

Conversations from page C1

family strife from opening up beneath her. She had to learn to read her parents' faces to figure out what was going on - and how to find her place.

She learned to sense how people were feeling. "Without my background, I just wouldn't shoot what I do."

It's a sensitivity further wrought from tough times that followed her in adulthood.

Aim that's true

When she was in her early 20s, shortly after her father died, Seiter was the driver in a fatal car accident. She's still haunted by the memories of the victims of the crash, and respectful of their families' privacy.

Like others who've asked

"Why" after a tragedy, Seiter believes that things happen for a reason. That explains her tough childhood. Even the inexpressible pain that remains from the terrible auto accident.

Destiny, she believes, has put her behind the camera. Fate, she contends, determines the right moment to preserve a timeless expression of her subjects.

Click, click, click.

She said she aims to capture her subject's honesty. She laughs as she checks the flash mechanism on the lights. "Hope it's working."

I wondered whether she meant her flash or my honesty. Anyway...

Click, click, click.

Suddenly, it's she who's inter-

viewing me.

Amid the shadows of Seiter's darkened studio, I find myself telling her of my aspirations and fears. And then, the distance between the camera and subject dissolves.

Self-consciousness slips away. A thing called "soul" rises to the surface and spreads across my face.

Click.

"Got it," she said.

And just like that, I've become part of Pat Seiter's collection.

Do you have an arts-related story? Please contact Frank Provenzano, (810) 901-2557. Or write to him at the Birmingham Eccentric! Newspaper, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009.



Penetrating eyes: Murcko captures the penetrating gaze of a Maasai mother and her child. The painting is based on a series of sketches he created during a trip last year to Kenya.

Sculpture from page C1

Christine Hagedorn of Troy; Sally Kaplan and Joseph Wesner of Birmingham; and John Piet of Southfield.

Just as good

"Collectors go to Chicago and New York to buy their art work," said Cynar. "Mainly, the galleries aren't talking these collectors that Michigan artists are just as good."

Cynar and Fortuna provided the vision, energy and organization behind the exhibit. "We've proved that you don't need a huge organization or a big budget," said Fortuna, whose wax and metal hanging sculpture at MCA is a tactile delight.

"We're two people who have the commitment to getting things done and the genetic

defect to take on too much," said Fortuna, who also edits the bimonthly arts publication, "Ground Up," written, published and distributed by local artists.

In February, Cynar and Fortuna assembled a list of about 50 sculptors. Then, they visited many of the artists, discussed their work, looking for distinctive ideas. Soon, the list of sculptors - and number of art pieces - grew.

Not receiving corporate funding nor public grants didn't dissuade Fortuna and Cynar. Instead, they enlisted the support of the Creative Art Center, Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital, the Pontiac Downtown Business Association, Habatat Galleries, MCA, Gallery Function Art and Industry.

And when it came time to pay for the design and printing of the exhibit catalog and other marketing materials, they dug into their own pockets for about \$8,000.

While Fortuna and Cynar aren't quite prepared to take on the endless task to begin planning for an annual group exhibit, they're encouraged that others may now recognize the broad talents of Michigan sculptors.

"Hopefully," said Cynar, "we've created a catalyst to get some attention."

Based on wide public and media attention, they can claim "mission accomplished." In keeping with the tradition of the first "Pontiac Sculpture" exhibit, perhaps subsequent shows should be aptly titled "Tenacious."

Cultures from page C1

revealing portraits of mothers, children and sages from the tribe attracted an unusually large number of visitors to the Hamilton Street space filled with African masks, sculpture, paintings and artifacts.

"The 'eyes' and 'skin tones' in the painting is what got me interested in Bill's work," said Moore, who opened his gallery last winter after six years in downtown Detroit. "Many people ask: 'Is the painter black?' They think he must be black because he knows his subject so well." I tell them, "No, Bill is a white man."

With increasing demand for his work and a born-again artistic spirit, Murcko paints feverishly nearly every evening at his downtown Detroit studio at the Scarab Club behind the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Taking up painting just a few years ago, Murcko not only works to make up for lost time, but to discover his own painting style. Coming from a profession sustained by commercialism and trendy cliches, the search for his unique artistic touch has the refreshing appeal of a mid-day tropical shower.

"Advertising has been a wonderful way to make a living, but painting, that's much more rewarding," said Murcko.

What: Paintings of Bill Murcko
Where: Moore Gallery, 304 Hamilton, Birmingham; (248) 647-4662

When he returned to the United States, Murcko sought to improve his initial understanding of oil painting learned in a class taught by Grace Serra at the Bloomfield Birmingham Art Association.

Although he admitted being an apprentice, he managed to be selected last fall to attend a one-week seminar in portrait painting taught by acclaimed New York painter John Sandan.

Apparently, his acceptance was largely based on the initial paintings from the 70 completed sketches of the Maasai people.

Alongside a 28-year portrait veteran and a graduate from the School of Realism in New York, Murcko settled into Sandan's Central Park salon, a studio inhabited by legendary painter John Singer Sargent, who has been called the Van Dyck of American painting.

"I looked at the splashes of paint on the floor and realized that maybe they were from Sargent," said Murcko, with a boyish grin.

Ironically, Sargent's portraits of the Anglo-American bourgeois are a stark contrast to Murcko's unpretentious subjects. With his painting, "The Bride," about two-thirds finished, Murcko showed the work to Moore, and told him he was working on a series of the Maasai people.

"As soon as I saw the work, I made up my mind," said Moore. "I know these people and Bill captures their lives and soul."

This October, Murcko will travel with his son to Bangkok and Rangoon. Camera and sketch pad in hand.

"Everyday in the advertising world I live from deadline to deadline," he said. "My art is like a jealous mistress. If I could paint full time, I would."

Looking over his impressive paintings of the Maasai people, Murcko is likely to feel the self-imposed pressure to "just do it."

ART BEAT

NEW HOME FOR EISENHOWER DANCERS

The Eisenhower Dance Ensemble (EDE) has moved from downtown Pontiac to Rochester Hills on West Hamlin Road.

An expanded facility will allow more room for rehearsal, storage and classes. Additional offerings will include a professional track, contemporary dance program, a professional track ballet program and a children's performing company.

EDE Center for Dance will hold its Grand Opening, Sept. 2-

6. The center's fall session runs for 15 weeks, Sept. 2-Dec. 12.

For information, call EDE at (248) 852-5850.

FALL CLASSES AT BBAA

Full term at the Bloomfield Birmingham Arts Association begins in mid September.

New adult classes include: Prehistoric & Ancient History, Wheel Throwing, Figure Illustration, Metalworking, Beginning Oil Painting, Non-figurative Sculpture.

Children's classes include: a

course to conceptualize and create short stories with pictures; an experimental course in various mediums; and the basics of photography.

BBAA also will offer a short-term Polaroid workshop and a course in tile making.

Classes begin Monday, September 15 and run 13 weeks. Registration starts for BBAA members on August 18. Open registration begins September 2.

To receive a full class brochure, call (248) 0866.

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Lack of pretension

In the mid 1960s, Murcko translated a few high school drawing awards into an entry-level job sketching homes and building retail ads at the *Flint Journal*. Twenty-seven years later, he has built his advertising/public relations business, Communication Associates of Troy, into a 23-person firm that handles annual reports, brochures and other business-to-business marketing projects. He also serves as a board member of Franklin Bank.

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