

Artists hear watercolorist speak

By CORINNE ABATT

FARMINGTON HILLS—If Farmington area artists are becoming recognized, and there is little doubt they are, it is because they work at it.

Saturday morning, May 11, when most of the world was still nursing a second cup of coffee, a group from the Farmington Artist Club were meeting with Thomas Thiery at Lou Gaddis's home in the hills.

Mrs. Gaddis had heard Thiery

speak and decided to invite him for a special weekend workshop. Thiery, one of the state's fine watercolorists, maintains a gallery-studio and home in Orsted and teaches painting and drawing at Adrian High School.

During the summer months he regularly takes groups of young people on art-oriented camping trips by bicycle. This summer he and about 15 young people will assemble their cameras, sketchbooks and backpacks and pedal westward to Seattle.



Thomas Thiery discusses his work with Farmington Artist Club. (Photo by Craig Newman)

THIERY CAME to Farmington Hills ostensibly to demonstrate and critique the work of the local painters. He has excellent credentials for such an undertaking.

In addition to degrees from Western Michigan University and Moody Bible College, he has a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University and has studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, Indiana and Taylor universities and with the associates of L'Abri Fellowship of Huemoe, Switzerland.

He received three awards in the past five years from the Toledo, Ohio, Federation of Artists. His works are on display at many museums including the DeWaters Art Institute in Flint and the Toledo Art Museum. His work will be featured in the July issue of American Artist magazine.

THIERY is a strong, independent person. He is a representational artist, and his feelings on the subject are clear and decisive. They encompass his philosophy of life and his religion.

This positiveness of identity and viewpoint is a major influence on his art. The art and the personal identity are inseparable in his paintings. This is one of the strengths of the man as a teacher—he works to help other artists develop a strong, personal identity in their work.

"My art work grows out of a commitment to a personal God. We believe in a personal God of the Old and New Testament."

He believes God created an orderly universe, and as a painter, his work depicts that orderliness.

"Abstract art goes hand in hand with the time-plus-chance evolution theory and a pantheistic, impersonal beginning."

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THIERY SAID he doesn't set out to convert his students (he is not a member of any organized religious group), but rather to point out reasonable alternatives to the problems and inconsistencies.

He mentions a "morality of convenience" and the fact that many can't live with what they claim to believe and consequently keep "throwing in moral judgments."

While Thiery brought only a few of his paintings to display for the Saturday workshop, it was obvious even from these, that while his subject matter is recognizable, his techniques and use of color are sophisticated.

The workshop was in conjunction with the Farmington Art Foundation, service project arm of the Farmington Artists Club.

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