

CONVERSATIONS



FRANK PROVENZANO

New director to transform the DIA

The confirmation of Graham W.J. Beal as the next director of the Detroit Institute of Arts is a mere technicality.

Even in the rarefied air of museum politics, a rather common phrase can be heard regarding Beal's impending appointment - "It's a done deal."

Ten days ago, the search committee gave its unanimous recommendation to the DIA board. In the near future - possibly as early as this week - Beal's candidacy will be rubber-stamped when the Detroit Arts Commission and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer give their approval.

"Time for Beal to say 'So long' to LaLa Land and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art where he served as director for the last three years.

In many ways, Beal is a prototypical modern-day museum director: Well-schooled in art history, in-the-know when it comes to contemporary art, and respectful of the most powerful art of the age - the art of marketing.

Building consensus

But before Beal takes any decisive steps with the DIA, he plans to spend plenty of time learning about the museum he's about to inherit.

His first step, he said, will be building bridges - and getting in step with the ambitious plan set forth by the DIA board to make the museum more accessible to the general public.

"I believe in building consensus, getting people to 'buy into' the process," said Beal, who was initially approached last fall by the search committee.

With a 75-member DIA board made up of the Who's Who in metro Detroit, a recently initiated \$320-million fundraising campaign, and a mandate to become even more financially self-sufficient, Beal might find that there's an endless list of people to consult.

Nonetheless, Beal's self-described "consultative leadership style" should serve him well, especially considering the past political and territorial squabbles that have beset the DIA.

New-found vitality

When the genteel, British-born Beal, 52, gets his footing at the DIA in early October, expect to see a savvy, innovative leader with a sense of what is popular and critically significant.

Since the early 1970s, Beal's approach at museums where he's been either curator or director has been to develop an expanded exhibition schedule that balances blockbuster shows with diverse exhibits aimed to appeal to many ethnic groups and artistic tastes.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate how the DIA enhances the quality of life in the region is for Beal to create a flurry of programs and exhibits that offer something for everyone.

It seems that he innately knows the demands of his new job.

"The advantage of (the DIA) being the only major art museum in the region is that it's the flagship, the place where people look for leadership," said Beal.

"The disadvantage, of course, is that sometimes, you just can't be all things to all people."

Up to the task

After two years without a director, the museum that for better or worse means "all things to all people" has found what the search committee set out to discover - a transformational leader.

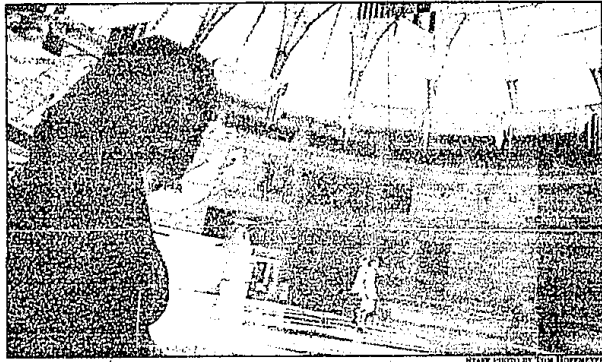
It's an adjective that describes Beal's performance in LA and when he was director of the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, chief curator at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

For instance, in three years under Beal's leadership, the LA County Art Museum doubled its annual attendance to 1.3 million.

The increase, according to Beal, was due to expanded hours, a public-oriented exhibition program and a new public-image campaign of an "accessible, user-friendly museum."

Perhaps it's time to get accustomed to English manners:

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Majestic space: Eileen Monteiro of Bloomfield Township sits in the rotunda of the Museum of African American History.

Eileen Monteiro: Emerging Artist at African American Museum

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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Everywhere Eileen Monteiro looks, there's a reminder of history.

From her perch inside the majestic rotunda at the Museum of African American History, Monteiro is a few steps from the permanent exhibit space that documents the African diaspora and heroic rise of African-American pride.

And since late July, in the same marble corridors where a recording of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech resonates, Monteiro of Bloomfield Township has added her own history.

In the museum's general-purpose room - on the first floor near the back entrance of the rotunda of Eileen Monteiro.

WHAT: The paintings of Eileen Monteiro.

WHERE: Multi-Purpose Room, Museum of African American History, 315 E. Warren Ave., Detroit.

HOURS: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Call (313) 494-5800 for more information.

■ "Africans in Mexico" continues through Sunday, Sept. 6 - Exhibit of pastels, photographs and artifacts of the everyday lives of Afro-Mexicans living in the region of La Costa Chica in the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, Mexico.

In mid-life, Monteiro, 52, has not only emerged, she has settled in to a role as an artist, art teacher and a subtle spokeswoman for the tenderhearted.

Through August, Monteiro is featured in the museum's Emerging Artist program. Over the last nine months, the program has provided 2,000 square feet of exhibit space and much-needed public recognition for Detroit-area artists.

"We don't think of ourselves as cutting-edge," said David M. Egnor, exhibitions developer at the Museum of African American History.

"This (program) is our way to show our contemporary history and give some talented artists exposure."

