

## FINE ARTS

# Photographers zoom in on art of the garden

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

What do you do when squirrels gnaw the sunflowers growing in a backyard garden?

S. Kay Young photographed the battered posies in her studio then entered the image, "Squirrel Harvest," in an exhibition at the University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

From 400 entries, Michael Sarnacki, president of the American Society of Media Photographers in Michigan, chose Young's photograph along with 42 others for "In the Eye of the Garden."

The color and black and white images, created by professional and amateur photographers from Livonia to Bloomfield Hills, vied for a coveted position as centerpiece of all promotions for the Ann Arbor Flower & Garden Show March 26-29 at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds in Ann Arbor. Show designer and coordinator, Paul Little expects



Black and white: Judith G. Yaker of Bloomfield Hills photographed these tulips, "Five in a Row," using natural light.

the winning entry, "Passion Flower Bud," by Jane McAnan of Saline, to draw 26,000 to 30,000 visitors to this year's "A Gardener's Fair."

"Throughout history, gardens have inspired art work," said Little. "We were looking for a piece for our poster. We're trying to get people's attention to come to the show."

Little encourages gardeners and non-gardeners alike to come out and see the floral photographs. The botanical gardens' staff programs activities like the exhibit in the off-season to heighten community awareness of the exotic flowers growing in the conservatory at Matthaei. Besides, said Little, "at this time of year, everyone can use a little brightening up."

"It's not easy to do photography although everyone can pick up a camera," said Little. "We wanted to encourage photographers to shoot more than pretty pictures. We wanted quality and to see what other kind of meaning besides beauty they could

create. I like the black and white. Composition and texture plays a bigger role in black and white. Color can mislead you in a way."

Each of the photographs have a story to tell. Young did return the sunflowers to the squirrels in her Madison Heights garden after photographing her entry.

Young, a professional photographer with a show currently on exhibit at Tango in New York City, is of Cherokee descent. The primary focus of her imagery is her heritage, floral and nature. Her work is included in the touring exhibition "She Be Me," opening March 28 at the Summit on the Park in Canton. The exhibition features women artists of African American, Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American ancestry. A

Center for Creative Studies graduate, Young will talk about her work noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 22, during an open house and workshop on photography, composition and natural light at the North American Indian Art Gallery and Trade Center, 17321 Telegraph Road, (north of Six Mile Road), Detroit. For more information, call (313) 535-7602.

In addition to the sunflower still life, Young exhibits "Intoxication," a double exposed portrait of a pink rose, also from her garden in the show at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. She emphasized that she only uses Fuji film, processed on Fuji paper at a Grand Rapids lab.

"I was trying to convey the sensual feeling you get when smelling a rose," said Young in

an interview from New York. "A single rose didn't give me what I wanted so I double-exposed it to get the scent in motion."

## Lily Magic

Susan Skibicki of Livonia used marbled paper for the background and a lily purchased at a grocery store to create "Mountain Lily Magic." As an art teacher at Edsel Ford High School in Dearborn, Skibicki has knowledge of a variety of mediums. She became serious about photography two years ago after shooting slides of her paintings. Artists need quality slides of their work to enter competitions and exhibitions. Skibicki's paintings have been shown at the Ann Arbor Art Association and the Atrium Gallery and Changing Seasons in Northville. An artist working in a variety of media, Skibicki is involved with theater as well. In May, she will appear in "The Odd Couple" with the Ridgedale Players in Troy.

"I was actually flattered to get in the show with my photographs," said Skibicki, a member of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. "I like photography as a medium. With photography, you can capture

the moment, capture what's happening."

Judith G. Yaker used the natural light streaming in from a bathroom skylight to produce "Five in a Row," a photograph of tulips gathered from her Bloomfield Hills garden. Yaker studied photojournalism at Oakland University in Rochester. A member of the Pontiac Photographic Society, she has only recently begun to show work at the Scarab Club in Detroit and Lawrence Street Gallery in Pontiac. A girlfriend encouraged her to enter "In the Eye of the Garden."

"Photography is a great way to express yourself," said Yaker. "It's fun, it's a passion. I like the camaraderie of the camera club members. I've met a lot of nice people."

Other artists exhibiting in the show include Laurie Tennant of Troy; Anne McCarthy, Berkley; Alicia Ghur, Hamtramck; Theresa Thompson, Royal Oak; Julia Markey, Huntington Woods.

For a story on the Ann Arbor Flower & Garden Show, see Thursday's At Home section.

## In the Eye of the Garden:

What: An exhibit of 43 color and black and white photographs focusing on the garden. The images were chosen by Michael Sarnacki, president of the American Society of Media Photographers in Michigan, from 400 entries.

When: Through Friday, April 10. For viewing times, call (734) 998-7061.

Where: University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 North Dixboro Road, (off Ann Arbor Road), Ann Arbor.

Related activity: The Ann Arbor Flower & Garden Show offers hundreds of ideas for gardens and landscapes in the more than 22,000 square feet featuring plants, designs, sculpture, tools, garden accessories, and furnishings 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, March 26-28 and until 5 p.m. Sunday, March 29 at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor/Saline Road, Ann Arbor. Tickets \$10 adults (\$8 in advance), \$5 ages 13-17 years, \$3 ages 4-12 years, children three and under free. Opening night gala: 7:30-10 p.m. Wednesday, March 25, tickets \$60 (\$50 in advance). Call (734) 763-TKTS/998-7061.

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