

FINE ARTS

Video from page C1

stand full-length, gazing curiously. Who knows, although unsettling and mesmerizing, these passing images in the dark could resemble a cloning colony of the future.

Perhaps the most controversial piece is "Clown Torture" by internationally renowned artist Bruce Nauman. The either "you'll love it or hate it" exhibit is located on the first floor of the museum. Approaching the installation room, visitors hear the chilling strains, "No, no, no!" Inside the room, on two ceiling-mounted projectors and four monitors, a Bozo-type clown is undergoing an exasperating routine: throwing a tantrum, sitting on a toilet reading a book and balancing a fish bowl on a stick. Is it satire, spectacle or vaudeville theater? The other two room installations, Willie Doherty's "The Only One in a Dead One," and Diana Thater's "Co Fifi: Five Days in Monet's Garden" push the narrative and

documentary possibilities of video art. Meanwhile, the free-standing exhibit, Tony Oursler's "Telling Vision #5," offers a compelling social statement. Set amid the museum's permanent collection, Oursler has designed a man's face projected on a cloth sculpture. Reflected imagery from the TV is subtly layered on the cloth. A tiny voice behind a ring report on what's on TV. The biting commentary is humorous. It subtly asks: Does the media shape us or do we shape the media? While distinctively different, the six video exhibits that are undergoing an exasperating routine: throwing a tantrum, sitting on a toilet reading a book and balancing a fish bowl on a stick. Is it satire, spectacle or vaudeville theater? The other two room installations, Willie Doherty's "The Only One in a Dead One," and Diana Thater's "Co Fifi: Five Days in Monet's Garden" push the narrative and

Conversations from page C1

Bettie Buss, director of cultural development at Detroit Renaissance. "Our common interest are our shared cultural institutions." Largely through Buss' efforts, Detroit Renaissance spearheaded the proposal on behalf of the region's tier-one institutions.

With consensus-builder and former Speaker of the House Paul Hillebrand, a Republican, now at the helm of Detroit Renaissance, Buss is optimistic about the prospects for reintroducing the proposal.

But for the time being, the political rub of the proposal is too irritating. With Oakland County providing the largest state equalized value in the state, county residents give more taxes than residents in Wayne County. Wayne County and Detroit: Most of the county's elected officers claimed that whoever was providing the most money should receive a proportional voice on the 12-member council.

In other words, Oakland County should have the most number of representatives on the

council. That might be good politics, but as far as cultivating culture and cooperation, it's extremely short-sighted.

In these times, it's worth noting that by no means should the arts be solely supported by public funds. Earned income from foundations, corporate support and fund raising is essential to keep cultural institutions independent from government, and more tightly run. Yet most cultural institutions need financial stability to cover the day-to-day operational costs.

With all the talk about building new malls, sports stadiums and casinos, the significance of a thriving cultural environment has been hardly discussed. Maybe we should be reminded that the arts transcend geographical, political, economic, cultural and racial borders.

To get more politicians to recognize that would be the best magic trick of all.

Frank Provenza is an arts reporter for the Eccentric Newspapers.

DIA docents bring art to schools

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN STAFF WRITER

St. Raphael School students recently toured the Detroit Institute of Arts without leaving their Garden City classroom. In a video presentation of Victorian and ceremonial art works, which included ceramics, stone carving, metalwork, quill and bead work, docent Dodi Weil of West Bloomfield brought the history of native cultures to students as part of the DIA's Art to the Schools program.

"Textbooks are so one-dimensional so I like to live things up," said Nicole Rakoczy, a seventh grade social studies and English teacher at St. Raphael School.

Rakoczy arranged the art appreciation talk last October. Free to tri-county area schools, the DIA's Art to the Schools program enriches student understanding of the place of art and humanities in society. Thanks to the efforts of 66 volunteer docents like Weil, Art to the Schools reached more than 26,000 students in 281 schools last year.

Students at St. Raphael draw, during a one hour class offered each week, but they seldom have the opportunity to learn about art and its history.

In addition to native cultures,

the DIA's Art to the Schools program offers presentations on African, Asian, Egyptian, European, American and modern art. Rakoczy follows up the annual talks by DIA docents with a class trip to the museum.

