

Spain trip changes his viewpoint

Outer space program set Jan. 15 in library

"New Frontiers in Outer Space" is the title of the program at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15, in Farmington Hills Community Library, 32737 12 Mile Road.

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By JIM WINDELL

"I couldn't believe what I was painting," said painter Richard Kozlow.

On a drizzly afternoon in his third floor Royal Oak Studio, Kozlow was talking about his recently completed works.

Stretched out on his couch in the oil-spattered studio, the black-bearded artist laughed about the work that began in Seville, Spain.

Two years ago while living with his family in Seville, Kozlow attended a bullfight. Later, he announced to his wife, "Lois, you won't believe what I'm painting. The bullfights."

That would not be so unusual for other artists. The bullfight has long been the subject of artistic works. For a Kozlow — a man of humanitarian beliefs and intense sensi-

tivity — it was as confounding to himself as anyone.

"I had no preconceived notions to begin with. I didn't even take any materials to Seville. I just went out and bought some tempera and began working in the studio."

"At first I wasn't sure what I was doing. Then, it began to take shape and I was using blacks and whites. If you had to look at a bullfight in bright red, you couldn't handle it."

Now, six of his bullfight scenes, originally a tempera series in black and white are being published in a lithographic suite in a limited edition of 250.

THE SHADOWY scenes in somber blacks have a dream-like quality but also take on a majestic air.

"I'm not defending bullfighting," Kozlow declares. "I'm just painting it as a spectacle. That's the way you have to approach it. As a spectacle."

"The bull is a big, impressive animal. And to be a matador takes real guts."

Kozlow, born and raised in Detroit, is one of few area artists who has supported himself entirely by painting for some 20 years. That hasn't been as easy as it has been lately.

"In the early 1950s," Kozlow recalls, "if you went into an office there might be a painting of an Irish Setter. Now, every office has original art — it's incredible."

His own sales and commissions to businesses have been important to his success. Currently he is very proud of an 18-foot painting, part of his

"Sky Series" hanging at Ford Motors headquarters. Since there are other Kozlow paintings on the walls of this Ford office, Kozlow likes to think of it as his own private gallery.

He laughs heartily remembering an anecdote about his "private gallery." An anxious man, waiting for an appointment with nothing to look at except Kozlow's blue skies and clouds, said later, "I thought I was there to see God."

Landscapes brought Kozlow respect as a painter. On his easel this rainy December day is one in browns and tans. He has also returned to putting tissue paper on the canvas for texture.

"It's in earth tones," he says. Then with a sly smile he adds, "Those were my natural and original colors, but when everyone else started us-

ing them I went to all blue."

"That says it all about me. That's the epitome of Kozlow." He laughs again, reveling in his history as a rebel. He doesn't mind talking about that, but his wife warned him not to bring up those old stories anymore. That, however, doesn't stop him because he enjoys talking.

"I was thrown out of both Cass Tech and the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts. However, Arts and Crafts brought me back later to teach. I was there 10 years teaching advertising and design."

IN 1950 he made the decision to leave advertising completely to concentrate on his painting, but he doesn't depreciate his years in advertising.

The advertising training was great. One thing it taught me was to start and to finish. You had to, there were always deadlines.

"Also, I think there is less dishonesty in advertising. There is no pretense. You are trying to sell a product and you say so. Painters say everything except what they mean. But, they're trying to sell a product too."

His first exhibit was in 1949 and he has had more than 20 one-man shows of his work since. "I've got paintings older than some curators," he comments.

At 53, he admits that he sometimes tires of the business and promotion end of being a painter. At present, he isn't under contract to any gallery after severing relations with Arwin Galleries, one of the leading Detroit art galleries, a couple of years ago.

"I guess it was an ego thing, with both of us," Kozlow says reflecting on the reasons for the dissolution.

He doesn't, however, tire of coming to the studio and painting. "No one makes me come to this studio. I love to paint."

"That makes me a rich man; I can do what I want."

In addition to his recently completed Bullfight Suite, Kozlow has also just finished a lithograph for the American Artist Series. It is a limited edition to be used for fund raising for the chamber music series at Cranbrook.

The Bullfight Suite, printed on Reeves paper and handsigned, is available by mail and from the artist at: 311 Washington Square Plaza, Royal Oak, Mich. 48067.

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