

Creative Living

Mario McGee editor/591-2300



Thursday, March 20, 1987 O&E

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Shawls: Cranbrook, Kashmir connection

Cranbrook Academy of art fiber students and craftsmen of Kashmir shared their skills to create an exciting exhibition, "Collaboration: Cranbrook/Kashmir," on display at Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum through Sunday, April 5.

The exhibition features 17 hand-embroidered shawls designed by 16 students working with Gerhardt Knodel, head of the fiber department and executed by the craftsmen of Kashmir. Knodel, an internationally recognized designer also did one.

Knodel said, "They are so much better than we anticipated — they are beautifully made and beautifully executed."

The students and Knodel provided full-scale designs for the hand-embroidered shawls that were executed in Kashmir over the winter months by local craftsmen, many of whom work as farmers during the summer.

Contact was made in June 1986 with a small organization in Srinagar, Kashmir, that produces hand-embroidered garments and rugs based on traditional designs for domestic sale and export," Knodel said. "A rigorous program of research and design developed in the fiber studio during three weeks in October that involved studying historic shawls through drawing."

"Design ideas went through generations of change until finally, in early November, a packet of 17 full-size, color-coded blueprints were sent, along with photographs of each of the Cranbrook designers."

"Collaboration: Cranbrook/Kashmir" has provided an unusual opportunity for people on opposite sides of the world to communicate through what they make, rather than what they say."

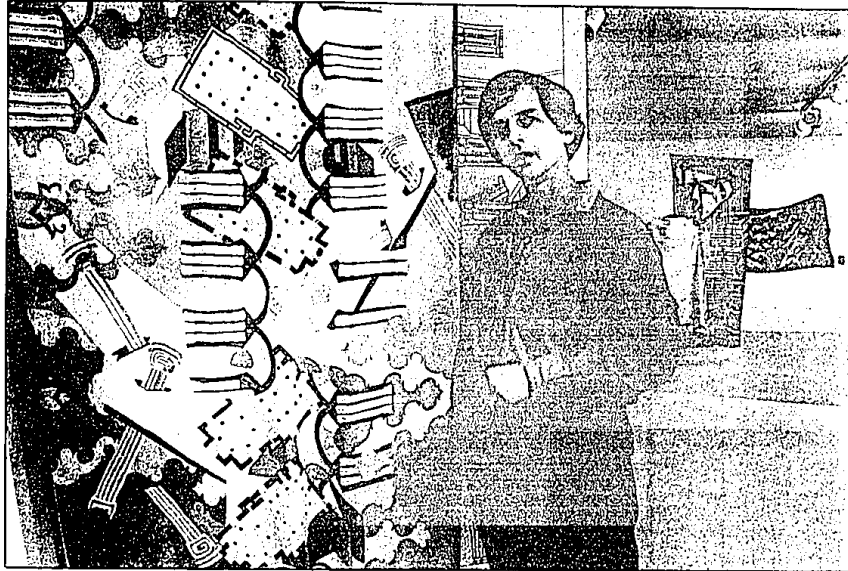
A HISTORIC section of the exhibit traces their development, from the early handwoven and embroidered Kashmir shawls to the European machine-made versions, and the influence of the European market on Kashmir shawl designs.

"The shawls with their bold colors and outstanding designs should be seen, indeed worn, to be appreciated," said Roy Slade, president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

The project was underwritten by Nancy Yaw of the Yaw Gallery of Birmingham.

Knodel said this cooperative venture worked so well in the sharing of ideas and skills, of giving to each other, that it has inspired him to set up more programs of this kind. He said he has already received inquiries about showing them in other cities.

Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, 500 Long Pine, Bloomfield Hills, open 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, offers temporary exhibitions focusing on contemporary trends in the visual arts. The permanent collection features work by Ellul and Gene Saari, Harry Bertola, Matis Grottel, Charles Eames and other Cranbrook artists, architects and designers.



JERRY SOLYNSKY/retail photographer

Gerhardt Knodel, head of the Cranbrook Academy of Art fiber department stands with one of the shawls, designed by his students and made by Kashmir craftsmen. The brightly colored shawls are silk embroidered on wool. Behind the shawl is the

full-size blueprint for this particular shawl. Each blueprint was color-coded and accompanied by color samples. It took the craftsmen about four months to make 17 shawls.

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— Roy Slade

Cranbrook Academy of Art

Pre-Columbian
Local collectors loan quality art

By Manon Moilgaard
special writer

Part II, "Pre-Columbian Art," of the three-part series, "Spirit in Clay," at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Art Gallery, is a gem of an exhibition.

Comprised of approximately 60 works, mostly from the collection of metropolitan area architect Louis G. Redstone and his wife, Ruth, plus other prime pieces loaned by Dr. and Mrs. Irving Burton and the Detroit Institute of Arts, the exhibit concentrates on tomb art — funerary figurines from regions of Mexico and effigy bottles and jars from Peru.

These objects, originally meant to accompany the dead on their final voyage, are displayed in glass cases. Meadow Brook's curator, Kilchi Usui, has an ingenious talent for displaying art to its best advantage.

The figurines from Mexico are divided into two geographical areas: West Mexico, encompassing the modern states of Colima, Nayarit and Jalisco; and the region of Mexico that includes the Valley of Mexico, Yucatan and states such as Vera Cruz and Oaxaca.

THE HISTORICAL span is from 200 B.C. to the 15th century A.D. for the figurines. Some of the objects from Peru are even older. The largest exhibits are about 16 inches high.

