

CREATIVE LIVING

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THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1993

Cranbrook show adds elements



The ancient Greeks thought that four basic elements made up all matter. These four elements — earth, air, fire and water — are featured in a current exhibit at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills. The works in the display have the elements as subjects, or allude to them in the way they were made.

By MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

It's element-al. That's the theme of a current exhibit at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills.

The ancient Greeks believed that four basic elements — earth, air, fire and water — made up all matter. The show at Cranbrook is called "Earth, Air, Fire and Water: Elements of the Permanent Collection."

Exhibited paintings, prints, sculpture, ceramics and glass have earth, air, fire or water as subjects, or they refer to those elements through their form or the way they were made. The display continues through Oct. 31 at 1921 N. Woodward, between Lone Pine and Long Lake roads.

These are romantic pieces that span centuries. Fire is in some of the colors, airy delicacy in some details. Some pieces look as if their materials or hues came directly from the earth, and some depictions shimmer in a misty, watery manner.

The earth is represented in Zoltan Sepeshy's 1941 tempera study for the "Scientist, Artist and Farmer" mural for the Rackham Building in Detroit, and a stoneware vase by potter Mary Scheitz and glazer and decorator Edwin Scheitz. This 1948 vase features figures that resemble art by ancient or primitive people.

"Celestial Navigator" by Brian Kritzman, a 1989 work, balances wood, metal and plexiglass to form an instrument. Dating before 1931, the wool piece "The Sunbeam" by Lorenz Kleiser features human figures among cacti, trees and vines.

Subjects from the air include birds (in embroidered wool on linen bed hangings from about 1917 by May Morris and Mary J. Newill) and a plane (in a 1974 lithograph by James Rosenquist).

John Kirchmayer's work called "Music," dating from before 1917 and made out of wood with gold highlights, depicts an angel playing a violin, while the 1981 "Icarus Series No. 25" by L. Brent Kington is an abstract piece made of mild steel, acrylic and krypton.

Images of fire are in the red chair and ottoman made of tubular steel by Eero Saarinen, circa 1946-48, and the 1977 lithograph called "Devil at the Keyboard" by Willem DeKooning. A stoneware vase from Pewabic Pottery, circa 1930s, changes color as it is viewed from different sides, and molded glass vases designed by Rene Jules Lalique, also from the 1930s, glow in red, blue and purple like a flame.

Water is presented in the oil paintings of Niagara Falls by 19th century artist Thomas Cole and "Snow" (1900) by Nancy Brett, and the 1948 cocobola wood sculpture of an endlessly curving "Wave" by Glenn Booth Chamberlain. Different moods are shown in Eva Kwong's 1981 porcelain work "Quiet Storm," and Karel Appel's 1978 brightly colored wooden "Flying Fish."

Carl Milles' 1938 plaster study for the Doors of Agriculture and Industry of the State Finance Building in Harrisburg, Pa., shows a figure in the rain. In his "Ontological Fragment (Tsunami)" of 1990, Ronald Leax combines a child's science book, a porcelain pan, salt and laundry bluing.

Hours are 1-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for children, senior citizens and full-time students, free for children under age 7 and museum members. Call 645-3312.



R.H. HENSELBERG

Alry subject: This circa 1917 bed hanging, embroidered wool on linen, is featured in a current exhibit at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills called "Earth, Air, Fire and Water: Elements of the Permanent Collection."



Earth tone: This 1948 stoneware vase is one of the items in the Cranbrook display that alludes to earth, one of the four basic elements that the ancient Greeks believed made up all matter.

Oriental art featured in painting display

An exhibit at the Oakland County Galleria in Pontiac shows the delicacy and quiet power of Oriental brush painting. The show continues through July 29 in the Executive Office Building, 1200 N. Telegraph (call the Office of Cultural Affairs at 858-0416).

Thirty-five artists from Taiwan, Venezuela and California as well as Michigan display more than 100 paintings featuring landscapes, figures, animals, still lifes and calligraphy. Highlighted are works from three generations of the famed Liang family.

Other paintings are by members of the Midwest Oriental Art Club.

The Liangs introduced new visions by combining styles of the East and West. Professor Liang Tien-Ming (1898-1959) dedicated himself to the cause of the Chinese revolution. His subjects include a maple with red leaves, horses and General Kwan Yu, "a hero of the three kingdoms," who is painting at a desk.

The artist's brother, Professor Liang Yu-Ming (1905-1984), was inspired by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. Among his works is a delicately colored painting of "The Eight Fairies Across the Sea." Each creature in the boat in this painting has its own personality. One is grabbing the sleeve of another who is reaching into the water.

Another brother, Liang Chung-Ming, became an eminent artist, pictorial editor, lecturer and educator for modern Chinese history. His works include a boy leading a buffalo through a storm. The viewer can feel them straining in the rough weather.

With some works the shapes are suggested by lines that blur and seem to melt into the canvas. Others are outlined more sharply. Colors may be used sparingly, to breathtaking effect or not at all. The calligraphy samples may have only one or two large characters that fill the canvas, or be accompanied by illustrations, or feature rows of smaller characters.

One of the featured artists is Yu-Ping Yung, daughter of Liang Yu-Ming. She has taught and exhibited at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. Her works include the beautiful, floating "Fairy of Longevity," different views of friendly frogs, and a colorful peony.