Egnor estimates that 15,000-20,000 people will likely pass through the museum in the next month, many of them passing through the Emerging Artist exhibit.

Coming off a month-long exhibit at The Community House in Birmingham, the paintings received an exposure that has already helped Monteiro. She approached several

A History OF Her Own



Remembering: Monteiro's watercolor painting, "Somali Respite," depicts the facelessness of the disease in Africa.

publishers about printing and distributing her images.

"There's no doubt about it, I've had a lot more people interested in my work because of these exhibits," she said.

"It's opportunity presenting itself after preparation."

Infatuated by color

Many of Monteiro's compositions depict colorfully vibrant still life of eggplants, lush apples, swirling sea



Feeling the need: Overwhelmed by emotion, Monteiro could not complete her watercolor painting, "Why?"

shells, supple calla lilies and reflective mirror standing at the proverbial water's edge.

Other pieces, reveal the artist's deep-seated concern, particularly the depiction of emaciated children in Somalia.

"It's not my purpose to make a political statement," said Monteiro.

"I'd rather show the image rather than debate the subject."

Her point is made subtly - of

Please see HISTORY, C2

Savoy Brown brings home the blues

BY ALICE REIEN
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Rock and roll bands love Detroit, it's true. And the British blues band Savoy Brown is no exception.

In 1969, the band, described by one longtime fan as a "revved up version of B.B. King," dedicated the B-side live jam on its fourth album "A Step Further" to its Detroit fans.

During the heyday of hippies, Savoy Brown played regularly at local concert halls like the Grand Ballroom in Detroit and Birmingham's Palladium.



Kim Simmonds

With those legendary venues long since closed, this Thursday the Magic Bag in Ferndale will host the band credited with helping to broaden popular appeal for high-powered British blues and hard-rocking bands like Led Zeppelin.

Exploded in Detroit

"Detroit gave us an immense amount of confidence," said Kim Simmonds & Savoy Brown.

"We came over on our first tour and all the sudden it just exploded in Detroit. We realized this was a major breakthrough."

That was 30 years and many band members ago. In fact, Savoy Brown is somewhat notorious for its changes. There have been upwards of 40 musicians with the band since it was formed in London in 1966.

In one of the group's most famous breakups, "Lonesome" Dave Peverett, Roger Earle and Tony Stevens left to form Foghat. And rumors still abound as to why its premier singer Chris Youland left the band.

Meanwhile, the current reincarnation of Savoy Brown includes gravel-throated, lead singer Nathaniel Peterson, who also plays bass, and drummer Tommy Compton, formerly of Alvin Lee & Johnny Winter bands.

The one constant

Although many rock music fans have heard of Savoy Brown, few probably can recall if the band had a hit song. Fewer still, link Savoy Brown with Simmonds.

Through all the band's changes, Simmonds has been the constant, referred to in liner notes as the "heart and soul of Savoy Brown."

The 61-year-old Kim Simmonds started playing guitar in London pubs when he was in his late teens. He found inspiration in blues guitarists like Buddy Guy, Willie Dixon and B.B. King. But he took the lazy Louisiana sound and infused it with a pounding urgency that was the beat of London in the '60s.

"I brought a strong technique to the blues guitar in terms of rawness and emotion," he said. "I think all the English guitarists did."

While his contemporaries like Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Mick Tay-

Please see BLUES, C2

BOOKS

History with a twist of Disney and dash of Lewis Carroll

BY FRANK PROVENZANO
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This mouse is neither mighty nor the object of affection for a fan club of members wearing god-awful hats with silly ears.

Like the times in which he was created, *Jody the Mouse* is a 1990s-styled down-to-earth androgynous human-looking rodent with a penchant for adventurous travel throughout the Great Lakes state.

Jody is the creation of Leigh Arrathoon and Jon Davy, authors of a seven-booklet series, entitled "Great Places: Jody's Michigan Adventures,"

WHAT: "Great Places: Jody's Michigan Adventures," a seven-booklet series. Story by Leigh Arrathoon and John Davy.

AVAILABLE: At Barnes & Noble, Borders Book Shops and Little Professor Book Centers, Halfway Down the Stairs in Rochester, or by calling Point Creek Press, (248) 650-0369.

COST: \$6.95/book

published by Point Creek Press of Rochester.

The pocket-sized books - targeted at fourth-grade reading level - combine historical facts woven tightly into stories about Jody's spirited travels to Greenfield Village, Detroit, Holland,

Frankenmuth, Mackinac Island, the Upper Peninsula and northwest Michigan.

The books were planned as a supplement to the state-mandated fourth-grade Michigan history curriculums. More than 3,000 copies of the series were sold to public school districts in the first month of printing. Another several thousand have been sent to local bookstores, including Borders and Barnes & Noble.

Davy conceived the idea and edited the manuscript drafted by Arrathoon, a freelance writer who holds a doctorate

Please see TWIST, C2



STAFF PHOTO BY JUDY STORZANO

Natural: Leigh Arrathoon has written a series of booklets aimed at educating young readers about Michigan history.