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alleviate stress in the Kane County Courthouse in St. Charles, Illinois.

"This is a way to be customer-friendly, but it also helps staff morale," he said. "We all have to walk these halls each day."

From 140 entries, 40 pieces were selected. The show was juried by Gerhardt Knodel, director of Cranbrook Academy of Art.

The project is a collaboration among the Citizens Alliance for the Probate Court, Pontiac-Oakland Society of Artists Creative Arts Council and the Oakland County Office of Art, Culture and Film.

It's difficult to discern whether Bingham is more excited about using art to make the wait at court more tolerable, or that no tax payer money was used for the project. "Some people think this is a waste of time, that what we need is more chairs, maybe bench seating," he said. "We don't have money for artwork, but some corporations and individuals can help."

Nearly \$20,000 is expected to be raised from corporate and individual donors to cover promotional costs and purchases of the pieces. Names of sponsors will appear on the plaque beneath the work selected for the permanent collection.

The exhibit - and subsequent collection of art - reflects Bingham and other court administrators' wishes to avoid showing any potentially controversial pieces. "We believe the art

'The court is reaching out to the community to give artists the opportunity to display art in high-traffic, non-traditional areas.'

Bonnie Brede
Former president of the Pontiac-Oakland Society of Artists

should be uplifting, positive and universally accepted," he said.

To select high-quality art that was neither offensive nor exotic, Bingham enlisted Mary Donnan, an art consultant from Birmingham. She has worked with interior architects in selecting art for corporate facilities at Kmart, Nissan and MacKenzie Life Insurance.

"At Kmart, we added a large quilt that helped people make a connection with their own lives," she said. "Art adds a human touch to a functional space."

Longtime local artist Bonnie Brede, former president of the Pontiac-Oakland Society of Artists, spearheaded the effort to get the word out about "Art in the Court."

"The court is reaching out to the community to give artists the opportunity to display art in high-traffic, non-traditional areas," said Brede. "We all hope this will decrease hostility and anxiety while people wait."

Women from page C1

when spoken to," she said.

"The art exhibit is a creative expression to bring their voices together. What you see is the sound of diversity," said Frank, program coordinator of OCC's Womencenter, which supports women in dealing with issues of continuing education, self-esteem, housing, divorce and sexual harassment.

After the rise of feminism of the '70s and the backlash of the late

'80s, Frank believes women are facing a time of great uncertainty. There are many perceived choices and advances, she said. But there remains the ongoing struggle to either fit in or shrug off societal standards of feminine beauty and a woman's role.

Christine Waters' "Ophelia" challenges those stereotypes. A lush landscape of Renaissance primitivism, Waters portrays a submerged Barbie Doll in a sub-conscious world, a reminder that the dazed-looking plastic simpaton represents vapidity, not beauty.

"She's so anatomically incorrect that she wouldn't be able to walk if she were real," said Frank. "Girls are told in ads from Claudia Schiffer to Kate Moss what they can be like. Yet they're also being told they can be anything they want to be. It's confusing."

Several pieces in the OCC exhibit offer further evidence of

what Frank refers to as the "diversity of women's voices." A patchwork quilt by Marianne Hall of Birmingham, entitled "Gala's Scream," contrasts images of the environment with a series of questions, such as "What will we do?"

Other noteworthy works include Center for Creative Studies student Sandra Dupret's "Collections of My Femoness," two shelves of miniature porcelain bras and panties; Kathleen Moore's "Fear of Flying," a clay sculpture with the foot of a Cro-Magnon man and the wings of an eagle; Nancy Prophet's delicate "Mother and Child" sculpture; and Mee-Kyung's Shim's "At Peep of Day," a haunting, surrealistic printing of a woman's awakening.

A Woman's Work
The exhibit at the Charach Gallery, located inside the Jewish Community Center, brings together local artist and Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association instructor Linda Soberman with New York artist Hamoy. For the most part, the mix is successful.

Sylvia Nelson, gallery director, admits that the exhibit is neither controversial nor political. Yet it's not without a few surprises.

The exhibit features two artists who fully explore their mediums. For Soberman, it's photography while Hamoy obse-



A woman's view: Mee-Kyung's Shim's haunting "At Peep of Day" is included in OCC's "Our Visions: Women in Art."

ively pushes her mixed-media inventions, particularly apparent in the ornate "Seven Prophets," an interpretive display of the wise women of the Old Testament.

