

# CREATIVE LIVING

THURSDAY, JULY 29, 1993

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MARY KLEMIC

## Store shows artistic front in renovation

**T**he Maxwell shop, 116 N. Woodward at Maple in downtown Birmingham, hit upon a creative way to ease the eyes as the front of the business is being renovated.

A brightly colored acrylic painting, measuring 8 by 8 feet, is emblazoned on the store front, replacing the sight of the rough renovation work in progress. Artist Jon Parlange painted the work in eight hours July 16, during the community's 18th annual "Night on the Town" promotion. The painting will be up for another three weeks.

Before the painting, part of the business front was boarded up. "It looked really bad," owner Chris Cosola said. "We thought we would have some fun, get a young artist, give him some exposure."

During Night on the Town, downtown stores had big clearance sales, and merchants outside the central business district had tables to sell their wares at various spots. Dining and entertainment were featured as well. It was an added treat for Night on the Towners to watch Parlange at work and talk with him, and vice versa.

"I've never painted in front of a thousand people," said Parlange, a Huntington Woods resident.

So many people were at the event that a lot of them didn't even notice him, the artist said.

"The energetic cubist work conveys the 'hustle and bustle of life,' as do many of Parlange's paintings, he said.

"You get your body into it, your mind in tune and your body in tune," he said of his method of painting.

This was his first public art work, and he would like to do more, the artist said.

Cosola likes the painting so well that he may try to take it apart and reconstruct it inside the store so it can be displayed permanently.

"We got great reaction," he said.

Something as spontaneous as this wouldn't happen in big malls, Cosola said.

"It's just an example of things that happen in Birmingham."

**Art objects**

There's nothing timid about the art shown in Objects of Art, 6243 Orchard Lake Road, just north of Maple in West Bloomfield (539-3332).

The recently opened gallery features contemporary creations for home or office in many different media. Metal, glass, wood, fiber and clay made into items ranging from large sculpture pieces to small jewelry and hair adornments are arranged in a lively display.

Large, glistening pieces decorate the walls. Furniture stands on the floor like giant plants in a garden. Unusual mobiles turn slowly from the ceiling. Big birds made of metal, and sculpted

See GALLERIES, 6E

## Chihuly glass art sparkles

Eleven galleries of glass installations by legendary artist Dale Chihuly create a mysterious, mythical world for suburban and urban viewers alike at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
SPECIAL WRITER

An unforgettable experience awaits families upon entering the mysterious world of glass artist Dale Chihuly, whose work is on view through Aug. 15 in the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward at Farnsworth.

"Glass Environments-Dale Chihuly: Installations 1964-1992" plays on the imagination with 11 galleries of abstract blown-glass forms serving as props to create a mythical land where creatures seemingly lurk, hidden from sight. Many Observorland residents are among the volunteers staffing DIA galleries.

From Chihuly's colossal chandelier that cradles cherubs while shooting gold and blue glass flames, to a towering forest scene created for a Claude Debussy opera, the Oz-like environment, including a yellow balloon chandelier composed of 250 individual balloons blown from glass, astounds the viewer with its inherent whimsical nature showcased in a total of 7,000 square feet.

"To see this exhibition is to understand that art is something that directly enters into your system through the eyes," said Jan van der Marck, DIA curator of 20th century art. "The glass is so immediate, so direct, it doesn't need explanation. You get thrown in there and you're thrilled."

Organized by the DIA in cooperation with the Seattle Art Museum where it originated, the exhibition, while not a retrospective, loosely documents the development of Chihuly's art.

Van der Marck curated the exhibition for Detroit after seeing it in Seattle. Major changes in staging occurred between there and Detroit.

For the first time, the DIA exhibits Chihuly's work in separate rooms thanks to a concept originated by DIA resident architect Louis Gauci to show each series individually. Also, while strong lighting and a white background greeted visitors in Seattle, Detroit's exhibition



"Persian Pergola": A glass ceiling tunnel created by world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly dazzles DIA viewers with a rainbow of reflections.

