

# Arts & Leisure

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Flowing: Sanjay Mody rehearses for an upcoming recital.

## Sanjay Mody: Playing with a 'presence'

The ringing acoustics from the Steinway & Sons piano dissolve into the recital hall at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.

Sanjay Mody rises from the piano bench and holds out his hand. It's the same right hand that moments before had coaxed the rousing melody from Mendelssohn's concerto in G minor.

He offers a polite greeting, and doesn't appear to realize how he makes such a difficult task of playing piano sound like flowing water through shifting currents.

As pianists go, Mody's hands are appropriately thin and agile. Anyone who listens to him perform will appreciate his proficient technique that defies his 12 years of age.

But anyone who watches him hover over the keys like a precocious Vladimir Horowitz will wonder how a child can interpret a series of notes into an emotionally mature landscape.

They simply called it "presence."

### From love

In just two days, Mody learned the Mendelssohn piece that he'll perform this Wednesday in a recital at Schoolcraft.

"I see in Sanjay a tremendous curiosity and ability to concentrate deeply," said Donald Morelock, director of the piano department at Schoolcraft.

From the early teaching sessions three years ago, Mody had an uncanny ability to memorize and interpret increasingly difficult pieces, said Morelock.

"Sanjay thinks like a professional," he said. "He relates to the structure of a piece, adds his own interpretations and brings his own emotional variety."

Morelock has developed an "imaginative connection" with Mody, said Sanjay's father, Parimal Mody.

Rather than dissect and memorize music, Morelock's approach is to encourage his students to create a personal narrative, or vivid imagery to associate with the various passages of a piece.

Typically, Mody practices rigorously keeping time with a metronome. The last time through a piece he sets aside the metronome and "just has fun with it."

"You have to put together a piece because you love it," said Mody.

The nuances in his playing style, he said, come from interpretations of the composer's life and milieu.

Beethoven is his favorite. "I love the emotion and loud chords," he said. "I also love that Beethoven had to write music as a

deaf man."

Please see PRESENCE, C2

It may be

# LOONEY

but it's art

At any moment, you expect the sound of carrol chomping, and a lovable, cocky white-tail rabbit to pop up from beneath the polished hardwood floors at the austere Park West Gallery.

With a casual disdain of James Dean and the cool appeal of a perturbed rock star, you expect that wascally wabbit to look around at the paintings of Renoir, Monet and Miro and pronounce the three most recognizable words in the Looney Tune lexicon: "What's up, doc?"

But even Bugs Bunny's cool defiance would melt just thinking about the emergence of animation as a collectible, perhaps the definitive American fine art.

The recently opened exhibit of animated art at Park West in Southfield offers a compelling case that Bugs and his loony colleagues Daffy, Porky, Wile E. Coyote, Road Runner, Pepe Le Pew, Sylvester and Tweedle aren't just satirical products of their smart-aleck creators.

Rather, perhaps the wacky world of these all-too-human cartoons reflects a universe of symbolic truths about our own wacky world.

If pop art raised awareness of the relationship between advertising images and art, then animation art slams ducks any vestiges between amusement and "serious art."

### American art form

Like many of his colleagues, Park West Gallery owner Albert Scaglione wasn't convinced that the artistry of animation was on the level of collectible paintings and sculptures.

"I did my research," said Scaglione, who noted that he conducted an informal survey of collectors at auctions around the country and aboard cruise ships where Park West coordinates the bidding on pieces of fine art.

With the prodding of his son, Marc Scaglione, merchandise manager at Park West, the elder Scaglione became a believer.

"Not only is there a market for animated art, but I place this (art) on the level with jazz and the Broadway musical as a purely

American art form," said the elder Scaglione.

Today, outside of Disney and Warner merchandise stores, Park West is the largest animator art-seller in the world. Last year, they reported sales of about \$10 million.

Park West's exhibit, curated by the younger Scaglione, features the work of Chuck Jones, one of the most distinguished and influential animators from what is considered the Golden Age of Animation, the mid 1940s to the early 1960s.

Jones' animation and directing work on Looney Tunes cartoons, and MGM classics such as "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" and "Horton Hears a Who," earned him two Academy Awards, and honorary degrees from the American Film Institute and the Directors Guild of America Life Membership Award.

Filmmakers Steven Spielberg and



George Lucas have claimed that Jones has been a major influence on their filmmaking.

At 85, Jones continues to draw and paint from his home in southern California. He sends autographed drawings to children who have written to him in search of a word from Bugs or the other Looney Tunes.

The wit behind that sharp-tongued hare has hardly diminished.

"We like to say, 'French Impression started as an art and became a business, and animation started as a business and became an art,' said Jones.

The bottom line: Humor

In exhibits adjacent to Jones' series of oil paintings, hand-painted

Please see LOONEY, C2

Wascally wabbit: A confused Elmer Fudd, center, struggles to figure out who's who in Chuck Jones' hand-painted limited edition cel, "Identity Crisis." By the way, that's Bugs Bunny on the left and Daffy Duck on the right.

