

Suburban Life

Lorraine McClellan editor/477-5450



Thursday, November 14, 1985 O&E

F369

Art behind the iron curtain

Work that took a summer to produce is 'somewhere in limbo'

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

SCULPTOR CECILIA REINER is in California this month with a one-woman show of her works in elabaster, bronze and marble. But the piece she is most proud of, the one that took her three months to create this summer while she studied with a master in her native Hungary, the one she named "The Fifth Commandment," is not among them.

"It is in some kind of limbo, and I have no idea when I will get it or if I will ever see again," the Farmington

Hills resident said. "All art produced there is owned by the government, at least for a period of time. If they decide they want to buy it, they also decide the price and pay you in forints, 50 forints to the dollar. And if it ever does leave the country they'll charge me one-third of whatever (other) price they decide in taxes."

"The Fifth Commandment" is the first piece Reiner created from wood. The black wood was pulled from a river that "must have been there for 10,000 years petrified to the feel of ebony. I got it from my instructor. I've never seen anything like it before. An

extraordinarily beautiful piece to use to begin my training in woodcarving," she said. "I just hope I can have it back one day." In Southern California (sponsored by that city's cultural division) next July.

"I have a picture of it, though, taken by a photographer who had to drive a cab in order to make a living."

REINER'S instructor in Budapest was Cs. Kovavos Laxlo. The title indicates he is of an old and noble Hungarian family with his family name put before his given name in a formal address.

Kovavos is one of 19 select artists in the country chosen by the government who live in a cluster-complex close to the city's museum along the Danube, much akin to being members of a king's court.

"The only reason he is living there is because he finally learned how to put Scotch tape over his big mouth, and even then he went with misgivings. He is a rebel, like me. He rebelled against the regime that wanted to control his soul, control his art, until it was impossible for him to do anything else, except continue on as a blacksmith, which was his trade. Even now he's considered the number-two artist in the country instead of having the number one spot, and that only because he still doesn't adhere to party lines," Reiner said.

"An artist wants to, needs to, show the world who they are through their art. Politics shouldn't have anything to do with art. I think if the U.S. started to dictate to me what I should produce I would quit and scrub floors. When the frustration gets too much for him I am told he goes into his studio alone and screams."

THE SUMMER trip back to Hungary was Reiner's first since 1969, a mixture of everyday study with the master sculptor and a visit with her 70-year-old sister.

She described her sister's tiny apartment "with its 2-by-3-foot kitchen," as "luxurious for those who live in the city and she has that only because she gets help from us."

From her sister's apartment to the studio wearing blue jeans and her work shirt, she said she made it a point to talk to every cab driver who drove her back and forth for three months but "can't find a good Communist in the lot." She did, however, find the photographer who took the picture of "The Fifth Commandment" for her and also found that anybody who wanted to work had to hold two jobs.

"A great many don't want to work, or just won't because the pay is so ridiculously small. The city is filled with so much talent and so many alcoholics. Nobody is building anything and if they are it is slow, slow. It takes them about three years to get a building up and

what is it here, three weeks?"

"The city is dirty," she said, "much more smog than Los Angeles that never burned off until noon. The old city was just not built for traffic and it is filled with old jalopies. You have to put (the equivalent of) \$8,000 down if you want a car, the government puts you on a two-three-year waiting list and then you get what you get. But it is never a brand new car."

"Private businesses are few and far between. As for art and literature and music, who can worry about that when you are struggling for survival?"

BUT REINER will return to Budapest as soon as she can arrange a trip for fellow artists who are members of the Birmingham Sculptors Guild, in the process now of changing their name to Michigan Sculptors Guild, at her suggestion.

"I want to show them the old city, the old art that is still there, show them how the 'select' artists live and show them how lucky we are," she said.

Reiner and her husband Robert left

Hungary when they were newlyweds at age 17 and 19.

"Truman, God bless him, allowed 100,000 of us into the U.S. and we landed here. I call Detroit my home town because I was reborn here," she said.

Since that time the couple brought her mother and father here, one brother and his children, her sister's son, his wife and their child. She is hoping to bring to the U.S. a 23-year-old medical student that she met on her summer trip.

"He is not for the regime. He will not thrive in that regime," she said. Reiner says she is an artist because she cannot do anything else.

