

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

Story: CORINNE ABATT
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 particular piece of 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 man 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 Shay of Franklin. A prolific artist who works in oils as well as various print media, Shay 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 Shay 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 in public buildings.

Cafeteria sign in the courthouse complex indicates the appropriate placement of Shirley Hars Denton's oil, "Great American Lunch."

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

In the McNamee-Faxon 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.

Down to earth

Garden changes reflect progress



By
ALICE
WESSELS
BURLINGAME

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.

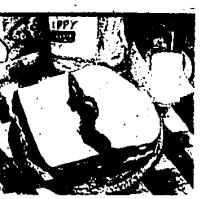
trying to point out?

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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Cafeteria sign in the courthouse complex indicates the appropriate placement of Shirley Hars Denton's oil, "Great American Lunch."

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