WHAT: "Animation Art Exhibit," featuring Academy Award-winning artist Chuck Jones  
 WHEN: Through Thursday, Sept. 3  
 WHERE: Park West Gallery, 29469 Northwestern Highway, Southfield  
 HOURS: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. For information, call (248) 354-2343 or (800) 521-9554.

Characters Chuck Jones helped to create:

- Bugs Bunny
- Daffy Duck
- Elmer Fudd
- Porky Pig

Characters created by Chuck Jones:

- Road Runner & Wile E. Coyote
- Marvin the Martian
- Pepe Le Pew
- Michigan J. Frog
- Gossamer
- Private Snafu
- Huckle & Bertie

## ART FAIR

# Couple enjoys tiling away their days together

Rodney and Lisa Cooper love making ceramic tile. This time-honored craft gives them a chance to spend time together.

During the day Rodney sets up web sites for Chrysler at Ross Roy Community in Bloomfield Hills, and Lisa consults on projects at EDS in Southfield.

Married five years ago in October, they became interested in architectural tiles after buying a 1939 bungalow in Livonia's Old Roseadale Gardens. An appreciation for Pewabic tiles and the Arts and Crafts movement led them to take classes at Pewabic Pottery to learn more about crafting tiles for their home.

The Coopers, along with more than 60 artists from Seattle to Boston, will sell their tiles at Pewabic Pottery's Antique and Contemporary Art Tile Fair Aug. 16.

"Tile making is really important because our jobs keep us separate," said Lisa, 31. "We really enjoy it. It keeps us happy all around."

"It's a good way to be together and share," added Rodney, 35.

The Coopers exhibited in the first Pewabic tile fair three years ago. The show was in conjunction with a symposium held by the Tile Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting an awareness and appreciation for the history and preservation of ceramic surfaces in the United States.

Among the items the Coopers will sell Aug. 16 are hand-painted and sea shell tiles, a cafe-style table for indoors or outdoors,

and ceramic flowers which were best sellers at Art in the Park in Plymouth in July.

Rodney grew up in Toledo and has bachelor and master degrees in visual communications from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He's always had an interest in art and design and worked in the graphic arts field in Ohio before moving to Michigan. Both he and Lisa are inspired by the wondrous tile of Old Roseadale Gardens.

He's currently making preliminary sketches for a bear who's just caught lunch out of a river. Lisa is carving clay for a mold featuring a porcupine. They're also working on a ceramic sign to be placed on the brick pillars leading into their subdivision.

"The thing with ceramics is the options are endless," said Lisa, who graduated with a business degree from the University of Florida. "The difficult part is settling on one particular idea at a time."

Rodney and Lisa have yet to find time to handcraft ceramic surfaces for their kitchen since starting KOP (pronounced copel), a custom handcrafted tile business, in 1994. In addition to selling tiles at Architectural Artifacts in Toledo, the Coopers accept commis-

sions for custom work and currently are creating tiles in an acorn and oak leaf design for a kitchen in an 1890 Toledo home, and a Scandinavian design of a deer for a backplash in a Livonia kitchen.

"Tile is coming back but in no particular style," said Lisa. "I think people have an appreciation for that type of surface, and there are a lot of do-it-yourselfers who can create something unique for their home with our help."

Spending weekends together at romantic Bed n' Breakfasts in Michigan, and antiquing are also favorite pastimes. They recently returned from a vacation in Allen near the Irish Hills area where they visited several antique shops.

"We look for antiques we can incorporate with our tile," said Lisa. "Our interest really lies in combining tile with iron work and furniture."

### Kathy Rae

Kathy Rae, an antique dealer from Bloomfield Hills who will sell vintage tiles from the 1880s to 1950s at the fair, says tiles have grown in popularity in the last few years, not only as framed art, but decorative surfaces for furniture. She retrieves antique tiles from Victorian homes about to be demol-

## Antique and Contemporary Art Tile Fair

WHAT: Pewabic Pottery presents its third annual sale of handcrafted art tiles by more than 60 artists from across the country. In addition to the tiles, tables, vases, frames, and a variety of items will be on hand along with free antique tile appraisals, installation demonstrations for the setting of tile tables, back splashes and floors, and a silent auction to benefit Pewabic's education and historic programs.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16.

WHERE: Grosse Pointe War Memorial, 32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms. For information, call Pewabic Pottery, (313) 872-0044.

COST: Admission \$5.

ished. Tiles were at the peak of their popularity during the Victorian period in America. Tile stoves, fireplaces, and surrounds for fireplaces decorated many homes built in Grosse Pointe and Indian Village earlier this century.

"Arts and Crafts is very popular but Victorian was the height of tiles," said Rae. "In England, they tiled everything. In hospitals, it was the walls, the floors, for sanitary reasons because it can be washed down so easily."

According to Rae, Art Nouveau tiles are gaining respect for their floral themes. But tiles of all designs can be found in homes and businesses today including

Please see TILING, C2