

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

Galerie Blu's move to Pontiac adds to revival

These things always happen. You've got a plan. Everything is all set. And suddenly, a thing called life gets in the way. It happened to David Papa of Birmingham. A graduate of Cranbrook's class of 1984, he went on to Kalamazoo College, then to the University of Michigan where he earned his MBA and studied marketing. "I was all ready for my corporate career, then I kept hearing the advice: 'Do something that you love,' said Papa. Apparently, the business background and his love of art has made Papa a practical idealist.

Opportunity calls These days, Papa has both a corporate career as a project manager at Ducker Research Co. of Birmingham, and is following his passion as a curator/director of Galerie Blu, a local gallery specializing in pop art.

He spends his 9-to-5 serving the marketing needs of his automotive industry clients. When the five o'clock bell rings, Papa turns into a connoisseur of taste and talks about hanging out in New York with people like Ronnie Cutrone, a contemporary of Andy Warhol. **WHAT:** "Best Buddies," an exhibit to benefit those with mental retardation **WHEN:** Opening reception 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5. Exhibit runs through Saturday, Feb. 27. **FEATURED ARTISTS:** Romero Britto, Keith Haring, Kenny Scharf, Alain Despert, Robert Rauschenberg, Julian Schnabel and others. **WHERE:** Galerie Blu, 7 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, (248) 454-7797

Despite his need for a "revenue flow" from a corporate job, there are signs that Papa's love of art could soon become a full-time gig. On Friday, he'll move his art gallery from his three-year home along N. Old Woodward in Birmingham to downtown Pontiac. The opening exhibit, "Best Buddies," is a benefit featuring an impressive list of pop artists. The future for Papa — and any art gallery, for that matter — is hardly predictable. But where some might hesitate to predict the future, Papa prefers to describe his as "a time for opportunity."

Creating a scene Typically, before Papa makes any decision, he gathers plenty of information. Looks for trends. Analyzes his options.

In deciding to move his gallery to Pontiac, it was no different. He spent time walking around downtown Pontiac, making sure that each visit was on a different day. He talked with artists, art dealers and longtime business owners in the area.

"They're creating a scene in Pontiac," said Papa, noting the local development, new retail spaces and the

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Inspired: "Best Buddies" by Mark Kostab.

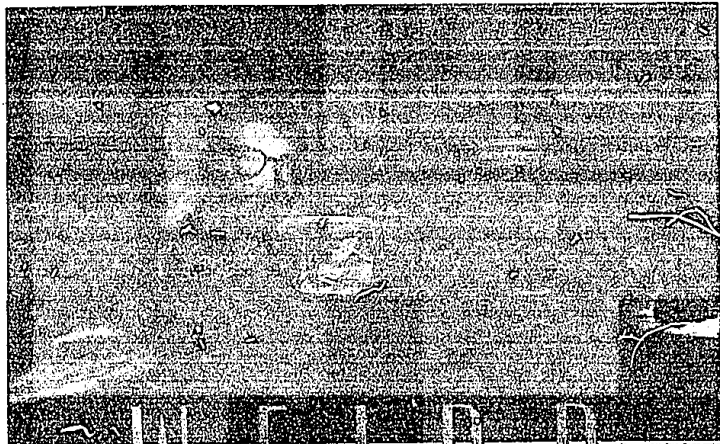


Photo by Jim Janczarek

WEIRD SCIENCE

Artists conjure spirit of discovery at Cranbrook

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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Perhaps a new opening line might be considered for the Book of Genesis. Something like: "In the beginning, there was cloning. And from there, things only got weirder." That, of course, might not please fundamentalists, but it offers a description of how far and relentlessly fast science is moving from the realm of comprehension into a frightening place where ethics and aesthetics are mere afterthoughts. And where a replicated ewe named Dolly is the poster child.

Besides genetic engineering of animals and human body parts, how weird is the world of science? Atomic and biological weapons of mass destruction have become passé. A population explosion of anonymous communities is floating in cyberspace. Meanwhile, outer space is becoming littered with satellites. And a multitude of virtual realities are replacing the real thing.

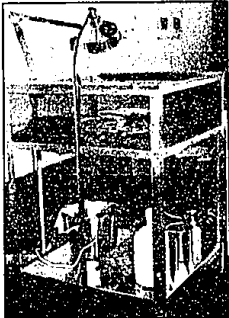
By any standard, science is a very weird place — and getting stranger and stranger.

Which only makes science — the subject, not the method — a perfect topic for a contemporary art exhibit.

Opening today, "Weird Science" at Cranbrook Art Museum, features the work of four American artists who turn their ironic sensibilities on scientific methodology.

The exhibit marks a milestone for Cranbrook, said Gregory Wittkopp, director of the art museum.

"We're at the point where we can organize shows of this caliber, not just be one of the venues of a traveling exhibit."



Controlled setting: Margaret Honda's project (above) examines the conditions under which a Box Turtle is studied. Artist Mark Dion (top photo) with his reptile specimen project, one of four in "Weird Science."

