

# CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1993



## Artists share spirit; posters tell of history

A story on icons last month showed that their appeal extends far beyond the Eastern European countries from which they started. After the article appeared, Karen West of Birmingham wrote to say that she learned the art of iconography at the studio in Ligonier, Pa., mentioned in the story. She takes commissions for icons, and makes and ships icons heads to iconographers all over the country. She sent along some clarifications about the preparation of icon boards and the way icons are made.

For example, fabric is added to the board during the gessoing stage to prevent the board from splitting or cracking. Many coats of gesso are applied. (West coats her boards with about 12 layers of gesso.)

Also, oil paints are never used for icons. Instead, egg tempera or acrylics resembling egg tempera are used.

Icons may be hung, but it isn't recommended, West said. To prevent warping, icons should be supported from underneath, as on a shelf.

West shared more information on icons. The works are written, not painted. They are theology written in images, which is why they aren't signed by the artists. Icons are written according to strict, traditional symbolism.

In an icon, light is represented as coming from the inner illumination of divine grace from within the image. This is why shading and highlights aren't natural on an icon, and why the eyes don't reflect light.

The face of the image is turned directly toward the beholder, in order to best enter into communication with one another. The eyes and ears are enlarged, and the mouth remains small and closed, to convey a sense of inner watchfulness and attention. The image has a hand raised in blessing, and the halo extends into the outer borders to represent universality.

Information on a related subject came from Troy resident Ray De Francesco, who called to say he is getting a committee together to organize a contemporary and religious art show. He has talked about it to area artists Bob Wilbert, Sergio De Giusti and Margaret Cavanaugh, and is looking for others interested in religious art.

Shows of this nature took place in the 1960s, involving the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills and the Ford Motor Co., De Francesco said.

De Francesco, now retired, taught industrial design and fine arts at Macomb Community College and also taught at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. He once took part in the National Religious Art Exhibition of Contemporary Ecumenical Art. He'll share more information on the new show as planning continues.

### Signs of times

"All Posters Great and Small: 100 Years of Original Posters," a show at the Arnold Klein Gallery, 4520 N. Woodward in Royal Oak, illustrates how posters have made their mark both in war and in peace.

The exhibit, continuing through Feb. 27, features posters on many subjects, from laundry products and ink, to operas and circuses, to Liberty Bonds and national pride. They are in a variety of languages, including English, French and Japanese.

One brightly colored, metallic embossed poster by Hundertwasser for the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich shows a stadium, with throngs of people watching athletes on a field. Red, tear-shaped spots are featured. These were later seen as the artist's strange premonition of the tragedy of the murder of the athletes.

Posters could inspire. During World War I, the American Library Association campaigned for donations of books, brought to public libraries, for troops serving overseas. Charles B. Falls' spirited images ("Books Wanted For Our Men in Camp and 'Over There'") sounded a powerful call. The campaign's success made a strong reputation for the artist.

Posters in the British Empire Marketing Series presented a poster for the 1974 Olympic Games in 1925 by Charles Fears featuring a ship sailing on the Suez Canal, flags flying. A poster by Denton Welch from the late 1930s shows a noble estate and assures the viewer that Shell Oil will help him or her see British landmarks.

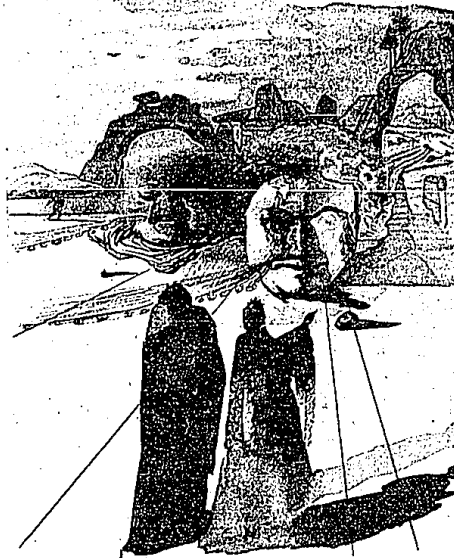
J.C. Leyendecker's rendering of workers on a horse-drawn wagon on a winter day urged viewers to "Order Coal Now." This was the famed illustrator and magazine cover artist's most important poster. A lithograph by another artist shows loading mail at docks in London.

