

CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1993



MARY KLEMIC

African metalwork shows special honor

Visitors to Barclay's, 280 Merrill in Birmingham, can explore Africa and appreciate special craftsmanship in art work and other items from that continent.

In celebration of Black History Month, the gallery is presenting an exhibit of 19th century metal work from Zaire.

"Metalworkers are respected (in that culture) as we respect (Judges)," said Marlene Hamel of Barclay's. "They had the power over fire."

Besides their power over fire, the metalworkers had the skill to create complex and subtle forms with a hammer rather than with delicate tools. The swords, knives and daggers, some of them owned by officials, show a variety of forms.

The display is from two famed collections, the Rubins Collection and the Collection of the Baptist Missionary Society.

Also featured are Ashanti gold weights. These are tiny representations of proverbs in the shape of animals, fish, implements and even a stool.

The gallery displays many kinds of African art. One image of a Shango goddess shows a figure bending a bolt of lightning, a thunderbolt overhead.

Images of twins, called ibiji figures, are exhibited. A mother whose baby died would ask a holy man to carve these. He would breathe into them and the mother would carry them around with her with the belief that her lost child would return to her.

The work is often intricate. Lines in a figure's head represent its hairdo. A beaded inlaid stool shows figures, animals and plants. A West African terra cotta vessel bears aquatic motifs in full relief.

The large works include a Chokwe Cikunza mask, made up of decorated red and white bark over a conical frame. Among the smaller items is a polished ware flask with a silver pendant at its neck.

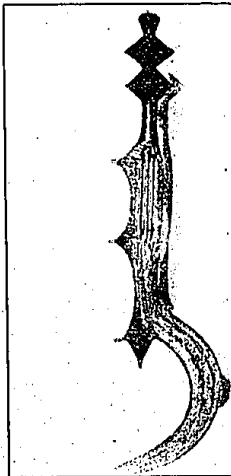
Glass works

Habatat Galleries, in the Triatrin Building at 32255 Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills, presents different types of structures in an exhibition continuing through Feb. 27.

One type, called sculptured environmental studies, is by Emily Brock. These are tiny rooms or games of glass. The games include tic-tac-toe and a small scene featuring a hopscotch and a jump rope.

The rooms are complete with furnishings and decorations that look as if a Lilliputian interior designer was hard at work. Glimmering details abound. An office contains scattered papers on a desk. A greenhouse has potted plants with long tendrils or short petals. Books and newspapers are on shelves and surfaces. Playing cards, a camera, candy, paint tubes and fashion accessories are in various other settings.

See BREWING, 6D



Out of Africa: This Ngala official's sword is one of the items on display at Barclay's in Birmingham. The display celebrates Black History Month at the gallery.

Latvian artists offered hope

A former foreign minister of Latvia visited Oakland County galleries to discuss setting up an exhibit of Latvian art in the United States.

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER



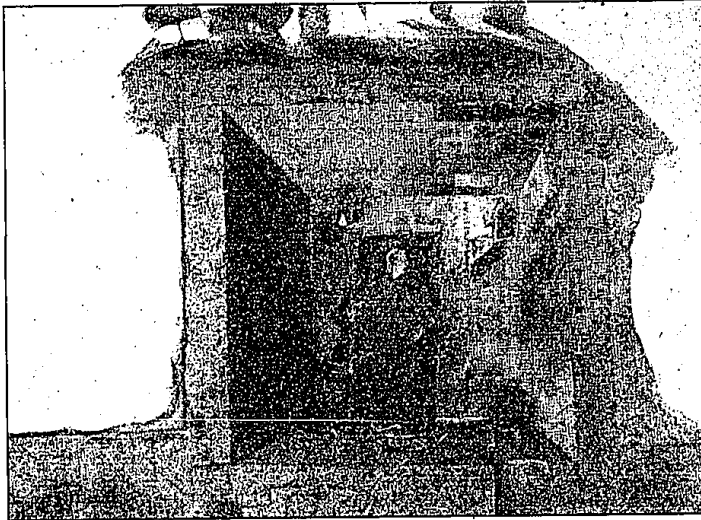
With a heart and a portfolio both full of pride, Janis Jurkans of Latvia went on a special mission around Oakland County.

Guided by love of art and of country, Jurkans visited area galleries last month with the hope of setting up an exhibit in the United States showing works by Latvian artists. He carried photos of works by young artists in oils, graphics and tapestries.

"Like your Detroit Pistons, we have our artists," said Jurkans, who was foreign minister of Latvia until recently. "This is something we are proud of."

