

Creative Living

classified real estate and homes

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(F1E)

Thursday, April 4, 1985 O&E



Frank Gallo and Bjorg Holto, who models for him, are pictured beside one of the largest works in the Gallery Birmingham show.

Sculpture

Unusual medium, classical style

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Frank Gallo continues to enjoy a successful career in art, with the female figure as his choice of subjects.

Gallo, who changed from building full-size epoxy figures, because of a health problem with the chemicals, to cast paper, has a show of his works at Gallery Birmingham, 223 S. Woodward, Birmingham through April 13.

These current works of very thick paper, the majority a pristine white, appear to be more closely related to carvings, bisque figures and marble than actual paper. Gallo takes a subject, often done very small, and makes it larger than life much as George O'Keefe takes the tiny area of the interior of a flower and makes it much larger than life.

The cast paper process which Gallo uses, al-

lows for a lot of minute detail to create even very subtle scenes such as "The letter," in which a woman, nude, pictured from the back is reading a letter while a man in the background waits for her response.

GALLO'S STYLE is closely related to the classical Greek tradition, with the strength and beauty of the faces and figures conveying the message of the ultimate in beauty.

His use of various mixtures of paper pulp to achieve suitable textures for the subject is subtle. While this medium, like porcelain may give an almost unearthly quality to the faces, neither it nor the fine workmanship ever overshadows the subject. The lines, the contours, the fine details of the hair or handcovering and the shadows from the deep contours say it all.

And it is an exciting medium for the nude, but then maybe any medium is exciting for a nude if

the artist is as sure and secure as Gallo.

His nudes are sensuous and always classical in their beauty. Like the ancient Greek sculptors, Gallo's faces and figures are without blemish, representing the ideal as much or more than the real.

In 1973 Gallo's sculpture of Raquel Welch, pictured on the cover of Time magazine received the "Cover of the Year" award from the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

His epoxy sculptures are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and art museums in Chicago, Toronto, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Jerusalem.

Gallo, born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1933, is head of the sculpture department at University of Illinois. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday, until 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday.



A large crowd gathered at Gallery Birmingham to see slides of Frank Gallo's work and hear him discuss techniques. That's the sculptor third from right.



This cast paper sculpture clearly shows the fine detail which Frank Gallo is able to accomplish with this medium.

By Avigdor Zaromp
special writer

Ensemble in tune with new music



Avigdor Zaromp

The Detroit Contemporary Chamber Ensemble presented its latest program of contemporary music Friday. The program featured music by Ramon Zupko, Sydney Hodkinson, Michael Colgrass and Igor Stravinsky.

If one were to ask to choose the "odd one" in the above list, that wouldn't be too difficult. None of the first three enjoys the universal reputation of Stravinsky.

The question of who is the more established composer is beside the point, however. The works of the lesser-known composers on this program did provide musical interest on their own, even if one prefers more established works. But even the work by Stravinsky, his 1918 composition "L'histoire du Soldat," (The Soldier's Tale), isn't part of the standard repertoire.

The opening work by Zupko, who was present, titled "Fixations," featured a trio for piano, violin and cello, supplemented by prerecorded sounds of these instruments (not with the identical performers).

Zupko explained that his technique differs

from electronic music. The taped sounds are those of bona fide instruments rather than electronic sounds due to multiple processing.

The interaction between the players and the recorded sound seemed to be spontaneous and real at some points. The trio on stage consisted of pianist Robert Conway, violinist Magdalen Heilbronn and cellist Marcy Chanteaux.

THE WORK by Hodkinson, "The Dissolution of the Serial," featured Barrett Kallella at the piano and James Dawson, playing interchangeably soprano and alto saxophone. The work, as the name implies, features gradual transition from atonality to tonality.

Dawson, a regular performer on this series and on the faculty of Oakland University, was impressive in his ability to produce so many varying sounds on his instrument and displayed fine technique.

Kallella, in addition to being a capable pianist, was amusing in his stage manner. Both seemed to be having a lot of fun, with added humor provided by violinist Glenn Mellow, who was in the capacity of page turner in this work, running from one performer to the other.

Mellow resorted to his more conventional duties following the intermission when he played the "Variations for Four Drums and Viola" by Colgrass. With Michael Udow at the drums, this unusual combination proved to be most inspired.

