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important exhibit for Americans.

The Patrons of the Arts in the Vatican Museums was founded in the early 1980s to restore objects for "The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art," a 1983 exhibition which toured the U.S. The organization's existence ensures the Vatican Collections, initiated by Pope Julius II in the 16th century, will be available for future generations. Napoleon decimated a portion of the collection when he ordered important art works to be sent to him in Paris in 1797. After his fall in 1814, a majority of the works were returned to the Vatican. Now 20,000 visitors a day enjoy the art at the 13 Vatican museums.

Lisikewycz stresses the exhibition is "definitely not just for Catholics" although items were either drawn from the Vatican Museums and Vatican properties in Rome or from the holdings of the Vatican and private Vatican apartments. Nearly one-third of the objects, presiding Emperor Constantine's edict recognizing and encouraging Christianity in 313 in Milan. Winged victories and figures from non-biblical cultural and artistic tradition attest to the belief in spirited beings throughout the ages. The oldest piece, a Neo-Assyrian stone relief (883-859 B.C.) is of a winged genius, a protective spirit who was a forerunner of biblical angels. The most recent work is a non-religious surrealist landscape by Salvador Dali from 1977.

"When I began research for this exhibition, I realized so many of these concepts are a common heritage of three major religions that came out of the East—Judaism, Catholicism and Muslim," said Lisikewycz. "Many cultures believe in a spirited being. Etruscans had winged

beings. Greeks and Romans had putti."

When representatives of the five participating museums met last December in St. Louis, not all agreed to emphasize the religious aspect of the exhibition. It was a team of scholars under the direction of the Rev. Allen Daston, O.P., Vatican director of the exhibition, and Arnold Nesselrath, curator of Byzantine, Medieval and Renaissance painting in the Vatican Museums and Pontifical Galleries, Los Angeles' installation followed the catalogue, but St. Louis and Detroit chose to organize their exhibitions according to the function of the angel—messengers (angel comes from a Greek word meaning messenger), as part of visions, intercessors such as guardian angels, music makers and attendants. According to Lisikewycz, the decision was made because Detroit's population has "a large non-Christian segment." Cities placed next to each other "assume that not everyone knows the story behind the art works."

"In Christian art, winged angels don't appear until the fourth century," said Lisikewycz. "Wings gave them the ability to get easily from one place to another."

The exhibition coincides with a renewed interest in angels. According to a national survey sponsored by Chrysler Corp., exhibit sponsor, 80 percent of Detroit respondents believe in angels.

"Angels probably add a sense of stability to people's lives," said Lisikewycz. "People not fascinated with angels will want to come because it's an art show."

The Rev. Terrence Dempsey notes in the last 20 years artists have begun to re-examine religious and spiritual dimensions

in art. He will speak on the topic Sept. 19-20 in the Lecture Hall. As founding director of the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art at St. Louis University, Dempsey is following the trend of artists addressing spiritual issues.

"There's a desire for mystery where the meaning is not simply surface meaning, and there's a desire for ritual and a sense of tradition," said Dempsey. "We have a throw-away culture. There's a desire for a forum for dialogue and tradition."

Dempsey first became interested in religious art while studying for his doctorate degree in Berkeley in the mid 1980s. He now has more than 2,000 files on U.S. artists whose work involves this theme. In a time when our world is so chaotic, he believes that if you don't become involved with the spiritual, you're missing one of the great definitive aspects of being human.

"Artists dealing with religious and spiritual themes are artists who have gone out on a limb," said Dempsey. "They're inquirers."

In conjunction with the "Angels" exhibition, special Friday night hours have been added along with (related) activities including music and artists demonstrations until 10 p.m. Visit the "Angels" exhibit as late as 8:30 p.m. with your timed ticket then view egg tempera painting by Sarah Konziaz (Aug. 28, Sept. 4 and 11) and Gail mally-Mack (Oct. 2, 9 and 16), and gilding by Ray Anderson (Sept. 18 and 25).

"We added the Friday night hours to attract more people by accommodating their schedules," said Pam Morrell of the DIA's art department. "There'll be food and demonstrations. It's something neat to do on a Friday night."



Offering a pop slide: The British pop band Arnold will play songs off its debut "Hillside" at the Newport Folk Festival at Pine Knob.

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Although his songs are intensely personal, neither he nor his family, including singer Rufus Wainwright — are bothered by that.

"I try not to worry about if people are going to take it the wrong way or think it's too negative or whatever. Everybody develops a style of writing as they go along. One of the things that works for me is just to say what I'm thinking. It just so happens that it's negative, dark depressing stuff."

Not so dark and depressing is his participation in the festival.

"The emcee thing is fun. We're playing bigger venues than I normally play. It's a new and interesting and fun. I get to sing 'If I Had a Hammer' with Nanci Griffith and Joan Baez at the end of the night. It's a dream come true I'd say."

Detroit-area debut

The acoustic British pop band Arnold feels fortunate to kick off its first major U.S. tour as part of the Newport Folk Festival.

"America seems so far away and exotic, but honestly we would have accepted anything," guitarist/songwriter Mark Saxby said with a laugh. "In England, it's a lifetime ambition to tour and play music in America. That's what everybody wanted to do since they were little."

The Newport Folk Festival, he said, isn't quite what he expected.

"We didn't know what to expect at the folk festival. It was sort of not what I suspected at all. People were playing country and western covers and then there were more cutting edge bands," Saxby explained.

"It's a different sort of festival to the ones in Britain. It's almost like a day out for families. We're not a folk band, but I think we did all right. They let us out alive. We bribed them with free T-shirts," he added with a laugh.

