

Our Town

Annual event educates as well as entertains

BY LINDA ANN CHOHIN
STAFF WRITER

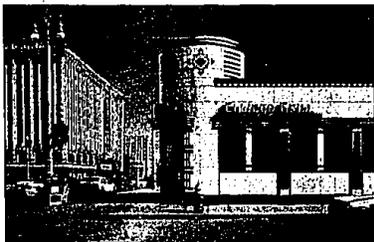
Cindy Leonard loves and collects art so it's easy to see why she was chosen to chair The Community House's annual exhibition Oct. 17-19 in Birmingham. It seems everyone connected with Our Town finds pleasure in purchasing a piece of jewelry or ceramics for their home or simply looking at a painting or photograph that takes them to another place.

Our Town brings people together to share the arts. Area residents have the opportunity to see the direction Michigan painters, sculptors, glass, jewelry, and clay artists are taking with their work by visiting the annual exhibition and now they'll also be able to learn how it's made and why people collect art.

"This year there's a focus on educational aspects with demonstrations by artists, a panel discussion on collecting art and a tour of Pontiac studios," said Leonard of Bloomfield Township. "It all begins with a gala Oct. 16 that's a really fun party with a strolling dinner and a way of raising money for the Community House."

"But what we'd like is for more people to just come during the day for the exhibition. There's no admission and of course we want to sell art. In the past we had a lot of art over \$1,000 and we asked the artists if they might do something less expensive and they came in with lower prices."

The \$10,000 in prizes draws the best artists in the state — this year more than 1,000 of them. Ferdinand Hampton of Habatat Galleries finally was able to select 275 pieces including more 3-D than ever before. Many of the artists show regularly but others like Donna Bell



This acrylic painting of the Elwood Grill is by Russell Dunbar of Farmington Hills.

OUR TOWN

What: Art Exhibit and Sale features 275 works in a variety of mediums

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 17-19
Where: The Community House, 380 South Bales, Birmingham. For information, call (248) 594-6403

Gala: 6-9 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16. \$200 benefactor, \$100. The Art of Collecting Art: Panel discussion by area art collectors 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 17. \$15. Pontiac Studio Tour: Tour vans leave The Community House 9:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 18, returns at 12:15 p.m. for lunch among the art of Our Town. \$30. Limited availability.

Zimmer show only once a year in Our Town. What began as a theme show with artists focusing on their hometowns and cities has expanded to portraits, floral wall hangings and still life in clay. One thing Zimmer likes about the exhibition that hasn't changed is all of the work is by Michigan artists.

"Our Town brings all artists together, some well known and some just like me," said Zimmer of Bloomfield Village. "It brings people together. It's an opportunity for people to let other people know what they do."

not only creating compositions through a lens but printing the images while majoring in Journalism in college in Missouri.

Sylvia Clark feels her oil portrait of an equestrienne captures the spirit of a young woman she used to ride with years ago at a stable on 14 Mile west of Woodward. A graphic artist for Michigan Bell until retiring 11 years ago, Clark belongs to an Indiana group of artists who hire a model to pose for them. The work was created during one of the sessions.

"It was exciting for me to paint that," said Clark of Redford. "I paint a lot of figurative and still life. You have to rise to the challenge of doing figurative."

Kathleen Andrews has exhibited nationally and internationally in quilt shows but has a fondness for Our Town. The Rochester fiber artist grew up in Birmingham and still has ties to The Community House where her sister Mary is a volunteer.

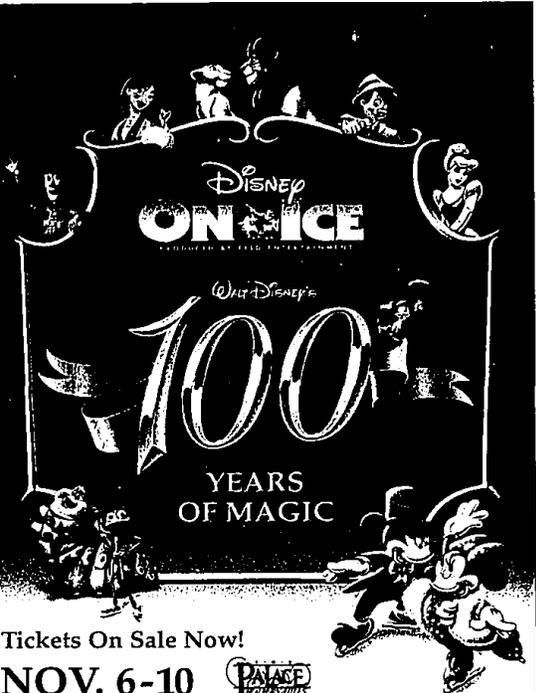
"This is my fourth consecutive year and I've sold pieces through Our Town two out of the three years," said Andrews. "The first piece sold within a few minutes on opening night."

This year Andrews' quilted wall hanging uses a watercolor technique of blending two-inch floral squares against a black background. The result is another of her floral landscapes for which she writes patterns and produces kits for the public.

"I like to play and be creative, something develops and I throw it together," said Andrews. "I like to create the illusion of depth and movement in my work. I use the principles of light medium and dark. They have a 3-D feel."

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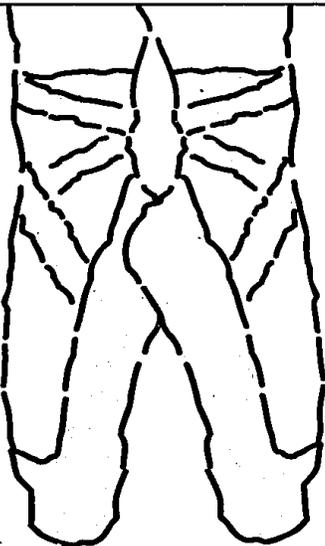
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