

Farmington watercolorist personalizes her paintings

Throughout history, some of the most powerful art works were created by artists in the midst of crisis and contemplation.

Donna Vogelheim feels her most recent paintings, which evolved from a series of personal "losses" over the past two years, are some of the best she's ever done.

The Farmington artist uses paint like an author uses words to express thoughts about the deaths of three female friends from breast cancer and her divorce after 30 years of marriage in the series "Transitions," part of the works on display in the Livonia Civic Center Library Fine Arts Gallery.

"I paint because that's how I talk to people," said Vogelheim. "I tell them about life through my art. It reflects periods of my life."

Livonia Arts commissioner Billy Thompson booked Vogelheim's work into the Fine Arts Gallery because of the content although she admires Vogelheim's technical proficiency as well.

"Donna's new work is personal," said Thompson. "The paintings speak very definitely to anyone who looks and opens themselves to the paintings. The feelings and emotion that she's putting into her work, it speaks to all of us. It's about healing, pain, life in general, overcoming. It's very hopeful. It shows hope

for the future."

This may be the last opportunity to view Vogelheim's paintings, which deal with her divorce after three sons and 30 years of marriage. To illustrate the torn feelings in the initial stages of divorce, Vogelheim split several houses in half and arranged broken twigs all around in "A House Divided." Red, a color quite often associated with anger, dominates two-thirds of the work. "A House Divided - Moving On" deals with the latter stages of divorce and contains healing words and houses which seem to be floating away.

"They're very personal," said Vogelheim. "I probably will not show them again."

Hung side by side, two 60-by-40-inch "Right is Wrong" paintings require intense study to realize Vogelheim's message. She likes "words and newspaper" and incorporates them into the paintings.

"The Iris was a symbol of death in the Renaissance," said Vogelheim. "The figures up at the top are grieving. In the left painting all the marbles are broken. It's sort of a before and after. The right painting, all the marbles are whole."

Marbles, irises, and celestial windows in gourmet coffee bags appear frequently in Vogelheim's paintings along with constellations in the text. Seven of the marble paintings were recently purchased for Beaumont Hospital's

What: The Livonia Arts Commission hosts an exhibition of watercolorists by Farmington artist Donna Vogelheim.

When: Through Wednesday, May 27. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Thursday, until 5 p.m. Friday-Saturday, and 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

Where: Livonia Civic Center Library Fine Arts Gallery, 32777 Five Mile, (east of Farmington Road).

pediatric ward.

"My trademark is marbles," said Vogelheim. "I started cleaning out my little boy's closet one day and found these marbles. The sun was shining through them like jewels. I love the luminosity. Depending on the light the marbles change colors."

"The paintings with the marbles have a touch of Surrealism, like they're walking around, they're like landscapes," said Vogelheim.

"The Pilgrimage" is almost surreal with gourmet coffee bags forming Stonehenge-like posts and lintels. In "Circle the Wagons," Vogelheim fills broken glasses with irises surrounded by nesting birds and places the objects out of context to anything but empty space.

"It's like they're out of nowhere at a dead stop there's a lot of playfulness," said Vogelheim pointing to an iris painting.

Vogelheim's "Big Shooter" series personalizes paintings for the purchaser. Before starting a painting, Vogelheim interviews clients for an hour. From that knowledge about the individual or business comes the painting of objects relating to their lives.

Behind all of Vogelheim's work is a solid background in drawing. While studying for a biology degree at the University of Michigan, Vogelheim spent hours in labs drawing what she saw through a microscope. Those years trained her eyes to "see."

After earning her degree, Vogelheim taught biology three years at Lincoln Park High School, but then began moving around to Chicago, New Orleans and Lansing due to her husband's job. Raising a family became her life. She returned to the area 24 years ago and decided to do something for herself by taking lessons at the Farmington Community Center then at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association. For nearly 20 years, her work has been juried into exhibitions by the American Watercolor Society, National Watercolor Society, Michigan Watercolor Society, Midwest Watercolor Society, Kresge Art Museum, and Deans Museum, to name a few. Her work has been published in "The Artistic Touch" by Chris



Thought provoking: Donna Vogelheim painted this watercolor titled "Circle the Wagons."

