

Public officials pick and choose as artists' work comes in on loan

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Photos: STEPHEN CANTRELL

Behind the yellow door, just off the lower lobby of the Oakland County Courthouse, some small battles sometimes take place.

Rather than jurisprudence, these revolve around who gets which painting for which office. And the subject and the friendly differences always bring a smile to Marlowe Belanger's face.

She's coordinator of the Oakland County Cultural Council and longtime champion for art in public buildings. To see the project in action, to find judges and cafeteria staffers arguing over a particularly fine oil for their walls warms her heart.

Since Oakland County artists responded generously to her request for paintings and other art to be loaned for display in the county complex, there's always a short and happy conclusion to the problem of what paintings go where.

"THE INTEREST from all departments has been tremendous," Mrs. Belanger said. The same thing is true about the artists who received the let-

ter asking them to loan works of art for a minimum of three months signed by Mrs. Belanger and Lorraine Chambers McCarty, art display chairwoman.

Mrs. Belanger said the Cultural Council isn't in the business of selling art, but rather of promoting and fostering interest in all the arts.

She likes the story about William Spinelli, executive officer for operations.

"Sometimes someone in the complex will see a work of art they just can't live without — like Bill Spinelli who saw the men taking down a wall hanging and said 'Hey, where are you going with that?'"

SPINELLI BOUGHT the weaving by Kathryn Rowe of Milford which was part of a special exhibition in the main lobby of winners from the Oakland County art show earlier this year.

"I could make this a fulltime job," Mrs. Belanger said as she stood in her office looking over 10 paintings that had just been brought in by Joan Brace of Lake Orion.

"She gave them to use," Mrs. Belanger said, "because she said she believed in the concept."

Another who obviously believes in the concept is Max Shaye of Franklin. A prolific artist who works in oils as well as various print media, Shaye has been donating works for many years to hospitals and other organizations. Several of his pieces are already hanging in the county medical complex, others are in various offices, and Shaye told Mrs. Belanger he will donate more than 100 more to the council's effort to put art in public buildings.

MRS. BELANGER CREDITS State Rep. Ruth McNamee of Birmingham for promoting interest in art in public buildings. Mrs. McNamee authored an art bill in the previous session of the Michigan Legislature. The bill provided for the purchase, installation and maintenance of art in public buildings.

Although her "Percent for Art" bill died, her cause is still alive. She and State Sen. Jack Faxon of Detroit have joined forces on a compromise bill to encourage the acquisition and use of art in public buildings.

However, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners was less hesitant in its approval of art for public buildings.

The commission passed a resolution to that effect more than a year ago, opening the way to the present cultural commission program.

In the McNamara-Paxon bill, the emphasis is on using Michigan art. In the courthouse complex, it's Oakland County artists who are spotlighted.

Another project which coordinated with the loan of art one is the Artist Registry, sponsored and coordinated by the cultural council. Made possible by a

grant from Michigan Council for the Arts, the registry lists hundreds of Artist Registry are available at \$2.50 each through the cultural registry that the council was able to contact the artists.

Copies of the Artist Registry are available at \$2.50 each through the cultural council, 858-0415.

Artists who wish to donate or loan works of art for display in public buildings should contact Mrs. Belanger at the same number.



Marlowe Belanger, coordinator of the Oakland County Cultural Council, pauses in front of an acrylic, "Chairs," by Harry Schwarzer of the Detroit Country Day School faculty. It hangs at the entrance of her office.

Down to earth

Garden changes reflect progress

by
ALICE WESSELS
BURLINGAME



Year after year, you have received my sage advice called "The Three Temptations." It goes like this:

The first time the weather is sunny and warm, hang your coat back up, put the rake away, go for a walk. The second time the great urge comes to turn the world upside down with a rake, just pick up sticks, hang up your coat and be glad you are alive.

With the third tempting day, take it easy, watch those pruning shears or you will cut off your spring flowers. Walk around the garden with a hoe, but use judiciously as perennials have shallow roots. You can spread fertilizer. It is reported that last week I saved a husband from a day of toil due to his good memory concerning "The Three Temptations."

At this time of year as you plan gardening for 1979, you are anxious to do something to upgrade your garden area. That attitude is progress. If every year you feel that way, your garden will keep its style, just like the ever-changing wardrobe.

HERE ARE some ideas which might have merit for you forward thinkers.

You have to be careful when you create curves in your border, especially along the sides in the rear garden. Don't have them too busy.

One thing you can do is to extend a curve out into the lawn, like maybe 20 inches, with an evergreen with a spreading profile at the tip.

It will tempt the stroller to walk way

around the extended curve to see what is planted there. At the inside of the curve farthest from the house, you could have an interesting pocket of beauty — possibly a small Japanese garden with a boulder and other details carrying out the Oriental motif.

If you develop a walkway, wherever, front or back of the property, be sure and consider having it five feet wide. That allows for two people to walk side by side instead of Indian style single file.

This is important whether we are talking about home or a commercial site. Some home walks are so narrow that when you turn around to thank your hosts for hospitality, you could fall into the bushes.

Another place where width is important is the exit steps from a doorway or terrace. A wide exit stairway from a porch or patio gives a luxurious, important effect.

YOU CAN make an existing walk wider by placing bricks to match the house on each side of an existing walk, horizontally in sand. Here's another detail you might like to incorporate to create a change.

Did you ever notice we often have round circles of earth at the base of a tree, either left with soil or perhaps with a planting of annuals? I've noticed that squares look better than a circle at the base of a tree. You have a round trunk, then, you hope, a round profile of a tree. Do you understand what I am

trying to point out? There's the new interest in Oriental vegetables, which are easy to grow and

taste. They are super cooked in a wok, which is a large iron pan with deep gently sloping sides.

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