WHAT: "Weird Science: A Conflation of Art and Science," featuring works by Mark Dion, Gregory Green, Margaret Honda and Andrea Zittel

WHEN: Through Saturday, April 3

WHERE: Cranbrook Art Museum, 1221 N. Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills

HOURS: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, (248) 645-3323

RELATED EXHIBIT

WHAT: "In the Dark," an exploration of the sights, sounds, smells of the dark through life-like dioramas, hands-on computer games, realistic specimens and fiberglass models

WHEN: Through Sunday, May 2

WHERE: Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1221 N. Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills

HOURS: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, (toll-free) 1-877-GO-CRANBROOK

Means to progress?

By no means, does "Weird Science" set out to bash science as calculating or inhumane. Nor do the exhibits of Mark Dion, Gregory Green, Margaret Honda and Andrea Zittel impose a Dr. Strangelove scenario of a world out of control.

The point of "Weird Science" is more subtle, and even respectful: Science without a conscience is mere fact gathering.

And while the four artists present distinctly different projects, there's a common theme: Too often, science is taken for granted as the means to "progress."

As many contemporary artists continue to explore mediums and subjects such as gender, identity and pop culture, there's a growing interest in the dynamo propelling technological, and medical inventions, said Irene Hofmann, curator at Cranbrook Art Museum.

"These artists use the language of science, but they're not constrained by the conclusions of science," said Hofmann.

In other words, the artists in "Weird Science" search to evoke those feelings that led Descartes to doubt, Newton to dream and Einstein to consider the relativity of the universe.

Religion of the day

"Science is the religion of the day," said Mark Dion, an artist from Pennsylvania who is self-taught in the field of natural history.

In a darkened gallery, Dion has arranged more than 100 reptile specimens on a long table. Jars of formaldehyde, snakes, lizards, and frogs are illuminated by lights beneath the table, giving the feeling of entering a mad professor's laboratory.

Amid the dramatic science-fiction setting, Dion hopes his exhibit will encourage questions about research methods, and the actual presentation

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WHAT: American String Quartet in concert
WHEN: 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7
WHERE: Rackham Auditorium, 919 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor
TICKETS: \$10-\$30, (734) 764-2539
PROGRAM: Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, Op. 18, no. 1, and Quartet in e minor, Op. 59, no. 2; and a world premiere of Kenneth Fuchs's Quartet No. 3 ("Whispers of Heavenly Death")

String quartet premiers new work, honors classical past

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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As far as prologues go, composer Kenneth Fuchs confesses, this one's a classical doozy.

Fuchs' newest composition for string quartet premieres Sunday, Feb. 7, at Rackham Auditorium in Ann Arbor.

Although he composed the piece with the American String Quartet in mind, Fuchs is awed both by the prospect of having his work performed by the legendary group and having his composition played immediately after a composer's work who revolutionized the classical style of the 19th century.

The American String Quartet, beginning a world tour to celebrate its 25th year, will perform Fuchs' 22-minute piece on a program sandwiched between Beethoven's Quartet in F Major ("Romeo and Juliet") and his Quartet in e minor.

"My favorite music is Beethoven's late quartets," said Fuchs, who is director of the school of music at the University of Oklahoma. "Those quartets taught me about form."

Obviously, it's a lesson for Fuchs that has had plenty of variations.

A prolific composer of diverse musical forms, Fuchs has written about three works a year since his days at Juillard School of Music 25 years ago.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he collaborated with playwright Lanford Wilson in a series of plays performed at the Circle Repertory Theatre in New York City.

Inspiration for Fuchs' Quartet No. 3 comes from Walt Whitman's poem, "Whispers of Heavenly Death," a haunting and highly lyrical cycle of poems.

The three movements, according to Fuchs, include a brief introduction, a slow, expansive search in

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Virtuosos: American String Quartet members include Laurie Carney, (left), Daniel Aushalov, David Gerber (standing), and Peter Winograd.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Q&A: Role for corporations to support the arts

(Editor's Note: "Behind the Scenes" is an ongoing series featuring a Q&A with people who support the arts in Oakland County.)

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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Today, there's little semblance of the 1950s button-down corporate type who made IBM the prototypical hierarchical organization.

These days, the talk at IBM is about "building teams" and "virtual corporations." Attesting to the change is Steven Horn, community relations manager for IBM in the metro Detroit region, located in Southfield. Wearing a blue-striped shirt and tasteful tie, he



Steven Horn

looks and talks with a 1990s' casualness about how corporations can support the arts. Horn's brush cut and conservative bifocals offer an honorary nod to the formerly staid corporate tradition.

With a philanthropic chest of \$60 million, IBM is the largest corporate giver in the country. While a majority of the funds go to IBM's "Reinventing Education" program, Horn of Beverly Hills has directed funds and in-kind services to arts groups throughout the region. He also serves on the boards of ArtServe, Detroit

Historical Society and the United Way. And last November, Horn chaired the annual Governor Arts Awards, honoring outstanding achievements and contributions in the arts.

ECCENTRIC: What's the main challenge facing the arts community?

HORN: We're not as savvy as we should be. When the funding starts to go away we ought to be pounding on doors like the rest of the nonprofits do. You know, it's a case of the squeaking wheel.

ECCENTRIC: That's why collaboration among arts groups is essential.

HORN: There are 15,000 nonprofits in the state, and

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