This work was on one of the programs of the Renaissance City Chamber Players. The odds against hearing this work twice in one season must be considerably more than finding an egg with two yolks. With such good fortune, it may be time to try the Michigan Lottery.

SPEAKING OF fortunes, Barrett Kallella, who is the music director of this series, has recently won a \$500 award for a new composition, "The Hill of Vision."

Kallella conducted this program by conducting a rewarding performance of Stravinsky's suite "L'histoire du Soldat." This was the one work in which the entire ensemble participated. The ingenuity of the composer was matched by the quality of this performance.

The next and last program of this series will feature works by Alan Hovhaness, the extremely prolific American composer of Armenian descent. The composer will be present as a guest.

Love, humor fill story of a genius

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Without a sense of humor, a young apprentice with Frank Lloyd Wright might have had a difficult time.

Edgar Tafel, apprentice with Wright, 1932-1941, and author of the engaging book, "Years with Frank Lloyd Wright, Apprentice to Genius," showed slides, a home movie and a delightful sense of humor when he was in Southfield last week.

Tafel met architects, designers and business people at a reception/program at Steelcase and autographed copies of the book.

TAFEL, WHO has an architectural practice in New York City and is obviously devoted to the great architect, presented a lively, human portrait of Wright just as he does in the book.

He told of the apprentice years with Wright at Taliesin, Wright's community at Spring Green, Wis. He was a 20-year-old architectural student, living and studying in New York City, when he made his first trip west of the Hudson River. Tafel joined Wright's community at Taliesin to build the buildings, farm the land and literally learn architecture from the ground up.

The rare home movies, taken by Aldon Dow, show the young people plowing the fields with teams of horses, cutting the trees for wood to be used for construction, following Wright across the open fields for picnics (which Wright loved), attending country fairs and swimming in the Wisconsin River with Wright in bathing trunks.

"MR. WRIGHT put everybody to work, wherever he was," said Tafel.

He spoke of the "4 p.m. tea circle" at which Wright presided, "He would talk and give us some of his philosophy — he was not averse to giving us some of his philosophy all the time."

One showed Wright and several apprentices carrying watermelons on their shoulders at the county fair and later eating them, "If Mr. Wright served you watermelon, you had better like watermelon," Tafel said with a broad smile.

"Sunday nights we apprentices were guests of the Wrights for dinner which we would prepare."

He described Wright as a person who "wore elegant clothes, spoke elegantly — he radiated elegance."

YET, TAFEL said Wright thought "everything he bought should be gotten wholesale." He told of the two years he spent working on the Johnson Wax Building of Racine, Wis., and Wright's response when told the city wouldn't let the construction continue without a building permit, "Keep building until they call out the militia."

Yes, Tafel could laugh at Wright, even make fun of the man's idiosyncracies, and describe Wright, photographed in a long flowing cape, as wearing "his Dracula outfit," but beyond all the fun and humor was the unabashed appreciation of the genius.

And that is what the film, the slides and the book is really about — the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright.

HE NEVER lost the feeling he had upon arriving at Taliesin and being in a total Frank Lloyd Wright atmosphere for the first time, "How I was struck by those forms, shapes, materials! It was breathtaking — I had never imagined such beauty and harmony."

In another part of the book, he says, "When I arrived at Taliesin that September afternoon in 1932, driven up the country road by Herbert Fitz, I knew I'd found my hero."

The book opens with the story of Wright drawing all of the plans for "Falling Water," the home at Bear Run, Pa., for Edgar J. Kaufmann. Wright hadn't put anything on paper until Kaufmann called and said he would be at Wright's office in a little over two hours. During that time Wright worked at a frantic pace and had everything ready when his client arrived, for a house still considered to be among Wright's finest.

TAFEL SAYS about it in the book, "The basic design never changed — pure all the way."

The book closes with Wright's death. Between the first and last chapter is a delightful picture of one of the great men of the 20th century. And whatever Europeans may think, modern architecture, says Tafel, "was born, bred and brought up in our own Midwest."

Tafel writes in an easy-to-read conversational style. The picture documentation is extensive.

"Years with Frank Lloyd Wright, Apprentice to Genius," Dover Publications Inc., softcover, \$9.95.



This picture of Frank Lloyd Wright was taken when Wright visited Cranbrook.

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— Edgar Tafel