Unwin, "Creative Watercolor" by Mary Ann Beckwith, and American Artist Magazine. In addition to the pleasure Vogelheim receives from painting, she gains great satisfaction from passing on her knowledge to students in art classes at the City of Farmington's Longacre House, University of Michigan Dearborn, Livonia Independent Artists Group, West Bloomfield Community Education, and the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center.

Vogelheim recently spent 10 days in San Miguel, Mexico conducting a watercolor workshop. She has taught watercolor tech-

niques around the country and on three cruises. Her classes are so popular that Vogelheim's schedule is usually booked three years in advance. In September, she will do a week-long workshop at the request of the California Watercolor Society. She's also preparing for a one person show at the Cary Gallery in Rochester next year.

Two years ago when Vogelheim was at her lowest point, it was painting that kept her going. Today, she is making time to write a how-to watercolor book.

"Painting is my passion," said Vogelheim.

Hot from page E1

outlets as billets for Hanson's first Detroit-area show, June 29 at Pine Knob, go on sale. Mmmmm-bop, indeed.

Imagine this, Sean Lennon will play songs from his latest album, "Into the Sun" (Grand Royal/Capitol), for a local audience Tuesday, June 2, at Pine Knob when he opens Beck and Ben Folda Five.

The Palace

Pine Knob's sister venue, The Palace of Auburn Hills, will play host to the Spice Girls, whose

July 26 show quickly sold out, and Tori Amos's first arena show July 23. The Verve is confident that it can successfully pull off a show at The Palace Wednesday, July 29, after selling out the 1,000-person capacity St. Andrew's Hall in Detroit last winter. It may turn out to be a "bitterweet" affair. It hasn't been a hot seller.

Although Kansas, Phil Collins and Roger Daltrey aren't newcomers, they've each added a little twist to their summer shows. His latest solo album, "Dance

Into the Light" (Atlantic), crashed and burned, so Collins is re-arranging his music as swing. He, vocalist Oleta Adams and saxophone player Gerald Albright will perform big band versions of his music at Meadow Brook Music Festival on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester June 23.

The Who's Roger Daltrey will perform the music of his band, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd with The British Rock Symphony July 8 at Meadow Brook. Follow-

ing the symphonic lead, Kansas is bringing along its own orchestra to the same venue July 18.

On a more traditional note, retro acts and classic rockers fill out the schedule at Pine Knob. Ted Nugent, The Doobie Bros., Heart, Peter Frampton, Pat Benatar, Foreigner, Loverboy, Blue Oyster Cult, B-52's and the Pretenders, Huey Lewis and the News, and, oh dear Lord, a reunited Culture Club - with all original members - visit this summer.

Money offered his insight as to

why classic rockers still can attract a Pine Knobful of fans.

"If you look at little groups like Green Day or Pearl Jam, the fans never stick. We developed a really large following. They still want to hear 'Shakin' or 'Baby Hold On,'" he said.

They're back

Festival granddaddy Lollapalooza may have dropped out of the touring world, but multi-band shows are in full effect this summer.

Banking on last year's success, Lilith Fair, the all-female music festival starring Sarah McLachlan, will play its only three-date run in the United States at Pine Knob July 8-9.

Speaking of success, Ozzy will drag his feet across the stage at this year's OzzFest bringing along heavy rockers Tool and Megadeth as well as a slew of metal bands to Pine Knob Thursday, July 23.

Blues Traveler is hoping to erase memories of last year's dismal ticket sales by rejoining the festival it founded, H.O.R.D.E. (Horizons of Rock Developing Everywhere). The Pine Knob shows, Saturday-Sunday, July 18-19, will also feature Detroit and Windsor-area favorites the Barenaked Ladies.