Posters on view from the previous century include those by Belgian artist Auguste Donny (for a song contest in 1895), John Haasall ("Little Red Riding Hood" in 1897) and Jules Chéret (the original lithograph design for the cover of the collection "Les Maitres de l'Affiche" — "Masters of the Poster" — in 1896).

See POSTERS, 6D

# Dali

'Oratorios':  
"The Last Oratorios of Virgil," from Salvador Dali's "The Divine Comedy," shows Dante, the main character in the poem, and the poet Virgil in a lush garden.



'Greed and Lavishness': Salvador Dali's "The Divine Comedy" series, now exhibited at Park West Gallery in Southfield, presents the surrealist master's colorful illustrations of scenes and creatures in Dante's poem.

## Surrealist master guides on journey



Visitors to Park West Gallery in Southfield will go on a surrealistic journey as they view Salvador Dali's illustrations of "The Divine Comedy." The colorful works may either frighten or inspire but are always fascinating in the one-of-a-kind Dali style.

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

In his poem "The Divine Comedy," Dante Alighieri was guided through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise.

In "The Divine Comedy," the current exhibit at Park West Gallery, 29469 Northwestern Highway in Southfield, surrealist master Salvador Dali guides the viewer on that same journey.

The display, continuing through March 4, features more than 50 works illustrating the 14th century poem. Dali made the watercolor paintings used as models for the series between 1951 and 1960. The woodcuts were engraved by hand between 1961 and 1964. The collection is considered to

be Dali's finest achievement in the graphic arts. Park West's layout leads you on a winding route, enhancing the feeling of going on a journey.

The title of "The Divine Comedy," refers to the search for the "divine," or spiritual salvation, and to the classical dramatic form of comedy, in which life's problems are resolved in a happy ending.

With Dante as the main character, the poem explores the theme of life after death. The story begins with him in a dark wood. He meets the Roman poet Virgil, who offers to serve as his guide out of the forest and through the underworld.

Dante and Virgil descend into Hell, filled with masses of suffering people

who are punished for their sins by monsters, devils and other creatures. The two emerge on a bench at the island of Purgatory, a mountain covered with bright terraces where the dead seek forgiveness for their sins.

At the top of Mount Purgatory, Virgil gives Dante a new guide, Beatrice. She leads Dante to a state of enlightenment, and he meets the souls of the blessed. Arriving at the throne of God, Dante glimpses for a moment the Divine Glory.

Dali made a new and distinctly surrealist interpretation of the story. Instead of brooding engravings, he made illustrations filled with light and color that always fascinate, whether terrifying or inspiring the viewer.

One image, "Men Who Devour Themselves," features faces that seem to be melted like the timepieces in Dali's famous "Persistence of Memory."

This is a world alternately strange and serene. Some creatures are faceless or hooded. Some bodies writhe, others stand tranquilly. Skies may be

blood-red, or misty with soft color. Serpents fly, and angels blow trumpets. "Fallen Angel" has a body resembling furniture with drawers. Beatrice's face is pure and calm.

Human shapes make up the trees in a forest of those who committed suicide. "The Dishonest" shows a creature with his tongue removed from his head and resting on a ledge away from his body. In another image, a traitor is pulled from the earth by the hair on his head, his face and skull stretched and contorted.

Other scenes feature gentle or magnificent beauty. Creatures are often calm or in splendor, rather than in agony. The mood is hopeful, rather than despairing. "The Last Oratorios of Virgil" shows two figures in a lush garden. "The Angel of the Sun" wears a gown that somehow suggests both sculpted stone and soft, flowing cloth.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Call 354-2343.

