's feet for shoes. Compare the slave quarters on the plantation to the building called the office. Look at the banjo a man holds; it is without ornament but by no means crude. Study the stern overseer on a horse as he watches cotton being picked.

One of the photos shows the mansion of South Carolina governor John Manning. It was made with granite from Rhode Island and was called "Manning's Folly" because it had the "frivolous" luxury of running water on the second floor. Slaves on the property lived in stark little log houses that were in rows of five or six.

Quotes from former slaves describe life on the plantation. Work was from sunrise to sunset, or from "can see to can't see."

"I never know what it was to rest," a woman said. "... I done everything except split rails."

"The dog was superior to us. They would take him in the house."

"Driver wave that whip, put you over a barrel, beat you so blood runs down."

The skills and talents of the slaves made the plantations economically self-sufficient.

"We has a right to the land where we are located," a man declared. "... Our wives, our children, our husbands has been sold over and over again to purchase the lands ... That the reason we have a divine right to the land ... And then didn't we clear the land, and make the crops of corn, of cotton, ... of rice, of sugar, of everything?"

Also featured are words that describe the reaction to hearing about emancipation.

"I felt like a bird out of a cage. Amen. Amen. Amen. I could hardly ask to feel any better than I did on that day."

The display continues through Feb. 6. Call (810) 948-0487.

Mary Klemic writes about Oakland County arts. Her phone number is (810) 901-2569; her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

Collectors share works with Michigan Museum



STORY BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Twenty-five years ago Jeffrey Roth wanted to buy a sports car. Instead his wife Wendy suggested they collect art. Now the West Bloomfield couple owns an extensive collection by contemporary American artists Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella and Alex Katz. Two of the Roths' prints are currently on loan to the University of Michigan Museum of Art for the Michigan Collectors exhibition.

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to glimpse into the home of a private collector, now's your chance. In celebration of the Museum of Art's 50th anniversary, major art collectors, with ties to Michigan, will loan their works for the Feb. 8 to April 13 exhibition of more than 125 paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs.

Art lent for the exhibit, which includes works by Willem de Kooning, Philip Guston, Georg Baselitz, Ansel Adams, Canaletto, and Christo, was through the courtesy of collectors from across the country including 14 from Birmingham, West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Hills.

All contributors have connections to Michigan either as former alumni of the University of Michigan or as a resident of Michigan.

The Roths, whose son and daughter attend the University of Michigan as did Wendy, are loaning two works to the Museum of Art: one a mixed media print by Stella, the other a print by Katz titled "The Wedding Dress."

"I think it's very important for the public to see the work of different artists. I'm happy deriving pleasure from it so why not make others happy," said Jeffrey Roth, who established the Rita Roth Memorial Scholarship at the University of Michigan School of Art & Design in honor of his mother, a U-M graduate.

Former Sen. Jack Faxon, a long-time supporter of the arts who initiated legislation for the founding of the Michigan Council of the Arts, lent two African carvings: a 48-inch Epa mask from the Yoruba tribe featuring the figure of a high priest

holding horns that contain magic, and a 36-inch Ibo male figure.

A painter himself with a loft in New York, Faxon initially collected modern art but gradually switched to African art nearly 30 years ago after realizing artists like Braque, Picasso and Brancusi were looking to it for inspiration. Even though Faxon holds a master of arts and history degree, the purchase of pieces from New York auctions and dealers around the country continues to be an educational process. When in doubt of authenticity or value, the University of Michigan graduate consults the experts at the Detroit Institute of Arts for confirmation.