Due to logistical problems, The Warped Festival returned to its former home, Phoenix Plaza Amphitheater in Pontiac, from Pine Knob. Pine Knob, it seemed, wasn't very conducive to a three-stage festival. The pavilion stayed empty most of the day while fans packed the entrance way and picnic area to see bands like Sugar Ray, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, and Social Distortion.

"The concert lends itself well to not having seats just because of the nature of the bands, the attractions and those sorts of thing," a spokeswoman for the event said.

New festivals

This year, Bad Religion, Rancid, Deftones, NOFX, Save Ferris, Rev. Horton Heat, Cherry Poppin' Daddies, The Specials, and Royal Oak rapper Kid Rock are among those playing the concrete jungle of the Phoenix Plaza at 1 p.m. Wednesday, July 22.

Two new festivals - the "Golden Road Fest" at the Phoenix Plaza Amphitheater on June 13, and the "Hoodoo Bash" Wednesday, July 16, at Meadow Brook - are hoping to attract Dadsheads with the likes of moe, and Ekostik Hookah.

Cheese metalheads rejoiced. Quiet Riot, Firehose, Slaughter, L.A. Guns and Warrant come together for "Rock Never Stops" (doesn't that conjure up images of Homer Simpson yelling "Don't stop a-rockin'") Aug. 17.

The Newport Folk Festival with Nanci Griffith, John Hiatt, Joan Baez, Marc Cohn, The Staples Singers, The Violent Femmes and Lucinda Williams will come to Pine Knob Aug. 22. Radio stations such as CIMX,

WKQI and WPTT will announce their annual festival line-ups soon. Besides breakfast in bed, ties, and homemade cards, Father's Day will also feature the Young Country (WYCD) Festival with Toby Keith at the State Fairgrounds.

Brian Setzer Orchestra's show July 11 at the Phoenix Plaza has been redubbed CIDR's "Riverfest." Hitting the stage with Setzer will be Big Rude Jake, Agents of Good Roots, Billy Mann, Patty Griffin, Steve Holtz, Stewart Francke and Jill Jack. The ticket price is higher than past years, \$21.50, because the festival was tacked onto an already existing show, according to a spokesman.

Music fans low on cash can still hear some quality tunes. Music and the aroma of local restaurants' specials will intertwine July 1-5 at the Michigan TasteFest in Detroit's New Center area. Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers, Los Lobos, Imperial Swing Orchestra, Straight Ahead, Mudpuppy, and Kog's Kata will be among those playing for free.

The "Entertainment on Us" series at Plymouth's Kellogg Park features top local acts such as Larry Nones, Robert Noll and Michele Ramo and Heidi Hepler through Aug. 21.

Meadow Brook

In celebration of its second year operating and managing Meadow Brook, Palace Sports and Entertainment dropped \$2 million to refurbish the venue deep in the woods behind Oakland University.

The most significant change is a state-of-the-art marquee with a computerized message board sitting at Walton Boulevard and Adams Road.

"Our goal is provide a schedule of great variety, which will entice those who haven't visited Meadow Brook to discover its beauty and charm and also to attract those who haven't visited the venue in recent years to return and re-discover it," said Tom Wilson, president of Palace Sports and Entertainment.

Pine Knob has even undergone \$1 million in improvements including new video screens, signage, and the addition of absorbent material to the pavilion to improve sound.

"During the relatively short summer in Michigan, Pine Knob must compete with a variety of outdoor entertainment options our great state offers," Wilson said. "To keep up with the pace, we must continually strive to give our guests the best experience possible."

It's the little things at Pine Knob that makes Money feel right at home.

"We've got a lot of friends in Michigan. We have a bigger guest list at Pine Knob than anywhere else. One time, someone brought us a broccoli casserole. We take care of as many people as we can. We're very excited."

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