## Designer takes success story to former library

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

In the former library at 210 W. University in Rochester, the shelves have been cleared and the tables removed for some time now. But the building, west of Main, will still be in the business of "checking out" starting next month.

Instead of books, visitors will be checking out home interior ideas and products. The structure will combine two furniture and accessory stores — Hepplewhite's and Generations —

under one roof.

The business will start in its new location in a big way with a gala opening to benefit the Rainbow Connection, the Rochester Hills Public Library, the Rochester Symphony Orchestra and the Paint Creek Center for the Arts.

"The community's been so great," said designer/owner Mary Lujan. "I love Rochester. It's been really good to me."

"It's like a dream come true." The grand opening, black tie op-

portional, will take place 7-10 p.m. Thursday, March 4. Celebrity co-chairmen are Marilyn Turner and John Kelly of "Kelly & Company" on WXYZ-TV.

Cost is \$75 per person. Live music and entertainment will be featured. Valet parking will be available. Juliette's Cuisine of the Merchant of Vino will provide refreshments and hors d'oeuvres. Call 651-4726 for more information.

Lujan remodeled the interior of the 25,000-square-foot building. An up-

per level will feature vignettes, so customers can see how furnishings look in rooms. Some walls are made of different materials, such as old stone made from cinderblock, logs for a cabin look, and stucco.

"No ice cube tray. No square cubicles," Lujan said of the arrangement.

Lane, Hickory Chair, Hickory White and Lexington's will be showcased. The business will offer one-stop shopping, with ready-made or

See OPENING, 4D

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

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

### CALL OF THE WILD

To celebrate the exclusive exhibit of Andy Warhol's "Endangered Species" collection at the Somerset Collection in Troy, The Nature Company at the shopping center is offering nature enthusiasts and Warhol admirers an opportunity to take home a piece of history with the six-work Endangered Species Portfolio.

The show features vividly colored portraits of animals facing the risk of extinction. The portfolio contains reprints of the tiger, ram, rhino, elephant, tree frog and zebra, and a timeline history of Warhol's life and creative works. Suitable for framing, the portfolio is priced at \$13.95. Also brought in for the special display are various items from the Detroit Institute of Arts Mu-

## Art Beat

seum Shop. Among the Warhol commemoratives are "Endangered Species" boxed notes, \$10.95; Warhol address books, \$12.95 to \$17.95; a hard cover sketching journal, \$10.95; and Warhol books for children and adults, \$7.95 to \$29.95.

The exhibit continues through Wednesday in the rotunda of the shopping center, at Big Beaver Road and Coolidge.

### GARDEN VARIETY

Escape the winter doldrums in a garden filled with lush plants, exotic flowers and vibrant veges, as Jacobson's Home Store comes to life with the earthly pleasures of spring in the store's Garden Pleasures promotion. The promotion continues this month and next at all Jacobson's stores, including the one on Maple in Birmingham. In addition to Mother Nature's best and brightest, Garden Pleasures features beautifully

crafted home furnishings and accessories bursting with brightly colored floral, botanical, fruit and vegetable motifs. Artists will be in the store handpainting garden themes on table linens, chairs and bedding. Victorian wire furniture by world-renowned interior decorator Mark Hampton brings a dignified country air to the party in the garden.

Hampton, one of the foremost authorities in the field of restoration, redecorated the Oval Office and reception rooms of the White House. He also lent his decorating talents to Blair House, the president's official guest residence in Washington, D.C., and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. He will appear at Jacobson's Home Store in Livonia on March 11.

### DIRECTOR APPOINTED

Boston Ballet principal dancer Karl Condon has been appointed artistic director of Detroit's Metropolitan Ballet Theatre. He will assume the post in Detroit on July 1.

MBT was founded last year by Bradley Stroug and Joseph Valentic, two accountants who live in Birmingham.