

Lecture, film explains Japanese print making

The Arts Committee of the Congregational Church of Birmingham will present a lecture and film on "The Golden Age of Japanese Print Making" at 8 p.m. Friday at the church, 1000 Cranbrook Road, Bloomfield Hills. The program is open to the public free of charge.

The film, produced by Toshi Yoshida, a leading Japanese printmaker, will be presented by Dr. Lawrence R. Bickford, who studied under Toshi while living in Japan.

Bickford, brother of Marey Jane Ball of Beverly Hills, has a bachelor's degree in ceramic engineering from Alfred University and a doctorate in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

While working in Japan for IBM, he studied block printing and became proficient in the art.

Bickford said, "There are more artists today at work at printmaking than at any other period of Japanese history."

He added that after 1800 the art of making block prints started going downhill because of government censorship and restrictions. The 20th century, however, has seen a notable resurgence of this medium, he said.

The film, "Hanga," traces the making of a print from the artist's first sketch through its various color stages.

Techniques for sign painting

By DAVID MESSING
special writer

As you remember last week we were talking about sign painting. I would like to take up where I left off, talking about different kinds of sign jobs and materials used.

Another popular sign job would be those done on art poster board and "show cards." Here again use vine charcoal and oil base paint. Most poster boards have a clay coating which quickly clogs up felt-tip markers. But you can cheat a little on show cards by using stencils. For the best results outline the stencil with a fine point marker of the appropriate color. Most people outline their stencil in pencil and then go crazy trying to paint along their final pencil line. If you outline with a sharpie (felt tip pen) of the appropriate color you will lift the stencil to find a line width of about one sixteenth of an inch which is easy to follow.

Remember also with window signs, most people are subconsciously alert to traffic light colors which are red, yellow and green. So plan your colors accordingly. It is therefore no mystery that the most successful paper signs for windows are black letters on red, yellow green fluorescent paper. They are gaudy to look at and can give you a headache trying to paint, but they really do catch your eye. If I have to paint on fluorescent paper, I actually wear sunglasses because of the brightness of the paper.

IN THE pricing of signs, it is very difficult to establish a hard and fast rule. For example, one man orders a 3-foot-by-4-foot sign with only the word "sale" in 2-foot letters. Another man also orders the same size sign, but he wants his entire store policy printed on it. Now these two examples must be priced not only according to the square footage but also as to what is called "light" or "heavy" copy. The light copy could go as high as \$50 or even more. When it comes to pricing, I guarantee the customer is not help

artifacts

at all. It is very common to hear them use phrases like, "just something quick" or "I only want a few simple signs." Here's a good one, the customer comes in with a 3-inch square piece of paper with about three paragraphs of words that they want lettered on a show card. They will usually say "correct the spelling, and I need it in two days." Signs are the last thing people consider. I myself forget to order or do a sign promoting my own sale.

One important tip is to always hold on to the rough copy that your customer brought to you. Many times customers forget the wording they ordered. It is so helpful for you, the painter, to unfold their scribbled piece of paper and say, "right here is what you gave to me." Since we are talking about customer relations, be very clear on your quotes. Price the job at what you need to get. You don't need a sign job on which you can't make any money.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT tip is that you be paid on delivery. While you are working on the job it is the customer's problem but if he or she takes the signs without paying for them, then it is your problem. Here are some of the popular excuses people use when trying to pick up signs without paying for them: "I forgot to bring a check," "my secretary will mail you a check," "give me a bill and I'll turn it into accounts payable," etc. The bottom line is that you are taking a chance. To let any sign leave your hand without some payment in the other. Of course as you develop a relationship with certain customers you can feel confident they will pay you promptly.

Hey lets go outside. . . well now that we

are outside, paper signs are definitely out and show cards won't last two days. So now we are talking about permanent outdoor signs. The first type of outdoor sign is really not considered permanent, but it is a very effective, versatile and eye catching. It is called a canvas banner. The canvas or sign cloth, is a fine woven fiber with a white acrylic coating. The paint used on outdoor canvas banners must be exterior quality. Again I recommend one shot lettering enamel. This paint is rich in pigment, glossy when dry and extremely permanent. Canvas banners are usually finished with grommets or a rope is sewn into upper and lower extremities of the cloth.

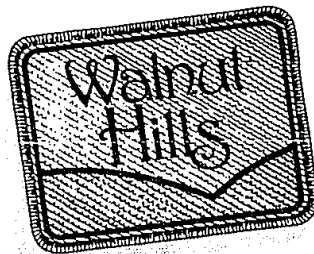
The next alternative in an outdoor sign is plywood. Plywood sign thickness varies from three-eighths inch to one-half inch. Usually you can simply use exterior gloss or semigloss acrylic paint to acquire the base color you wish to paint on. Use a roller with a fine nap, this will produce a smoother surface for lettering.

Most lighted signs are lettered on milk white plastic. This type of sign is much easier to do for us non-sign painters. If the plastic is new it will have brown paper stuck to both sides. Simply lay out your letters on this brown protection paper. When satisfied carefully cut out each letter. Now lift out each letter to expose the white plastic surface. Simply spray with exterior paint the exposed portions of glass. When the paint dries, lift off all the brown paper to see your completed sign. This technique is called "razor cut and spray." How's that for a creative name! If the plastic is bare to begin with, then simply mask it with white contact paper and proceed as above.

Quickly, I would like to give a few ball park figures on sign prices. Most market signs are around 50 cents a square foot. Paper signs range from \$1 to \$2 per square foot. Show cards begin at \$20 and can easily go \$50. Canvas, plywood and plastic range from \$3 to \$5 per square foot.

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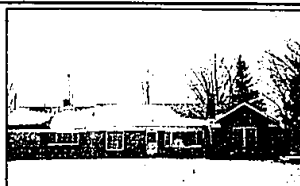
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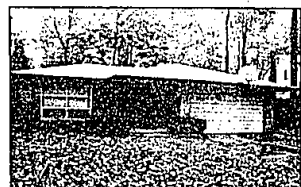


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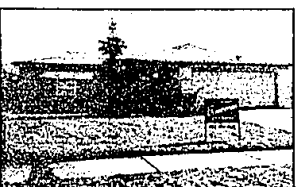


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