

Nagler's skills show in panoramic scenes

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

The opening of an artist's first one-person show must carry some of the excitement of a theater premiere or a debut at Carnegie Hall.

Monte Nagler, a West Bloomfield photographer, was relishing his moment in the limelight at Blikt Gallery in Ann Arbor earlier this month.

Sure, he said, he has been in some fine group shows and he has had one-man shows in other places. But this was his first show in a recognized fine-art photography gallery. That made it different — and special, he said.

A gallery showing turns the tables on a photographer. Instead of observing the action, he becomes the center of attention. The public eye is focused on him and his work. He can only hope people will like what they see; it's like trotting out his secret thoughts for the whole world to rummage through.

FOR A COUPLE of years, Nagler has been using a large format camera to capture the majesty of the world's natural wonders. He did this well with a 35 mm, but the large format has given him much greater scope in showing the grandeur he obviously enjoys photographing.

Nagler is able to catch the veils of mist on California's Big Sur in his "Morning Fog" and the lines of time on huge rock in Pinnacle Cove at Point Lobos, Calif. — which certainly must rank as one of the best pieces in the show, along with "Mystical Forest," another work which lets mist create a fantasy mood.

But Nagler doesn't neglect the small, intimate subjects — a clump of Michigan violets or a winding street in an old Spanish town.

He has a special skill in contrasting fine foreground detail against a background of vast reaches of natural panorama.

With telling accuracy, he shows us individual leaves or blades of grass, while letting us look miles and miles beyond, often into another kind of world.

Of course, Nagler is not the first to use this technique, but he handles it very effectively. Happily, many of these photographs are printed large and the resultant prints are handsome.

WHEN NAGLER WORKS on less sweeping subjects, as he sometimes does since Michigan has few mountains, he is just as effective. It's a delight to see shots of the home state in the show. They hold up very well against California and the mighty Rockies.

It's a pleasure to see several photographs such as "Floating Leaves," which was taken in the Pere Marquette Forest of Michigan. It's a lovely, almost ethereal quality to it and the tree trunks at the water's edge are seen only in the reflections.

Nagler uses trees as other photographers do people — as survivors, as testimonials to strength and resilience. They frequently stand in groups, or occasionally alone as sole survivors. Some have a "battered, but unbowed" appearance; others appear undaunted by the storms that have passed them by.

"Olive Tree Grove," from the Palma Mallorca Islands, takes advantage of the twisted, gnarled beauty of this long-lived species.

Nagler soon will be embarking on a great photographic adventure — a trip to Baffin Island with friends, Dr. Charles and Dr. Edna Eifort, to photograph the natural wonders of the far north.

This is an opportunity to deal with fresh, untouched subjects — something any photographer would relish. Most certainly it will provide rich resources for Nagler to do another major show, either jointly or individually.

Thursday, June 18, 1981 (F)15C

m.m. memos

Margaret Miller

Moving on by degrees is a satisfying feeling

As a family, we received the third degree last weekend.

It was awarded by Michigan State University to Daughter No. 3, and we watched her get it on a huge television screen in a stuffy fieldhouse.

The first degree for our daughter's generation had been awarded five years ago in an equally stuffy fieldhouse at the University of Michigan. Four years ago we were part of a smaller crowd that celebrated the graduation of another offspring and the rest of a smaller class from Lawrence Institute of Technology.

This year's event proved an interesting variation on the commencement theme.

Rain had moved the graduation exercises from ample stadium to three less ample buildings, and we gave up trying to get into the one where the graduates were seated.

Instead, we headed into one of the two auxiliary buildings where what you watched was the video screen.

WE FOLLOWED procedures we had learned well while four daughters graduated from high school and the first two had attained bachelor degree status. We speculated on words of wisdom likely to issue forth from the commencement speaker. We looked for listings of other graduates we knew. We counted Smiths and Joneses and Millers.

Specifically this time, we admired the listing of our daughter's name with an H and two asterisks, which denoted high honors from honors college. We empathized with the proud father behind us, who said several times he'd been waiting 21 years for this proud moment.

We lent an ear to the speeches and commented that the television and sound track were better than we expected.

And then we waited and waited while hundreds passed in front of the TV camera to receive from the various deans a rolled-up piece of paper that said only that this was not a diploma, the real one would come in the mail.

BUT ONLY the diploma was ersatz. The satisfaction in the completion of another journey through college was very real. So is our pride in our daughter's accomplishment that has earned her a grant for graduate study toward a master's and a doctorate, thereby joining two sisters in the pursuit of higher education.

Definitely, the third degree doesn't spell the end of commencements.

Organist at Kirk in the Hills to make European tour

By Mary Doerr
special writer

Dr. Frederick Marriott, organist and carillonneur at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield Hills, will be in Europe again this summer for a series of 11 carillon concerts.

Marriott's eighth consecutive summer tour includes concerts in Belgium and the Netherlands and at the International Carillon Festival in Dijon, France. In 1960, Marriott became the first American invited to perform at the International Carillonists' Festival in Hilversum, the Netherlands.

Marriott said he is looking forward to returning to places where he has often performed during his 30-year career. The "loveliest spot," he said, is St. Michel's Cathedral in the heart of Brussels.

The carillonneur said he expects the largest crowds in Belgium in Halle and Saint Truiden, where he is scheduled to play for market days.

"The carillon is always played for market day," Marriott said. "Thousands of people come from all over the countryside. It is a big celebration."

Marriott was also scheduled to tour England for the first time in his career.

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