"The acid I use and the grit that files off a stone is so embedded in my hands that creams are hardly of any use to me any more. I wear goggles and sometimes a mask when I work. My shirts are eaten away by the acids. I don't have many that don't have at least one hole. I have worked throughout the night, which doesn't do your looks any good. But how can I think of how I look like if it might cause me to lose my thought?"



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Cecilia Reiner chips away at a piece of crystal elabaster in the upstairs studio of her Farmington Hills home. When she works in bronze, it is in her downstairs studio, and then she is wearing her goggles and a mask.



"The Fifth Commandment" (above), carved in petrified wood by sculptor Cecilia Reiner, remains in Hungary where it was created and is at least temporarily the property of the government. At left, the artist shows two pieces that will be part of her exhibit in California this month. "The Happy Goddess of the Tree" and the "Sad Goddess of the Tree" are representations of nymphs of Greek mythology.

Sanders' memorabilia sought for 110th anniversary display

Jack Sanders is on an extraordinary treasure hunt, searching all over the country for Sanders' memorabilia to celebrate Fred Sanders Inc. 110th anniversary.

"We're looking for candy boxes from as far back as 1875," said Sanders, chairman of the company who represents the fourth generation of family ownership and direction. "If someone sends us an empty box of candy from 1940 or before, we'll send them a fresh box free to anywhere in the U.S."

"The individual sending the most distinctive piece of Sanders memorabilia will receive a \$110 gift certificate. We also have three certificates for \$50 each."

"We think some people have candy boxes tucked away in their attics and storage rooms," said Sanders. "We just hope they'll take the time to send them to us."

The memorabilia will be displayed in store windows in the main office with the owner's name next to each box. Sanders lovers should send their boxes to Fred Sanders Inc., 100 Oakman Boulevard, Highland Park 48103.

SANDERS IS a Detroit institution, predicated on uprooted Detroiters who have voted Sanders products time and time again as the item they miss most about their home town.

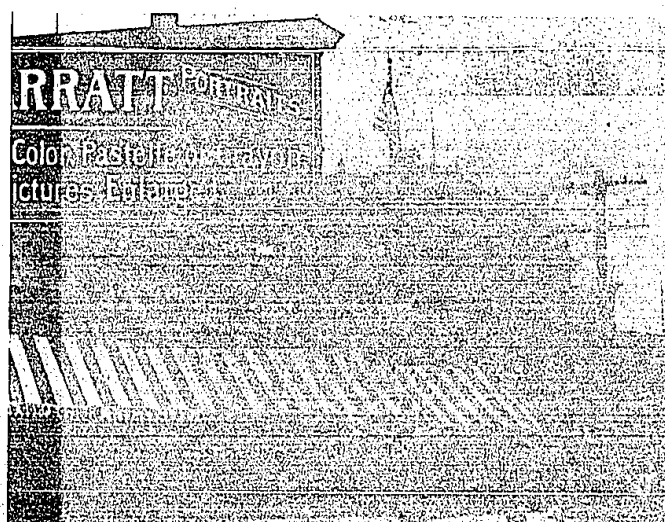
name was Henry Ford.

WITHIN A few years, baking was added to the candy and ice cream operation. Sanders grew rapidly with a burgeoning Detroit in the 1920s and 1930s. At the approach of World War II, there were 21 stores in neighborhood and downtown shopping areas. These stores were pioneers in fast food service. At the heart of Sanders' operation was the hot-fudge sundae.

In its fourth generation of family ownership, there are 38 stores in the metropolitan Detroit area and Sanders' products are distributed in specialty food stores across the country.

An extract from the "American Journal of Commerce" printed some time prior to 1899 says it all about Sanders:

"Among the very many representative lines of trade that have helped develop the commercial interests of this city, none have done more to establish a metropolitan air than our genial fellow townsman, Mr. Fred Sanders, who conducts the manufacture of pure confectionery and ice cream. At Nos. 141 and 143 Woodward Avenue, The Ice Cream and Soda Parlors are the finest in the west and are elegantly fitted and lighted with myriads of electric lights, and are a veritable palace, fit for the gods."



This is not a scene from a movie. It's Detroit in 1930 at Michigan and Woodward where Fred Sanders opened his third store, the Sanders Pa-

vilion. This year the company celebrates its 110th anniversary.