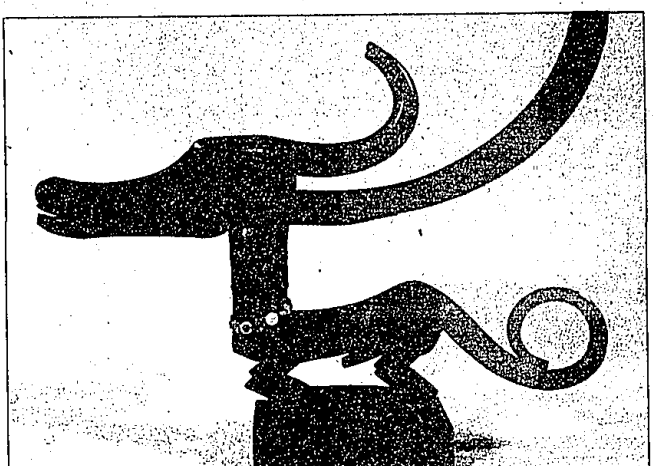
"It is a tremendous challenge to learn and develop through the acquisition of objects that are not only aesthetically pleasing but historically related. Collecting is a form of lifelong learning. Each time you become knowledgeable. I research and read the literature about each acquisition. I'm always challenged by what I haven't seen or known before," said Faxon who lives in

Birmingham.

For the last six months museum director William Hennessey traveled to New York, Chicago, Virginia and Oakland County in search of the drawings by Egon Schiele, a Greek bronze vessel dating from around 300 B.C., and a collage Christo created in preparation for his renowned California "Running Fence" installation.

Frequently playing the game "which one would he take home if he could," Hennessey let the selection grow naturally out of the visited collections.

"The show was curated in collaboration with the collectors themselves. We began with a small list of people we already knew and asked who else should we talk to. For me it was such an enjoyable experience to walk around the homes of passionate collectors and see the light shining in their eyes and excitement coming into their voices when speaking about their art," said Hennessey, concurring with Roth that the general public should have the opportunity to be exposed to work they might



From Mall: (Above) Franklin collectors William and Ellen Kahn loaned this African carving to the University of Michigan Museum of Art for the Michigan Collectors exhibit Feb. 8 to April 13. (Left) Jeffrey and Wendy Roth loaned this print titled "The Wedding Dress" by Alex Katz.

Michigan Collectors

What: In celebration of the University of Michigan Museum of Art's 50th anniversary, major art collectors from across the country with ties to Michigan will loan their works for an exhibition of more than 125 paintings, sculptures, prints, and photographs. Admission is free.

Where: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 525 South State Street in Ann Arbor. For information, call (313) 764-0395.

When: Feb. 8 through April 13. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday; until 9 p.m. Thursday; and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Related Events:

- Tea at Three — Conversations with Collectors features collector Marvin Eisenberg who will share his experience and expertise in collecting Oriental carpets and Dutch ceramic tiles 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21. A wide variety of teas and pastries from Zingerman's will be served. Admission is \$5, free to museum volunteers.
- Collectors Seminars — 7:30 p.m. Thursdays March 13, 20 and 27 includes talks by leading collectors who have lent work to the Michigan Collectors exhibit. Admission to the series in the Museum is \$30, \$15 for Museum Friends.
- Aspects of Collecting — An Anniversary Seminar 4 p.m. Saturday, March 22 in the Alumni Center at Washington and Fletcher streets. Michigan alumni share their collecting experiences and offer tips on collection care, determining quality and authenticity, and the financial aspects of collecting in this seminar sponsored by the Museum and the U-M Alumni Association. Call (313) 764-2201 or (800) 847-4764 for registration information.
- The Museum Collects — 20th-Century Works on Paper continues through May 4. This exhibition of recent acquisitions features nearly 20 American and European prints, drawings and photographs by Max Peckstein, Alfred Sieglitz, Louise Nevelson, Robert Motherwell, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, and Jim Dine.

not otherwise see.

"I think most collectors take delight in owning these works and in sharing them with others. And that's what good art is all about, that sense of sharing."

As he approached collectors, Hennessey found them very gracious. He sees each work loaned as a tribute and gesture of recognition for one of America's finest university art museums.

"The surprise that came is that we're already talking about a Michigan Collectors II and III. There is no Asian art in the exhibition but in the future it will have its own show as will the decorative arts," said Hennessey.

