

CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1992



MARY KLEMIC

Designs, noir scenes show range of moods

Four-letter words say it all at two Oakland County galleries this month. The words are "Erte," the name of the art deco master, and "noir," as in "Series Noir" by Detroit artist Diane Levine. An exhibit through Oct. 20 at the Park West Gallery, 29469 Northwestern Highway in Southfield, celebrates the 100th anniversary of Erte's birth. Levine's paintings are on display through Oct. 31 at the Xochipilli Gallery, 568 N. Woodward in Birmingham.

By design

Erte was born Count Romain de Tiroff in Russia. He went to Paris in 1912 to study architecture and turned to fashion design. His famous name came from his initials R.T., pronounced "air-tay" in French. His art was typically used for costume design (for MGM and Ziegfeld, among others).

Erte could suggest opulence and extravagance in clear, simple lines and geometric arrangements in illustrations, sculpture and jewelry. Foil stamping enhances the vibrant colors in some works.

The slender figures in Erte's art may be in poses or in graceful motion. The gowns or dresses they wear have curves that caress or swoop out from the body.

Some of the works are almost like optical illusions. Two parrots are found in the pattern of one dress. The clasp of a purse features two reclining figures that meet in a kiss when it is closed. A figure in "Arabian Nights" is draped in a sheer fabric that changes from a thick, patterned carpet waving over her head.

A work called "Evening, Night" shows figures in two dresses. One dress has the rays of a setting sun at the bottom. The other ensemble includes star earrings and a hat that resembles a moon.

Different moods are suggested. "Lucrece Borgia" holds out a cup that catches blood dripping from a spot on top of the paper. "Ondee" frolics exuberantly. The figure in "Sweet Away" seems to battle lightning and winds, losing a shoe in the process. "The Pursuit of Florio" is almost a forerunner of Peter Max's starry works of the 1960s, with such features as a broad swath of stars and profiles.

Even Erte's bronze statues flow. Butterflies alight on the figure in "Fantasia." Beads drip from the figure in "Pleasure of the Courtesan" into a chest. "Feather Gown" touches the table like wax melting from a candle.

Night moves

Levine's paintings bring to mind scenes from film noir, that bleak world in black and white with moody saxophone melodies crawling around thoughts of characters, an atmosphere that could erupt in violence or tragedy at any moment and then settle back into indifference.

Cool looks

The sepias series shows a woman posing with a plain, wooden chair. A seated man watches from the murky background in most of the scenes, once embracing the woman.

In some scenes the woman is taking off or putting on her clothes. A sense of loneliness or separation filters through the works, as if the two figures are never able to get together. Detachment is a stronger feeling than love here.

Detachment is also apparent in a more colorful series at Xochipilli, a quartet showing Levine learning how to shoot a pistol. The four paintings are presented as if in a film sequence, showing the artist drawing, aiming and firing a heavy steel gun, a spent casing leaping from the weapon as the figure looks on coolly.

Splay show

Artists are really spouting off and shaking things up this month at the Ariana Gallery, 386 E. Maple in Birmingham.

The gallery's fifth annual "Tea for Two" show, continuing to Oct. 26, features teapots, traps and salt and pepper shakers in clay, glass, wood and paper by more than 50 artists.

Artistic and technical challenges were met in a variety of ways. You see dancing teapots, three-headed shakers, teapots in geometric shapes, and one teapot topped with a hammer and a broken heart. A set consisting of a teapot, creamer, sugar bowl and shakers suggests old-fashioned elegance with rose applique and ruffles. Other patterns are wilder and bolder.

Some items take on animal shapes, including that of a camel, or borrow from architecture, resembling an Oriental temple or a diner, among other structures. Other works carry a tea-time theme, including sculpture, jewelry and wall pieces.



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM HIGER

Artist mixes old, new in variety of sculpture



BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

At first glance, the smooth, sleek cylinders in an orderly arrangement against the wall resemble organ pipes. But before you can blink, you realize you are looking at carving tools — 700 of them — that are awaiting the touch of Svetoslav Videnov.

The Troy resident is a musician of sorts. He's a sculptor who fashions wood, leather, metal and other materials into visual melodies that can stir or soothe the soul.

"To be a good artist you must be first a good craftsman," said Videnov, 28. "It will always help you."

Videnov's work harmonizes the

traditional and contemporary to make striking, exciting art. Carving and painting techniques used in church icons produce his unusual, modern pieces, often featuring industrial materials and paints he mixes himself.

"I try to mix old tradition with a new technique."

Videnov's art is displayed all over his house. One painting features parts of a violin that extend beyond the frame. A shadowed arch and wire lines accenting the perspective help make a three-dimensional look in another painting. In a work called "Catch the Rainbow," a wire curves on the frame.

Other pieces resemble icons, with

arched frames. "Faith, Hope, Reality" is a wood cross with faces carved in the vertical piece that reaches almost from ceiling to floor. Wood and leather pieces hang like leaves from the arms.

