

CREATIVE LIVING

D

PERSPECTIVES



MARY KLEMIC

Involvement hailed in mixed media show

Around and about in the Oakland County art scene: To say that there's a "saving grace" to Ellen Wilt's mixed media works isn't to belittle them.

The pieces in tempera, acrylic and watercolor celebrate involvement, people caring about other people and rescuing them. They are exhibited through April 30 at the Xochipilli Gallery, 668 N. Woodward in Birmingham (call (810) 645-1905).

The paintings and an installation in the show contain disasters, such as fires and unknown catastrophes in which people and furnishings ended up in water. But they are filled with people diving from bridges and reaching out their hands to save others. Other installations around the gallery are figures of divers, ready to get involved in the scene.

Colors fill the scenes like flowers in a bouquet. Some people wear life jackets that have bright hues. Landscapes are dreamlike. The top of the bridge in the installation in the front window is colored like a spectrum. This installation involves the viewer in a special way, as it is a diorama that draws you into it. Many of the people who are willing to jump in and help are presented without too distinctive features - they could be the viewers.

"I'm more of a storyteller," said Wilt, professor emerita at Eastern Michigan University. "I never did still lifes, never did landscapes."

The award-winning artist was born in 1921 in Pittsburgh. She was educated at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, the New School for Social Research in New York, Wayne State University and the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, where she earned bachelor of fine arts and master of arts degrees.

Fantastic furnishings

Math was one of his worst subjects, Richard Bennett said with a smile at Gallery: FunctionArt, where he was visiting the opening of a display of his furniture designs.

You'd never guess it by looking at Bennett's sculptural pieces, exhibited to May 1 at the gallery, 23-B W. Lawrence in Pontiac (call (810) 333-0333). The artist's furnishings are esthetic exercises in geometry. Their components sing in harmony.

Two painted aluminum tables have trapezoid shapes under clear tops. The base of a painted aluminum console is like an X. One table has a walnut base like a large V. A stack of stainless steel is nestled near the top of the V. Beveled glass appears to slice the piece like the way the steel is stacked. A similar table has a stained ashwood base. The grain of the absorbs the stain in different ways, creating a play of shades.

Bennett's collapsible "New York" table made of Australian lacewood has an art deco look. When it is folded up, with its square top tilted straight down one side, it resembles a sculpture. You'd want to leave it out when it wasn't in use. Another style of table is a sleek black piece with a hammered brass section in the center of the top.

Among Bennett's other works are a slender copper and steel torchiere, and an abstract sculpture of a bull consisting of arcs balanced in different ways.

Artscapes

Art works can go outdoors too. For examples, visit Objects of Art at 6243 Orchard Lake Road, in the Sugar Tree Plaza north of Maple in West Bloomfield. Pieces for outdoor decorating are featured there this month (call (810) 638-3332).

The works range in size from wind chimes to lifesize sculpture. A chair by Scott Brazee has a long back and a low seat. A wavy steel sculpture by Maureen Voorheis features arms on top that spin in the breeze and circles of colorful glass. "The piece withstood the punishing test of this past severe winter," the artist said.

There are small, flat, cartoonlike characters by Judie Bomberger and large, looming figures by Mark Chatterley. Candleholders and wind petals (graceful structures that balance thin, shaped sheets of steel and chimes) are among the variety of items on display.

A handpainted porcelain chess set by Doug Anderson isn't included in the outdoor art but catches the eye. The limited edition set, called

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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Creative Living next week:

■ A look at an exhibit by distinguished photographers Monte Nagler of Farmington Hills and Tony Spina of Bloomfield Hills.

■ Marty Figley's Garden Spot column.

■ Exhibitions, art gallery event listings.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN BYRONZANO

Conservatory concept: The flowers, bushes and outdoor sculpture surrounding artist Audrey Self (left) and Karen Kaselitz are actually painted on the walls of an addition to Kaselitz's Bloomfield Township home. Kaselitz's longtime dream of having her own conservatory came true when Self painted the walls and ceiling of the room.

This 'garden' grows with artist's touch

■ A paintbrush turned a room at a Bloomfield Township house into a conservatory. An artist painted such images as flowers and sculpture on the walls and clouds on the ceiling to create the effect.