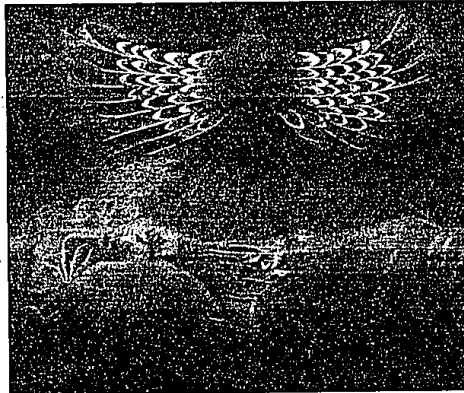
Jurkans was accompanied by Dagnija Lacies of Orchard Lake, who is president of a computer business in Latvia, her husband Andris Lacies, and Mary Lou Bagley, manufacturing/research president of Automotive Chemical of Detroit.

See LATVIA, 3D



'Mausoleum': This painting by a Latvian artist burns with intensity as well as vibrant colors. A former Latvian minister visited Oakland County galleries recently to discuss an exhibit in this country of works by Latvian artists.

Colorful:
Textile works, such as the one at far right, and graphic works, such as the one at right, show the diversity of Latvian art.



Miniature exhibit big on artistry

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Little things mean a lot.

For example, stop by the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, 1516 S. Cranbrook Road in Birmingham. A current exhibit there, "Masterpieces in Miniature II," showcases miniatures as an art form.

The display continues through Feb. 27. It features tiny room settings, homes, silver, porcelain, paintings, fabrics, glass and other decorative accessories loaned by invited international artisans and private collectors. The pieces are on a scale of one-half inch or one inch to one foot.

The BBAA and Miniature Makers'

Workshop, 4516 N. Woodward in Royal Oak, are co-sponsoring the exhibit. They co-sponsored the first "Masterpieces in Miniature" show at the BBAA, which took place in 1989. That exhibit drew 5,000 people.

"The fascination (with miniatures) is probably from our childhood, from toys, playthings," said artist and longtime collector Duffy Wineman of Bloomfield Village, who with Miniature Makers' owner Criss Goad of Birmingham is coordinating the show.

"I always think they (represent) that fantasy or escape from the real world."

"A miniature room setting or doll

house becomes a work of art when you see a high degree of craftsmanship, sensitivity to scale, and a final product that speaks way beyond its simple presence," said Kenneth Gross, BBAA executive director.

"I have looked at some miniature settings and felt drawn into them, imagining what it would be like to climb that staircase or sit on one of the chairs."

Miniature making goes back to ancient times, when pharaohs made replicas of their possessions to be interred with them in their tombs. Today miniatures are used by architects, real estate developers, the ad-

vertising industry, museums and theaters. Goad knew of a Japanese visitor who took miniatures of things she saw in the United States back to Japan to help explain American customs.

Men and women, young and old, make a variety of small wonders. A super sampling of these is displayed at the BBAA. Vignettes feature upholstered furniture, rugs, curtains and items on shelves. Viewers can find a sterling silver dressing set, a sink basin with real marble, an egg yolk on a floor.

See MINIATURES, 3D

Artbeat 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.

FINE FEATHERS

Heiner Hertling of West Bloomfield is one of five award-winning Michigan wildlife artists producing color paintings for the forthcoming book "The Birds of Michigan." The book, a joint project of the Sarett and Kalamazoo nature centers and Indiana University Press, will feature 115 collectible paintings portraying 220 bird species found nesting in Michigan. Its publication is scheduled for 1994. Money to produce the large-size book will be raised through sponsorships of the original

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paintings and an exclusive series of five limited edition prints. Each sponsor will be listed in the book and receive a complimentary copy. Along with the art, the book will contain information about more than 400 species of birds. For a current listing of available paintings and prints, contact the Sarett Nature Center, 2300 Benton Center Road, Benton Harbor 49022, or call 616-927-4832.

PHOTO SHOW

Framed works by Farmington Hills fine art photographer Monte Nagler are on display this month at Borders Book Shop in the Novi Town Center, off Novi Road just south of I-96. The

show features pictures from Nagler's first hard-cover monograph, "Statements of Light," recently published by Suburban Communications.

Nagler writes a photography column for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. His award-winning works are in many private and public collections, and he frequently travels to galleries across the country. In addition to the seminars and courses he teaches at area colleges, he has appeared at Borders to lecture on such topics as travel photography, photography history and how to succeed as a fine art photographer.

"Statements of Light" contains 76 black and white pictures taken by Nagler during his travels around the world, and a technical appendix. Its foreword is written by Detroit photographer Tony Spina. Listed at \$65, the book is available at Borders for \$58.50. Nagler also offers a limited deluxe edition, which comes with an original photograph, for \$350.