In addition to the Roths and Faxon, local residents loaning art to the exhibition include A. Alfred Thubman, Stanley and Margaret Winkelman, Robert Sonick, Maurice Cohen, Oscar and Dodo Feldman, Eugene Applebaum, and Alan and Marianne Schwartz of Bloomfield Hills; Dr. Garbner, Delian, Kempf Hagan, Ruth Rattner, Marc A. Schwartz, and William and Ellen Kahn of Birmingham, and William and Ellen Kahn of Franklin.

In honor of its 50th anniversary, the museum will unveil its latest acquisition on Feb. 8. Hennessey spent the last year looking in London, Paris and New York for Gaspare Traversa's portrait of the biblical heroine Judith. The painting by the Naples artist is from the 1740s.

Although the museum adds more than 100 works to its collection annually, the purchase of a major painting happens only every couple of years. One the magnitude of Traversa's hasn't occurred in 10 years. Hennessey hopes the Michigan Collectors exhibition will inspire more gifts to the museum.

"The exhibit is important because you get a glimpse into the homes of people who collect but also because we hope works will find their way to the museum as gifts," said Hennessey.

"We're a small museum and don't have a huge amount of money so we depend on members of the community to add to our collection."

MUSIC



Rory and her playmates: Reddy (left to right), Rory, Buster and Duncan will perform a mix of original music and childhood classics with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on Feb. 8.

Classical concerts programmed for families

BY CORINNE ABATT
SPECIAL WRITER

While focusing on the whole family isn't exactly new in the realm of classical music, right now, in our area, there's an increased emphasis on programming for all ages.

Underlying this welcome flurry of musical events designed for everyone from tots to grandparents is the awareness of the importance of building future audiences.

DSO

"The Detroit Symphony Orchestra has been giving concerts, in one form or another, for

young people for over 70 years," said Jill Woodward, spokesperson for the DSO. "A lot of our present subscribers started by coming to young people's concerts."

DSO does five concerts for young people at Orchestra Hall in Detroit, and three for tiny tots at Merly High School Auditorium in Farmington Hills each season.

"We try to make a lot of these concerts participatory, and there's always an educational element," said Woodward.

Children's entertainer "Rory" kicks off the DSO's three-concert Tiny Tots series Feb. 8. Host of "Rory's Place" on The Learning

Channel (TLC), Rory is visiting the DSO with three of her puppet playmates — Reddy, an inquisitive 6-year-old girl who loves animals; Duncan, a 5-year-old boy who is fascinated by machines; and Buster the Alligator, a composing curmudgeon who writes songs, plays the keyboard and harmonica.

Rory and her friends will perform a mix of original music and childhood classics with the DSO, conveying important messages through songs like "It's A Great Big World" and "Take Care of Yourself," while having fun with

Family concerts

- Tiny Tots Concert, Rory with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra — 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, Merly High School Auditorium, 113 Mile Road at Middlebelt Farmington Hills. General admission tickets \$10. Call (313) 833-3700.
- "Musical Carnival," Lyric Chamber Ensemble — 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 9, Millstream Theatre, Southfield (near Northland Shopping Mall on J.L. Hudson Drive). Two-for-one coupons for this and other LCE programs available at Huskins and Target stores. Individual concert tickets \$18 adults, \$15 students and seniors; \$5 children 18 and under. Call (810) 357-1111. Concert Prelude at 2 p.m. features students of LCE's Summer Chamber Music Camp.
- "Family Fantasia," Plymouth Symphony Orchestra — 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 16, Novi High School Auditorium, 24002 Tall Road (corner of 10 Mile Road and Tall Road). Tickets \$8 adults, \$4 children. Call (313) 451-2112.
- The first 250 people who purchase a ticket to "Family Fantasia" will receive a free ticket to the Detroit Whalers hockey game on Feb. 20. Limit four tickets per family.