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

An artistic greenhouse warms the spirit in the Bloomfield Township home of Karen Kaselitz.

In an addition to the residence, artist Audrey Self of Dearborn has painted such features as bushes and statues on the walls and sky and clouds on the ceiling. The effect is that being in the room is like being in a lush, elegant garden or conservatory.

"I've always dreamed of having this conservatory," said Kaselitz, who has lived in the house for 17 years. The addition was put on two years ago.

"I just wanted the feel of a European garden," Self had painted murals before but never a complete room. This room measures 12 by 30 feet. Its ceiling is 11 feet high.

"(The project presented) a whole lot of challenges," said the artist, formerly of Redford. "You really have to think of this as one

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Getting perspective: Self worked from watercolor sketches such as this, transferring the scene to the surface of the room.

Arboret features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48008, or fax them by calling (810) 644-1314.

FINE ART DAY

Today is the last day of the spring "fine arts days" offered at the Colorworks Studio of Interior Design, 32500 Northwestern Highway in Farmington Hills. The show, featuring a wide range of art and accessories, will take place 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Call (810) 861-7840. (Incorrect days were given in a press release printed here last week.)

Art Beat

ENCHANTING ENHANCER

David Wachler and Sons' award-winning pearl enhancer is back from its world tour and will be available for viewing at the jeweler's, 100 S. Woodward at Maple in Birmingham (call (810) 540-4822 or (800) 845-6003), April 28 through May 1. Proceeds from the sale of the design will go toward scholarships for design at the Center for Creative Studies and Cranbrook Academy of Art.

With the design, creator Link Wachler be-

came the first American to win first prize in the prestigious International Pearl Design Competition.

TO A TEE

Cherna Bednarek of West Bloomfield, an instructor for the education department of the Ann Arbor Art Association Art Center, teamed up with director of education Valerie Mann to create one of the miniature golf holes at the innovative "Fore! Art" exhibit at the Detroit Artists Market, 300 Stroh River Place in Detroit.

Fore! Art, an 18-hole course, will continue to challenge visitors through May 1. Call 393-1770.

Ready? Get set to grow

BY MARTY FIGLEY
STAFF WRITER

Just as we know the sun will rise and set, it will rain or not, the wind will blow or it will be calm - SPRING WILL ARRIVE!

April is National Gardening Month, so it's time to make a schedule of things to do as the season begins.

If you started seedlings, keep the soil moist and transplant them to larger pots if necessary. They must be hardened off before they are planted in the garden. Put them outside for a few hours (in a shady, protected area) for several days so they can adjust to the higher light. After they are set in the garden, be ready with a covering if frost is forecast. The last frost date in this area is generally the middle of May.

Trim ground covers (vinca, ivy, etc.) around walkways and stepping stones. Rake the leftover debris of winter from beds and put it on the compost. This will make the areas look neat and tidy before more involved chores need to be done.

Check your perennials, and if the thawing and freezing has loosened them from their anchor in the ground, reset them firmly in place. Many perennials can be divided now, and it is easier to do when they reach four inches in height rather than when they grow taller.

Trees and shrubs can be pruned now; it will encourage new growth. If you have spring flowering shrubs, wait until after they bloom or you will sacrifice some of the flowers.

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Glass has galleries shining

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Glass is a mystical, mesmerizing medium.

A simple prism is a magic wand, turning light into a miniature rainbow. In the fantastic forms seen in area shows related to Michigan Glass Month, the fascination with glass is magnified in the arrangements of flat surfaces, slender fibers and twisting shapes.

The earliest known glassmakers worked in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq and Syria) as far back as 2500 B.C. The Romans developed glassblowing in the first century B.C. Glass started to be seen as fine art in the 1960s, and artists worked with a variety of techniques (such as slumping, fusing, casting, sandblasting, laminating and lampworking) and incorporating other materials (such as steel, wood, wire and found objects).

Ancient artistry

Donna Jacobs Gallery Ltd. (674 N. Woodward in Birmingham, phone (810) 540-1600) presents the 15th annual Exhibition of Ancient Glass through May 7. The collection represents 2,000 years of glass history. Items come from Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Near East and the Roman Empire. They include flasks, beakers, bowls, bracelets and

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