After a long walk through the gallery, however, it's clear that Hamoy's other work grows tiresome, while Soberman's artistry continues to amaze. The photos of antique mannequins shot through veils and other devices are painted and refined into compelling abstract figurative expressions. Soberman's strongest pieces are a series of images placed inside wooden drawers, hung along the walls.

Through Women's Eyes
More than 300 pieces from women of 27 countries is represented in "Swords into Plow-

shares" Pence Center and Gallery's "Seeing the World Through Women's Eyes." The exhibit is a portion of the larger women's art show held in conjunction with the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China during September of 1995. The work has been reduced to a uniform size of 6 by 7-inches. The pieces include photography, paintings and photos of sculptures. In general, the work depicts the struggles of women in their daily lives and their dreams for equality, opportunity and peace, said Fern Katz of Southfield, a member of the exhibit committee.

"We just have to look at art history to realize that women's art has been notoriously undervalued," she said.

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lar place for touring jazz artists and informal jam sessions.

Ironically, while jazz is often referred to as the original American music, it appeals to only a small percentage of domestic record buyers. The plan, she said, is for other cities to honor local musician who've upheld the jazz tradition.

Even in Detroit, one of the top radio markets in the country, there is only one commercial jazz station, WJMV. That station, however, plays mainstream "smooth jazz." Eastern Michigan's public radio station WEMU has a jazz-blues format. Jazz can be heard on special pro-

grams, such as WDET's Ed Love's weekend show.

In the next few years, Riley Green hopes that legends of Jazz Hall of Fame concerts will be held in major cities across the country. The plan, she said, is for other cities to honor local musician who've upheld the jazz tradition.

"One day, we could be like the Montreux Festival," she said. "But first we want to perfect. Legends of Jazz in Detroit so people see us as responsible, and as something they want to be a part of."

ment striped Jews of their rights, homes and possessions, then sent about 75,000 to die in concentration camps.

In early April, France's three major art museums - the Musee d'Orsay, the Louvre and the Pompidou Center - placed on public view a collection of drawings, paintings and sculptures recovered from the Nazis. A collection of nearly 700 works at the Louvre included paintings by Rubens, Biber, Corot, Delacroix and Rousseau.

In his book, Feliciano claims that the government feebly attempted to find the owners of the unclaimed works. Only 30 works were successfully reclaimed since 1945. The government's position, however, was

that many of the art owners probably perished in Nazi camps.

But Feliciano's meticulous research uncovers the story of the French museums' failure to return thousands of pillaged paintings. He proves his point by examining the systematic confiscation and disbursement of five private art collections belonging to French Jewish families.

After 50 years, the unvarnished truth about the confiscation is revealed, including the role of many silent conspirators.

"What the Nazis did was to try to change history," said Feliciano. "Because of the negligence of auctioneers in the US and

Europe, this chapter of history is still open."

Feliciano traces how the art was transferred from top German officials to art dealers to auction houses. Disregarding questions about the origins of the art works, houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's sold looted art.

As a result of his book, Feliciano has single handedly forced the French government to identify and show some of the looted art, encouraged the descendants of the rightful owners to claim their heritage. And along the way, he has revived a debate

about national character and righteousness.

"I wrote the book for a sense of justice," said Feliciano. With the looted art works headed to their rightful owners and the unvarnished truth known, maybe now time can march on.

Do you have stories about your art group, art show or any art related issues? Please contact Frank Provenzano, (810) 901-2557. Or write to him at the Birmingham Eccentric Newspaper, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Frank covers arts for communities in the Observer & Eccentric coverage area.

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Saturday, May 3 - Video:
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Sunday, May 4 - Lecture:
Food in the European Late Middle Ages, 2 p.m. Lecture followed by sampling of medieval dishes, 3-4 p.m. Free with exhibition admission.

Saturday, May 10 - Music:
Good Neighbors All, 1 and 2:30 p.m.
Instrumental ensemble plays medieval music. Free with museum admission.

Sunday, May 11 - Drop-In Workshop
for all ages: *Carving*, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Carving Demonstration, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

This exhibition, which travels in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, June 23-August 11, 1997, was organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts and is made possible with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Institute of the Arts, the Council on the Arts and the Humanities, the Florence Gould Foundation, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Rita Kayan Center for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the D.I.A. Friends Society. In Detroit, the exhibition is sponsored by Cadillac and the Detroit Cadillac Dealers.

Devotional Images, Cecil G. Brown, Jr., 1990-1992

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