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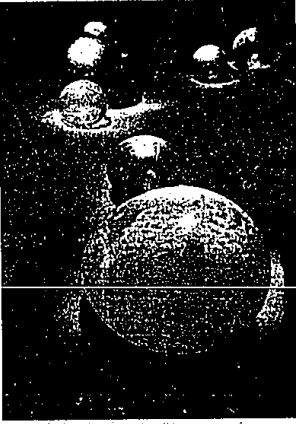
Jan van der Marck  
DIA curator

awakens the imagination via an eerie nightmarish atmosphere.

"We didn't have a space with windows. With the darkened interiors and illuminating light, it's even more magical," van der Marck said. "It's like walking through an enchanted forest."

See CHIHULY, 5E

**Moon walk:**  
Visitors wandering the winding path through Chihuly's large-scale "Nijijima Floats" feel as if they've landed on the moon.



## Franklin artist, Kmart team up for holiday

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER



Johnston

The announcement was that Johnston's Americana painting, "Country Memories," will be the design of select Kmart items this year — collectible porcelain villages, gift bags, a 20-piece dinnerware set, 13-by-16-inch framed reproductions, placemats, a kitchen designer rug and a puzzle. The merchandise will debut in September.

In addition, Kmart will donate 200 signed, limited edition prints to schools, libraries and museums around the country to display or use

in fund-raising.

"David's . . . style captures the . . . essence of our past," Mike Wellman, Kmart marketing vice president, said at Tuesday's press conference.

As for the time, it was "Christmas in July," Wellman joked. As for the place, it was the late 19th century Poppleton School in the Troy Museum and Historical Village at Wattles and Livernois, and "Country Memories" seemed right at home.

The gouache (opaque watercolor)

painting features a traditional, early 20th century winter barnyard scene. A sleigh waits at the gate, one of the passengers waving to a woman on the porch. Skaters, a rider on a sled and riders in another sleigh frolic outside a Victorian style house. Evergreens and bare trees dot the scene.

Closer inspection reveals such touching details as the stones in a low wall, the latticework and a cat on the

See MEMORIES, 4E

**Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 644-1314.**

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

### ■ ELEGANT EXHIBITS

The Somerset Collection, Big Beaver Road and Coolidge in Troy, has special showings planned in connection with this year's Concours d'Elegance at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester.

The Somerset Collection will display one-of-a-kind ensembles by Adrienne Vittadini, Anne Klein and Isaac Mizrahi, featured with a 1932

## Art Beat

Cadillac Phaeton, 1934 Pierce Arrow convertible and 1929 Stutz Town Car, July 31 through Aug. 8. The ensembles were designed to coordinate with the vintage automobiles.

In addition, the Somerset Collection will show dramatic art pieces with automotive themes by 14 world-renowned artists. The artists include Hector Bogandi, who created the poster for Concours d'Elegance, Charles Maher of Bloomfield Hills and Tom Hale of Farmington Hills.

The ensembles will be previewed Friday, Aug. 6, during a reception at the Somerset Collection. They will be auctioned, with proceeds benefiting Meadow Brook Hall, during the Concours d'Ele-

gance black tie reception Saturday, Aug. 7. Concours d'Elegance, a classic automobile show with related events, will take place Sunday, Aug. 8. For more information, call 645-6360.

### ■ TRAINING TOURS

Workers in the landscape, nursery, lawn service, arborist and forestry and parks occupations may attend summer training tours Tuesday, Aug. 31, at Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester and Monday, Sept. 27, at the Henry Ford Fairlane Estate in Dearborn. Landscape, turf and tree problems, plant and pest identification will be covered. Cost is \$25 per person. For information, call Greg Patchan at the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service-Oakland County at 858-0887 or the Metro Detroit Landscaper Association at 646-4992.



Artistic front: The Maxwell shop in Birmingham bears this colorful painting by Jon Parlange on its front, replacing unfinished renovation work.