Arnold is celebrating the release of its debut album "Hillside" (Creation/Columbia), a collection of dreamy, introspective acoustic-based songs. Recorded in 1997, Arnold produced it on its own.

Newport Folk Festival

Who: Nanci Griffith, John Hiatt, Joan Baez, The Violent Femmes, The Staple Singers, Marc Cohn, Wilco, Rickie Lee Jones, Rodney Crowell, Arnold, and emcee Loudon Wainwright III.

When: 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22

Where: Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-75 and Sasabaw Road, Independence Township.

How: Tickets, \$35 pavilion, \$18 lawn, are available at the Pine Knob Music Theatre box office and all Ticketmaster outlets. For more information, call (248) 377-0100 or (248) 645-6666 or visit <http://www.palacenet.com>.

"There's an office and living quarters and rehearsal and storage space. I hope we can keep it. You know how it is. I hope we do well."

The Newport Folk Festival is acting as a springboard for the band who is promoting its latest CD "Mermaid Avenue" (Elektra), which it recorded with Billy Bragg.

"Mermaid Avenue" is a collection of "lost songs" by Woody Guthrie which were handed over to Bragg by Guthrie's daughter Nora.

"I think folk musicians didn't think that anyone outside of their circle should do the tunes. But Nora met him at a 60th birthday party or something like that and decided he was the guy. It was nice of him to bring us aboard."

Bragg approached the band while it was in Europe touring in support of its previous effort. Stirratt said he believed it was his band's traditional Americana sound which brought Bragg to Wilco.

"He felt he needed some American validation," he said laughing. "They had some American element to the project, really. He heard 'Being There' and felt we were just caught in the past where we could give the songs a good treatment."

Culled from the collection of songs was "Ingrid Bergman," which recounts his daydream of making love to Bergman on the slopes of an Italian volcano; "California Stars," a rollicking love song; and the self-exploratory "Another Man's Done Gone."

Bragg and Wilco are double-teaming the world with Guthrie's songs. While Bragg is touring Europe with his band, Wilco is doing stripped-down acoustic versions of the songs at the festival.

"It's gonna be a good chance for us to play this Woody stuff in a stripped-down way. You should not be going to expect us to rock. We're going to be into the acoustic show and see if we can't do that."

Art school gets \$1 million capital pledge

The Center for Creative Studies has received a \$1 million pledge toward its capital and endowment campaign from the Anderson Family Foundation.

The pledge follows a \$20 million gift from Josephine Ford, wife of the late patron and CCS chair Walter B. Ford II.

CCS is attempting to raise a total of \$60 million will cover cost for the construction of a new building for classrooms and studios.

In addition, the funds will go toward renovating the campus' Krug-Ford building, along with increasing library and student housing space.

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works by video artists Gary Hill and Bill Viola, and conceptual artist Roman Signer.

Although it has modified its policy to include the work of non-graduates in its permanent collection, Cranbrook is limited by space, and its primary mission, which is to serve the Cranbrook educational community.

But that hasn't limited Witkopp's ambition.

"Maybe someday Cranbrook Art Museum will have a space in downtown Detroit."

Changing perceptions

Unfortunately, one drawback of discussing the possibilities of a new contemporary arts museum is that the DIA is unfairly criticized for not offering more contemporary exhibits, such as

"Interventions," a show two years ago featuring local artists.

"I would never want to be critical of the DIA," said Janet Torno, executive director of the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Center. "But there's really no one (museum) that's collecting contemporary arts."

The debate shouldn't be about what the DIA isn't doing, but strictly about the need to recognize the historical value of contemporary art, said Torno.

"A contemporary art museum would document what's going on in the local arts scene. It'd also help everyone in the galleries who show works of contemporary artists."

In the final analysis, a simple question comes to mind: What do New York City, Chicago, L.A.,

Boston, Houston, Cleveland, San Diego, San Francisco, Miami, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia have in common?

"The major metro areas have both an encyclopedic and contemporary arts museums. Art, after all, should reveal as much about the past and as it does about the present."

While Oakland County is home to many worldwide billion-dollar corporations with philanthropic goals, Cranbrook's Witkopp noted that being associated with a contemporary art museum is probably too risky for corporate sponsors.

"Usually, contemporary arts museums have the vision of one particular person," he said.

In other words, may the rumors fly.

ART BEAT

Please send information to Oakland County Art Beat, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.

Or via e-mail, send items, story ideas and tips to: sprouzenan@cc.homestead.net

AWARD FOR MEADOW BROOK'S PLAYWRIGHT-RESIDENCE

Karim Alrawi of Rochester has been awarded top honors in the Pacific Playwrights Workshop.

Alrawi's winning play, "Deep Cut," is set in the Pacific Northwest. It's about a young Arab-

American woman's search for the truth about her past.

The essence of the play, according to the judges, is revealed in a deceptively light and humorous tone.

Alrawi is currently in his second year as playwright-in-residence at Oakland University's Meadow Brook Theatre.

NEW IMAGE ON ZOO TOWER

The landmark water tower that stands high above the Detroit Zoo at the corner of Woodward Avenue and I-96 has been given a new look.

The new imagery was created

by W.B. Doner of Southfield. It resembles the silhouettes of animals used in the Detroit Zoo's brochures.

Grafika of Troy developed the digital screen printing for the images on the tower.

ROYAL OK GOES BUGGY

The works of children and local artists inspired by bugs and insects are currently exhibited in the Royal Oak Business District through August.

Appropriately, the month-long project is entitled "Royal Oak Goes Buggy."

In my family, learning is everything.

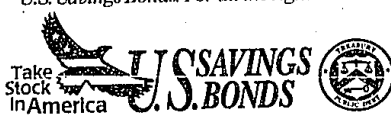
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