Videnov was born near Sofia, Bulgaria, and lived in Bonn, Germany, for the last three years. He and his wife, Christel, arrived in Troy in December and will stay in the United States for four years while Christel Videnov works with the consulate general of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Videnov had private lessons in wood carving and drawing for nine years, beginning when he was 8 or 9 years old. In Bulgaria he was a private student of wood carver Peter Kuschlev.

After Videnov passed an examination with his design of an iconostase, 20 feet long and 15 feet 2 inches high, he was allowed to work in Orthodox churches all over the world. Until



Curves ahead: A curved wire rests on top of this work, "Catch the Rainbow." Some of Videnov's art extends beyond the limits of the frame.

then, Kuschlev was the only Bulgarian church wood carver.

Videnov is one of five artists familiar with the Debar style of wood carving. This creates an intricate, three-dimensional work, with three to six levels, from one piece of wood.

See SCULPTOR, 7D

Jewelry designer comes up with gems of ideas

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Charlotte Quinn can see and feel beyond the cool, smooth surfaces of jewelry.

To her, a ring or a necklace can represent love or a special event. It can offer a challenge to combine aesthetics and practicality while fitting the personality of the owner. It can be a sign of trends to come.

This looking beyond the here and now guides Quinn when she designs jewelry. Some of her gold and gem-

stone items will be included at a benefit for the Birmingham Village Players Friday-Sunday, Oct. 23-25, at the playhouse, Chestnut and Hunter in Birmingham.

The benefit is an art and gift fair featuring works in a variety of media. Proceeds will go to the renovation fund for the Village Players playhouse. For information, call 640-2465.

An opening night gala for the fair will take place 6-9 p.m. Oct. 23. A \$5 donation is requested, which will go toward the Village Players Renova-

tion Fund. Hours for the fair are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 24 and noon to 6 p.m. Oct. 25. Admission is free.

"Jewelry is for people," said Quinn, a Birmingham resident.

"You have to be very inventive, very mechanically thinking. The aesthetics and design and always the intrigue of techniques and mechanics ... is extremely important."

"The contemporary jeweler is the one who sets the direction of where design is going."

Twenty years ago, Quinn and her

artist husband, Harlan, made replicas of four royal crowns to accompany replicas of gowns of four empresses. In many ways, designs coming from Quinn Studios in Birmingham can make the wearer feel like royalty.

"They want a serious piece ... very often (for a) birthday or anniversary," Quinn said of her customers. "I do a lot of wedding rings."

Quinn always asks about the person for whom the jewelry is intended,

See JEWELRY, 6D

Arboret features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

SMOOTH TALK

Richard Stamps of Oakland University will present a slide lecture on "The Silk Road" at a meeting of the Michigan Oriental Art Society 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, at the Troy Public Library, 510 W. Big Beaver. The meeting is open to the public.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Lenore Paxton, author of the "Sing, Color 'n Say" books and tapes, will attend a signing 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17, at Waldenbooks, 214 W. Maple in Birmingham.

POETRY READING

Key Lister will present a poetry reading and open microphone 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 16, at the

Art Beat

Lawrence Street Gallery, 29 W. Lawrence in Pontiac. Admission is \$5 at the door. The event is part of the "Inventing the Invisible" programs, which present new poets and writers. Call 693-7227 for more information.

DIA SHOP

The third Detroit Institute of Arts museum shop, this one at the Summer Collection on Big Beaver Road in Troy, will open with an official unveiling 9:30 a.m. Thursday. Roy Lichtenstein, the founding father of pop art, will be present to sign copies of his publications, including books and posters.

FOCUS ON FAMOUS

Celebrity photographer Linda Solomon will speak on "Focusing on the Famous," including slides and anecdotes from her experiences with celebrities, at a noon luncheon Thursday, Oct. 22, at The Community House, 380 S. Bates in Birmingham. Tickets are \$25 and early reservations are recommended. Call 644-5832 for more

information. The event is part of the annual Our Town Exhibition and Sale.

ARTIST VISITS

Noted fiber artist and author Jack Lenor Larsen, a graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, was at Cranbrook to receive a Founders Award earlier this month. He worked with fiber students and on campus one day. Larsen was recently honored at a benefit at the American Craft Museum, with academy president Roy Slade speaking on behalf of the academy.

BROADCAST NEWS

The guest host on the "Guess Who's Playing the Classics" program, 9-10 p.m. today on WQRS-FM 105, is Franklin Village Council trustee Bernard Isenberg, whose business history includes positions at J.K. Lasser and Co., Isenberg, Edgar and Thomson, Grant Thornton, and Hamilton Investments Inc., all of Southfield. He is a member of Concerned Citizens of Franklin, the Men's Club and membership committee of Temple Beth El, the Franklin Community Association, the Franklin Historical Society, West Bloomfield Gateway Plus and the Franklin Historic District Study Commission, among other organizations.