Traditional scenes are presented, such as landscapes with trees and small houses. "Royal Ladies' Spring Outing" by Liu Lan Dun looks like an exquisite treasure from the past. Her fresh and graceful "Outing from Misty Shores" features a flower and a hummingbird, received an Outstanding award from the National Painting and Calligraphy Academy in China.

Examples of how just a few colors can bring a painting to life include the goldfish by Chiang Chung-Wang, and the hill mynah by Liang Tan-Hui. A few strokes of green and blue define the fish. The mynah's yellow beak is the sole spot of color.

Explosions of colors are in the chrysanthemums by Chang Dana Liang, and the peacock and crabbie by Jack Liang, Yu-Ping Yung's brother, who coordinated the show with her.

Among the whimsical notes in the show are a painting by Liang Shio-Chung of animals in water listening to a youth playing a flute, and others by Chiang Tan-Mei Liang featuring swallows seeming to leap from a willow like two trapeze artists, and two small birds dwarfed by a large branch.

Liang Jo-Lan Lee presents the slender leaves of an orchid rather than its blossom. In "Spring At the Pond," Tan Lee Cheng shows flowering branches over a lake, in which fish can be seen looking up. A painting by Vera Smith shows grapes, and a little grasshopper that isn't apparent at first. Works by Leonard Alkon, a Southfield commercial real estate broker who has exhibited at the BBAA and the Chinese Cultural Center in Troy, include the cissampus "Winter Pine," branches with touches of snow, and "Blue Fury," a bird with wings fluttering like the skirt of a flamenco dancer.

Brushes, solid ink, seals and inkstones used in the art are also displayed.

The exhibit is part of a partnership of the Midwest Oriental Art Club and the BBAA to enhance the cultural exchange and public awareness of Oriental arts and philosophy.

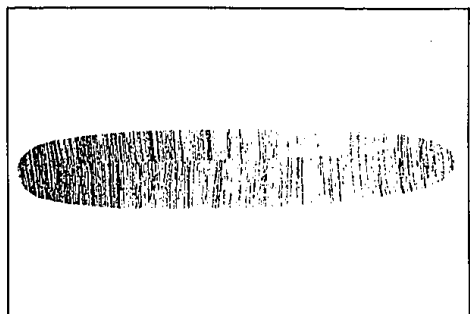
Euphoric haunt

The collage collection by Joseph Bernard on display to July 31 in "Euphoric Haunt" at the Feigenson/Preston Gallery, 796 N. Woodward in Birmingham (call 644-3956), is dreamlike memorabilia.

See GALLERIES, 7E



'Icarus Series': This steel sculpture is one of the items in the show having to do with air.



Sharp image: This wood and metal wall sculpture by Marcos Coelho Benjamin is one of the works by Latin American artists exhibited this month at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham.

Exhibit heads south

By MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

The mystery and beauty of the lands south of the equator are found in an exhibit by Latin American artists at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham through July 31.

The gallery, 430 N. Woodward, presents emerging talents from those countries in sculpture, painting and photography.

Rena Julieta Hanono offers the mixed media installation "Narcissus." Disturbing images are painted on boxes that are stacked like a child's building blocks set. They include barbed wire and a form apparently trapped in a large pot, arms covering the face or the back of the head facing the viewer.

The boxes are arranged in front of a mirror that slightly distorts the viewer's image. The crown image on the painted figure's head is also on

the top of the mirror, as if the person looking in the mirror and the figure are the same.

Marcos Coelho Benjamin's metal and wood sculpture pieces bring subtle colors out of the rust and steel hues. Fernando Velloso's slender clay and straw sculpture looks as though it came from a larger structure, or was a support piece for a table or building. The canvas appears cracked in the large, brooding, black and white charcoal works by Oscar Munoz Punto DeFuga.

The black and white photos by Mario Cravo Neto and Flor Garduno are intriguing. Among Neto's subjects are birds held up to someone's eyes as if they were tears. Garduno focuses on such subjects as a young woman carrying a basket of flowers on her head.

Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Call 493-3700.

Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 205 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 644-1314.

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

CHINESE EXHIBIT

The Troy Public Library, 510 W. Big Beaver Road in the Civic Center complex just east of I-75, will host an art exhibit by the Chinese Association of Greater Detroit noon to 6 p.m. Saturday. The exhibit will feature Chinese folk art, including Chinese New Year pictures and wax

printing pictures by artists from the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese Association of Greater Detroit is a non-political, non-profit organization whose goal is to facilitate friendship and promote exchanges among Chinese people and people from other cultures.

EXPLORING A MYSTERY

Michael Farroll, art historian from the University of Windsor, will present a slide-illustrated

lecture and demonstration on "The Mystery of Chinese and Japanese Black Ink Painting," 7 p.m. Friday, July 23, at The Print Gallery, 29203 Northwestern Highway in Franklin Plaza at 12 Mile in Southfield.

"Sui-hoku-Ga" (water and ink painting) and "Sumi-e" (black ink picture) describe a mysterious form of painting that originated in China. Buddhist monks meant for the pictures to lead the viewers toward "sudden enlightenment," the goal of this form of esoteric Buddhism. The art eventually left the monasteries to become an academic style used in such traditional subjects as landscape and still life painting.

The Print Gallery is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday and to 9 p.m. Thursday. Call 356-5464.

Art Beat