

# Cranbrook from page 1D

New York studio.

Both works invite the viewer to make a story about the arrangement of objects they present. Among the items displayed in "No. 60" are a lipstick, a pink beaded necklace, a ring, sunglasses and an open book of matches. "No. 61" includes a toothbrush, a cigarette, a set of keys and a ring.

Together, the still lifes suggest a rendezvous between a man and a woman. The objects look unused, letting the viewer impose individual characteristics on them.

The viewer could also take in the arrangement without thinking of a story. The items in the pieces are balanced, such as the keys and the cigarette. In "No. 60," the ring is placed in such a way that the stone is like an eyeball, in front of the sunglasses instead of behind.

"That's always very tough," Wesselmann said when asked how he decided which objects to use. "I have no answer to that."

"It's difficult and somewhat arbitrary to decide... what is going to be included in the collection."

In this case ("No. 61") I started (with) the decision to use a toothbrush, which intrigued me. I bought a toothbrush, trying to figure out things that would go with it. I took a set of car keys, posed them. It seemed like (they were) interacting."

I try not to let a sense of humor enter in my works."

After graduation, Wesselmann experimented with collages. He gathered litter and combined it with staples and glue to make abstract works.

In his "The Great American Nude" series begun in 1960, he included nude females, at first limiting his palette to red, white and blue. He also featured images from advertising posters and art magazines and actual flooring material and fabric. His next series, "Bathroom Paintings," included real hardware, towels and shower curtains with nudes.

By the late 1960s, Wesselmann was using the female nude form more abstractly, such as only a foot or a breast on a shaped canvas. The "Bedroom Paintings" series featured male and female nudes and painted elements found in a bedroom. Wesselmann collected billboards, using parts of them in his work. His art work grew in size.

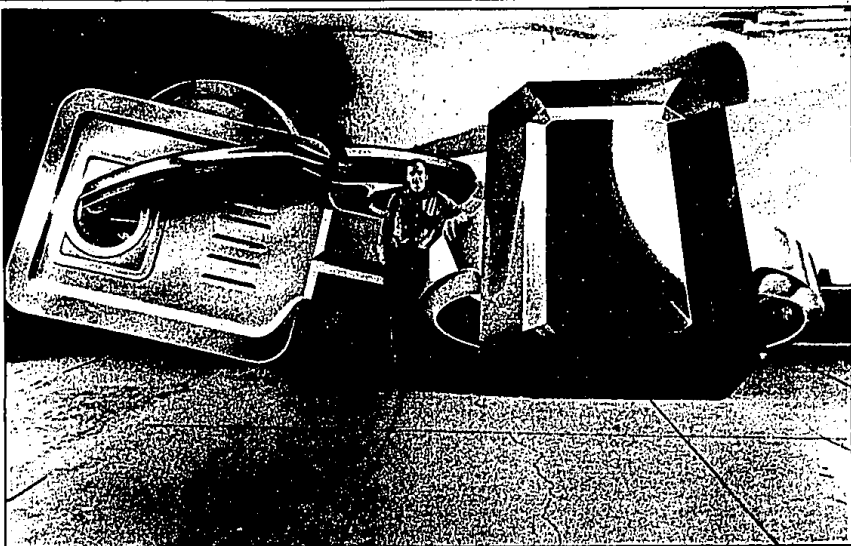
"1983 was kind of a watershed year for me. I decided I would... focus more and more on the drawing, painted drawings."

Examples are laser-cut pieces, some of which were exhibited at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham last year. The works are so fluid they seem to be made with felt tip markers or paint.

"I'm always exploring new ways to grow."

Both monumental still lifes will be featured as part of Wesselmann's European retrospective after the show at Cranbrook. It will be the 83-year-old artist's first retrospective.

"I've been working a long time. A retrospective is overdue."



ERIC POLLERZA

Big show: Tom Wesselmann poses in front of "Still Life No. 61," one of his two monumental works at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills. Among the pieces, oil on shaped canvas, are a set of keys and a ring.

**Background**

Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati. After serving in the Korean War, he earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology at the University of Cincinnati and studied art at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Supporting himself by cartooning, he went to New York to study art at Cooper Union in 1956.

"I couldn't draw" is how he explained his move from cartooning to art.

"I lost my sense of humor..."

**Hours are 1-5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for senior citizens and full-time students, free to children younger than 7 and museum members. Call 810-645-3923.**

## Antiques show set in S'fld

The Southfield Pavilion Antiques Exposition will take place Friday-Sunday, Feb. 25-27, at the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen (at 104th Mile). Hours are 2-9 p.m. Feb. 25,

noon to 8 p.m. Feb. 26 and noon to 5 p.m. Feb. 27.

Admission is \$4 with any of the event's ads or listings, \$5 regular, free for children age 12 or under.

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