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## Silversmith's world Artist creates a land of crazy creatures

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

Like their creator, Earl Krentzin's sculptures live in a world all their own. They have endearing human qualities that produce smiles and laughter from those who admire them.

Krentzin's show, which opens at Donna Jacobs Gallery of Birmingham with a 2-5 p.m. reception Saturday, is all new work: 20 silver sculptures, many around six inches high counting the pedestal, a few larger.

Two, "The Lapidarist" and "Rocket Launching" are complete scenes with several figures. Almost all of the figures are articulated with arms and legs that move. The wings of the large bird on the nest flap when the side crank is turned. There are four figures that, when lifted from their stands, become attractive pins that would be dramatic on a lapel.

Two others, "Walking Robot" and "Man Wheeling Dragon" come with wooden ramps and when the figures are placed at the top and given just a nudge, they plod or shuffle down the run.

In general, these works appear to be caricatures of people and animals, yet they aren't intended as insults or even exaggerations. There is, however, a charming irreverence about them.

They are what they are — beautifully crafted works of art that are amusing and enchanting.

KRENTZIN said, "I'm not the kind of artist that has a message. I make these things because I like to make them. I like to let my works just speak for themselves."

He said rather than trying to be replicas of people and animals his work is "essence of bird, essence of person, essence of animal — they're primitive in that sense. I feel closer to primitive and folk art objects."

But these differ dramatically from much primitive art in the level of workmanship. In that respect they are closer to European and Oriental craftsmen who made exquisite gifts for wealthy and titled persons, often mixed with a touch of humor. It was

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When the robot is activated from under the wooden stand, the arms move, the figure goes back and forth and the blades of his head gear whirl.

as though artists of superior skill in craftsmanship had poetic license to build in humor, because they could handle it so deftly. To make such wonderful adult toys takes a special vision, imagination and coupled with extraordinary metal working and engineering skills. It is one thing to visualize them but another to make them work.

Krentzin's work also has ties with history, literature, fantasy and other cultures. In fact, all of his many interests come into play in these works.

The cup, in "Animal Holding Cup," is part of a coconut shell. The creature holding the cup is sterling. Walnut and soldalite are also used.

Krentzin said, "There was a theory in medieval times that if you put a poisoned drink in a coconut shell, it

would neutralize the poison."

He said that's why kings who feared being poisoned liked to drink from coconut shells, although the idea has never been proven to work.

In addition to silver and 18 karat gold, Krentzin uses many semi-precious and some precious stones — amethyst, carnelian, onyx, agate, garnet, jasper, aventurine and malachite. Like the silversmiths of long ago, he combines a figure and a box, making a gem of a functional piece.

Especially Krentzin collects antique toys from many countries, net-sukes and many kinds of folk art.

As he spoke of the net-sukes, which are elaborately worked or carved toggles for Japanese robes, he said, "I find, that in general, Japanese art is so human. Chinese art is too formal, too rigid."

ANOTHER group of artists who come into the exquisite adult toy maker category is the firm of Faberge of Russia.

"I admire the work," said Krentzin, "but, I find them kind of dull."

Faberge made the famous jewel encrusted eggs, cups and trinkets for Russian aristocracy and crowned heads of Europe.

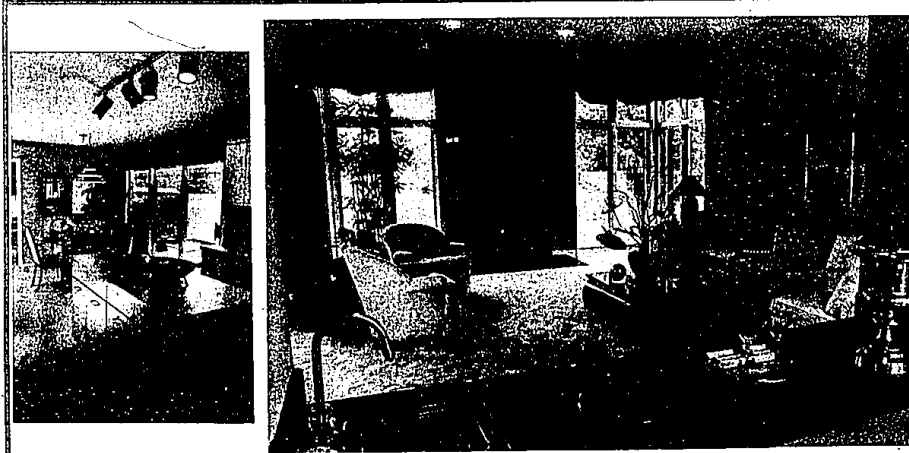
Krentzin, who was primarily a printmaker while studying art at Wayne State and a metalmith while getting his masters at Cranbrook Academy of Art, said, "I started more or less in this style, even before Cranbrook. The same sort of quality (a kind of playful irreverence) was evident in my prints."