Using the "Visual Thinking" approach to art education, Weil encouraged students to observe and develop critical thinking skills.

This "learning to look" teaching technique, which instills students with confidence to independently appreciate and enjoy art, was part of Weil's 10 months of intense training in art history required by the DIA's education department.

"You remember more when you think about what you've seen, what is it, what was it used for," said Weil, an Art to

the Schools speaker for 20 years. "We consistently receive more requests for presentations than we can fill," said Art to the Schools vice-chairman Barbara Wojcik of Farmington Hills. "There's an infinite number of talks we can give. If we could get 10 new volunteers, who are available 20 times during the school year, we could offer hundreds of additional programs."

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teers need not be art history majors or artists to become a museum docent.

"We have to know all that we can about the art, but the 'Survey of World Art' course brings everyone up to speed," said Adams. "The education is just incredible, and we're constantly being exposed to the collection and learning more."

In addition to introducing children to art, museum docents give public tours 1 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, and 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Sundays.

"We have a tremendous need for volunteers," said Helga Wise, chairman of the 130-member museum docent committee.

"Our museum docents are cur-

rently studying and reading all kinds of books in preparation for the 'Images in Ivory' exhibition so when people ask questions, they have the answers.

"We'll need even more volunteers for the 'Splendors of Ancient Egypt' exhibition in July that spans an unprecedented period of time (from the predynastic period to the seventh century A.D.) with over 207 objects. It will take up all of the modern galleries."

A docent for 16 years, Wise also gives tours in Spanish. Her background is in international relations.

"The DIA is one of the jewels of Detroit," said Wise. "I really like to introduce people to its

incredible collection. It really teaches us so much about our times, our selves. It's a broadening experience."

Museum docent Judy Lewis of Plymouth agrees with Wise about the need for volunteers especially for the upcoming Egyptian art exhibition.

"They don't have to have the 10-month training that museum and Art to the Schools docents have," said Lewis, a longtime volunteer for the arts. "We'll need gallery service volunteers, staff aides, museum shop help, and people to host information tables for Founders Society membership. They can get their feet wet and then think about becoming a docent."

Wildlife from page C1

Nearly one-quarter of the Lansing-based foundation's budget comes from the Southfield and Grand Rapids exhibit, which is held in the fall.

The festival has grown along with the popularity of wildlife and landscape art. Said Dennis Fijalkowski, executive director of the Habitat Foundation, which claims a 35,000-name database. Fourteen years ago, 35 artists displayed a narrow range of wildlife subjects. Today, nearly twice as many artists will be on hand to reflect the growing diversity of the genre, from realism to Monet-like impressionism.

Since the mid 1980s, Hertling's paintings have been considered on the same level as

this year's featured artists Robert Sissel, Ray "Paco" Young and Robert Hautman. While these artists are inspired by the natural settings of the prairies of Iowa, the grandeur of Montana and the Canadian frontier, they share a distinct aesthetic. Their wildlife renderings often appear with photographic clarity and reflect an attitude somewhere between Andrew Wyeth and Norman Rockwell.

Until recently, wildlife art wasn't widely considered as "serious art." That's changed dramatically, said Fijalkowski. "Just because it's affordable doesn't mean that it's not good art," he said.

While early wildlife art started with decoy carvings and paint-

ings that appealed to hunters, the more recent subjects reflect the tastes of a broader audience.

Trained as an image retoucher during his formative years in Germany, Hertling, 54, has spent more than two decades as a commercial artist. Many of his illustrative works include automotive parts for the Big Three. Regardless of the commercial demands, he always found time outside of his day job to pursue painting, often working into the early morning hours.

He was the featured artist at the 1986 Festival, and was

named artist of the year by Michigan Ducks Unlimited in 1987. Hertling's 7-foot metal heron sculpture, commissioned by West Bloomfield Township, stands in the front of the township hall.

But on a non-artistic level, the festival also appeals for a broader awareness of environmental and conservation issues.

"The festival gives us exposure as a city with a good environmental record," said Jeff Farland, director of Parks and Recreation in Southfield.

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