There are intriguing similarities and differences between the groups as well as a variance of styles within each group. Female figurines from West Mexico often hold bowls, depicting their role as providers of food. In many of these societies women were responsible for both food preparation and agriculture.

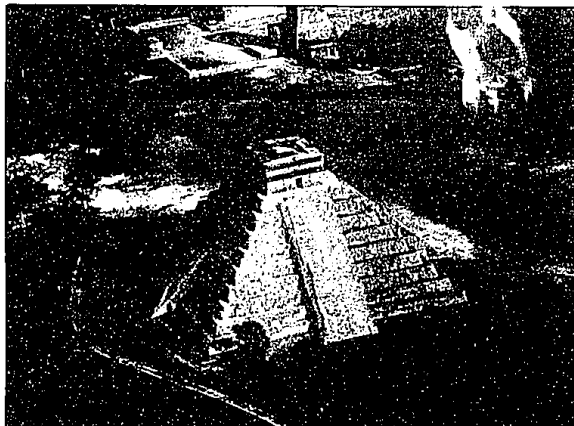
The males, often shown as shamans, ball players or warriors, hold small weapons or balls. The facial expressions are serene rather than frightening.

Many of the figurines in this group wear large nose and ear rings. Coloration varies from a greyish beige to reddish tones. The clay may be glazed or unglazed in this fascinating collection of tomb art, which includes many seated couples.

Figurines from the Mexican group often portray deities. Some are dressed in military costume, others wear the huge and heavily ornamented headdresses of seated gods.

David Penney, associate curator in the department of African, Oceanic and New World Cultures at the Detroit Institute of Arts, writes in his well-illustrated and informative catalogue, "Images of gods, culture heroes or references to world creation myths convey the same overall theme as West Mexican ancestor figurines."

IN CONTRAST to the above groups, the early societies of Peru buried their dead with effigy bottles and jars in sculptural shapes.



An aerial view of the pyramid at Chichen Itza in the Yucatan is part of the background material in the exhibition of Pre-Columbian art at Meadow Brook Gallery. At right is a seated female figurine, Nayarit, from West Mexico.

A typical piece is a bottle with two chambers with spouts, joined by a "bridge" and ornamented with effigy forms of humans, animals and birds. Some of these amazing vessels go as far back as 1200-300 B.C.

This exhibition is combined with a display of very fine aerial photographs, "Yucatan Earthscapes," by American photographer Marilyn Bridges. These views of Mayan temples, monuments and excavations were taken by Bridges while she was piloting a single engine plane. One stunning photograph of the pyramid of Chichen Itza shows details of the surrounding courts and walls.

The exhibit was curated by Usui with the assistance of Penney and Michael Kan, curator of the department of African, Oceanic and New World Cultures at Detroit Institute of Arts.

The gallery is open 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 2-6:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and evenings through the first intermission when there is a Meadow Brook Theatre production. Continues through April 5.



By Mary Jane Doerr
special writer

Superstar Luciano Pavarotti will be appearing with Michigan Opera Theatre, MOT, during the company's 1987-1988 season.

The recital, scheduled for June 12, 1988, at 4 p.m. at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit, is being presented in cooperation with Tibor Rudasz. Only those who buy season tickets for all six MOT productions will be able to purchase tickets for the concert before 1988.

This critic learned of the upcoming Pavarotti appearance three months ago, but, because of a special request from MOT, did not release the information.

The concert, originally scheduled for September 1988, is a joint venture between Opera Pacific in California and Michigan Opera Theatre, one of the benefits of the management link between the two companies.

David DiChiera is general director of both companies. Pavarotti will be appearing in Costa Mesa on Jan. 4.

Like the stadium concerts in other cities by the two leading tenors, Placido Domingo and Pavarotti, an elaborate sound system will be installed at Joe Louis Arena.

At the recent Domingo concert in Toronto, this critic found acoustics similar to those of a recording system. The 13,000 people in the Maple Leaf Gardens all enjoyed the same level of sound, despite the enormous size of the hockey rink.

The MOT Orchestra will back Pavarotti and whomever he brings to perform with him. In Toronto a few years ago, Pavarotti shared the program with a flutist.

The rest of the 1987-88 season is varied with superstar Leona Mitchell and Vyacheslav Polosov scheduled for the spring season, made possible through the same joint contracting with California as with Pavarotti.

A rather lightweight fall of comedy at the Fisher Theatre is planned, including "Falstaff" by Verdi Oct. 9-17; "Follies" by Stephen Sondheim Oct. 23 through Nov. 7; and the recent Canadian Opera Company's production of "Kismet" by Alexander Borodin, Nov. 13 through Dec. 6.



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No announcement was made of the casting for these productions.

"Kismet" will move on to Dayton and Costa Mesa after its Detroit run and Opera Pacific/MOT's new production of "Die Fledermaus" will move to Detroit from California for five performances at Masonic Temple May 14-21, 1988. Surprise guest stars are planned for that production.

Superstar Leona Mitchell is returning to sing Verdi's "Il Trovatore" April 30 through May 7. She sang "Aida" in 1985 with MOT. The final performance of the 1988 spring season at Masonic Temple is Gian Carlo Menotti and Zack Brown's production "La Bohème" by Puccini, a production opening this weekend in California with Jerry Hadley. Vyacheslav Polosov is scheduled to sing Rinaldo in Detroit.