His show at Donna Jacobs Gallery will continue through October. This is presently his only gallery affiliation. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 574 N. Woodward, Birmingham.



Earl Krentzin holds the strange looking bird which sits on a nest of three eggs. The handle of the crank which makes the wings flap is mastedon ivory as are the eggs. The bird's head is also a piece of ivory. The rest is finely worked silver.

Staff photos by  
Carol Francavilla



The view at left is looking through the kitchen to the breakfast room and the enclosed garden court with a pool and fountain. There is ample space on the deck of the court for a table and chairs for meals under the sun or the stars. The living room of the model, done in neutrals — black, white and gray — by Carl Friewald of Perimutter Friewald of Franklin, is contemporary with oriental touches. The wet bar of the divider between the living room and foyer is optional.

## Builder opens condo model

Work on the Village Pines, detached condos on Lahar between 12 and 13 Mile roads in Beverly Hills, developed and built by Robertson Bros., is proceeding at a brisk clip.

In the first phase, which will have 27 units on 11 acres, six are under roof and seven more are under way. Already completed and open for visitors is a model completely furnished by Carl Friewald of Perimutter & Friewald of Franklin. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. every day but Wednesday.

Phase II, directly to the south, will have 24 detached condos on 10 acres and, if the property becomes available, there will be a third phase of seven units.

The land was purchased from the present property owners whose lots had unusually generous frontage. None of the original homes were sacrificed.

The units, attached only by a garden wall (no common walls), are of sand-toned brick and cedar shakes in a French provincial style.

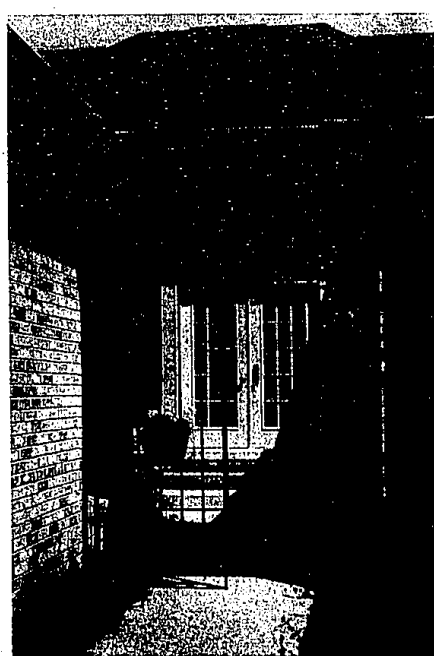
The interior of the model is marked by outstanding architectural line and detail.

It has a 20-by-18-foot living room with a modified cathedral ceiling, a 12-by-14 dining room, kitchen and breakfast nook which together are 12-by-21 feet, a master bedroom suite and two additional bedrooms, one of which is furnished as a library in the model.

There are two courtyards, one off the breakfast nook and another inside the wrought iron gate at the entrance. Each of the units has an extended rooftop in back where a screened porch could be easily added. These areas are private and well-screened from the road by a landscaped berm.

The architecture, site planning and landscaping all help create the feeling of a gracious lifestyle, close to all of the conveniences of the metropolitan area, but isolated from the immediacy of the hustle-bustle.

Price range is \$199,000 to \$245,000. Ron Mayotte Associates is the architectural firm.



The entrance to the Village Pines model suggests the charm which is carried throughout the interior. There's a garden to the left inside the gate with shrubs and flowers. The foyer beyond is large and filled with light.

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky