

Artist-Illustrator Robert Thom Has New History Project

By CAROLYN HALL

"I think art should contribute to humanity," states Robert Thom, local artist-illustrator of national repute. "A man shouldn't walk through life without leaving some foot prints and I want mine to be good traces."

Marching impressively along behind him is a trail of paintings, contributions to civic organizations and many warm friendships; enough to satisfy many a man. But Bob Thom has little time to savor his past. He has plunged enthusiastically into an extensive series of history of Michigan paintings.

"I MADE a boo-boo right off," said Thom. "In the first picture of Michigan's prehistoric woolly mastadons, I used a beautiful local swamp as a model. Dr. Hatt, director of the Cranbrook Institute of Science, said that it was historically accurate generally—but not for Michigan. Eleven thousand years ago the glacier was closer and Michigan's weather colder. My swamp scene would have been right for Kentucky or Tennessee. A tiny cloud of earth found in the Cranbrook mastadon's tusk socket, when analyzed by a U-M ecologist indicated that the closest comparable swamp was in upper Wisconsin. So off my wife, Nellie, and I went to Wisconsin."

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Such accuracy is typical of Bob Thom. From the first of the History of Medicine series, 85 paintings ago, he realized that people accepted these carefully researched paintings as fact. He has respected this responsibility to his viewers. His ratio of research time to painting time is five-to-one.

THOM SAYS HE is fortunate to be working with a man who he considers the top historian in Michigan, Dr. F. Clever Bald. Thom still must do most of the cultural research on architecture, costume an artifacts, himself, and in so doing, he has collected a library of books on art, philosophy, history, costume and related topics that is so extensive he is looking for a librarian to catalogue it for him.

"It's necessary to know the 'feel' of an era, too," said Thom. "How was a doctor accepted in the fourteenth



Robert Thom invades the kitchen, artistic stronghold of his wife, Nellie.

century? How long was an Indian's span of interest in a war? Why were the lumber men apparently so careless and wasteful with Michigan resources? It takes a lot of probing to know the attitudes of people.

"THIS WAS an ideal year to start this Michigan series," Thom pointed out. "I was able to film the bicen-

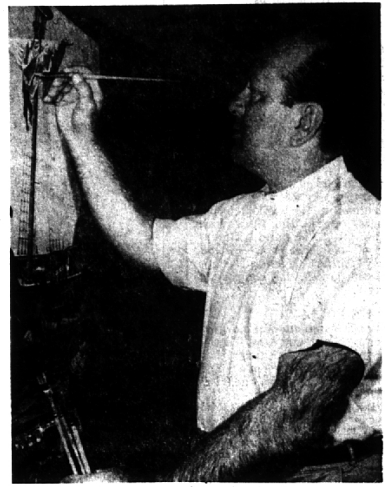
tennial (200-year) reenactment of the massacre of Fort Michilimackinac (Mackinac). There was a cast of 50 or 60 accurately costumed as Indians and English—and that would be hard for me to duplicate...

"Michigan has not really been a history-conscious state in spite of its colorful background and rich heritage. The French were here with lace and gold, velvets and silks. The British armies wore red coats, epaulettes, breeches and boots. The Indians wore primitive skins with bright decorations of feathers and beads. And the American frontiersmen were half way in between. Michigan has staged a costume pageant."

"MICHIGAN WAS first known around the world for its furs. When that resource was ruthlessly harvested, the lumbermen arrived to cut down every tree in sight for miles. The dry summer of the famous Chicago fire, a bigger one raged burning from Holland, Mich., all across the state to Lake Huron. That fire was fed by the strewn trees and branches littering the landscape left by the lumber harvest."

Thom is so steeped in the history of his paintings that his telling of it has the same immediacy as a description of one of his trips to Europe. He toured the continent on five extended research gathering expeditions for the History of Medicine and the History of Pharmacy series.

His EXTENSIVE experiences have contributed to make Bob Thom many things: an engaging speaker, both to small groups of friends or large civic audiences, an accomplished gourmet who wrote and illustrated an article for Gourmet Magazine on the Burgandy



and then retreats to his studio to work on an "historical" painting.

TELLING ABOUT Bob's many facets and talents is like giving a synopsis of a book. There's no space for his fascinating story of making the sewer plant into an art association, heading the Community House expansion drive, founding the art festival, how he

cooks pate en croute or even mentions of his delightful wife, Nellie, and his two sons, Bob, Jr., and Bill.

His will be quite a trail of foot prints to leave in the sands of time.

'Round the World And into the Club

A Franklin man, Ralph C. Charbeneau, has been elected a member of the International Circumnavigators Club. He was elected at the September meeting in New York of the club's board.

The major qualification for membership is that the applicants have circumnavigated the world, traveling in one direction and crossing all lines of longitude.

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Music Guild's First Concert Stars Pianist

Ronald Turini, young pianist and presently the only pupil of Vladimir Horowitz, will perform at the opening concert for the Cranbrook Music Guild on Tuesday, Oct. 29.

Turini, a winner in international competitions, including the top ranked Queen Elizabeth of Belgium Concours, has established a reputation as one of the best of the new generation of pianists in two short years.

CANADIAN-TRAINED Turini was chosen to be piano soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra when that organization made its first trip to the continent to play in principal cities of Russia and in Vienna and Paris.

Russian audiences in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev took the young pianist to their collective hearts. Such was the enthusiasm expressed for his artistry that he was invited to return to Russia for twelve concerts in January, 1963.

THE TURINI concert is the first of five programs in the 1963-64 Music Guild series which offers the opportunity to hear musical talent in the intimate setting of the Cranbrook House library.

All Cranbrook Music Guild programs are followed by an afterglow in the paneled Oak Room to meet the artists and enjoy the country-manner atmosphere of the former George Booth home.

OTHER CONCERTS in the 1963-64 series include the 1963 Grinnell Operatic and Piano Scholarship Winners on Nov. 19; the Albion College Chorus in a program of Christmas Music on Dec.

Nature

(Continued from 1-D)

the artist as to the order in which you respond to the various movements of color, shape, and light. Mr. Christ-Janer numbers his paintings, rather than titling them, in the hope that the viewer's pleasure will be enhanced by his own experiences of earth, sky, and water.

BOTH OF these men were invited to contribute a group of paintings to the 154th Annual Pennsylvania Academy show this year—an honor given only to ten men, and both were represented in the 22nd Annual International Biennial of the Brooklyn Museum in New York.

Architect

(Continued from 1-D)

gins to drop off and this oxidation or ripening process begins taking place whereby the color comes to the fore," he said.

Laird has an obvious zest and enthusiasm for his job as he tells of specific projects he is currently working on or has worked on. Among them is the interior court for the new State Department Building in Washington, D. C. (Birmingham sculptor Marshall Fredericks is doing a large sculpture for this courtyard.)

TO BE A licensed landscape architect in Michigan, one must have at least a B.A., plus at least five years experience in landscape architecture and pass the required examination. National professional recognition is given by the ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects). Laird has the honor of being a fellow in the ASLA, an additional recognition after years of service.

WHICH DOES HE prefer working with—projects which must be developed from scratch or projects which are already partially "built-up"? "It's easier to have blank, prairie area to work out. You're not restricted; but bear in mind that most jobs don't come that way," Laird replied. "It's more challenging to weave existing structures into a new pattern."

"We just try to give people the enjoyment to look at and hope that they do. We hope to help people to see more," he said.

Forty-seven of our 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have laws in effect which regulate wage payments.

New File in Library Lists Ideas for Clubs

Even better than Aladdin's lamp when it comes to pulling club program ideas out of the air—that's the PA file, a new "Program Aids" file designed for organizations, now ready and waiting for use in the Reference Department of Baldwin Public Library.

Arranged according to general subject area, this extensive file lists a vast assortment of talks, demonstrations and other types of programs which have been "booked" for clubs in the Birmingham area over the past several years, and which utilize local talent. Data is compiled from the pages of the weekly Birmingham Eccentric.

While listing in the file does not constitute a recommendation by the library, file users may secure further details by consulting club officers or hostesses as noted on the file cards.

WHAT SORT of subjects are to be found in the PA file? They run from birds, babies and book reviews to wigs, wild flowers and world conditions.

With the tremendous number of active clubs in and around Birmingham, the library feels this new service may save considerable time and trouble for program committees, including those unfamiliar with the area's rich talent resources.

Oils at the Kingsley

Through the month of October a group of oil paintings by Marcel Martin will be shown at the Kingsley Inn. The approximately 30 paintings displayed range in price from \$175 to \$350.

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'Pillow Talk'
(Continued from 1-D)
til last. This means stumbles just when one wants the "coup de grace." The tempo and timing of the third act was inferior to that of the first two acts—probably for this reason.
Though the Village Players' "Pillow Talk" will not go down in history as the first performance of a live play, it will be remembered as an evening of fine entertainment.
If you haven't seen it, don't miss your chance this Friday and Saturday.
10: The Knudsen String Quartet on Jan. 28; and Jaime Laredo, the outstanding Bolivian violinist accompanied by his wife Ruth Meckler on March 17.
Membership in the Cranbrook Music Guild is open to all persons interested in music. Further information can be obtained through Mrs. Palmer Sutton of 3015 Bristol Lane, Birmingham.

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