

ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Modern Art Is Tied to Modern Age

By CAROLYN HALL

"The only trouble with the arts festival," complained a neighbor, "is that there is so much modern art. This seems like a very funny comment. What else can a modern painter be expected to paint? People wear modern clothes, drive modern cars and read modern books. Why should it seem so strange to see artists painting modern paintings.

Maybe it's the name. The term "modern" coupled with "art" brings to mind wild abstractions painted by bushy haired unconventional artists. It's downright dismaying how civilized artists are nowadays—and their paintings, with a little understanding, make a lot of sense.

WHAT PEOPLE really object to is the artists' unusual interpretation of our world.

People like a comfortable world. Everyone has been taught to some degree to live according to established traditions. These traditions grew from the most workable reasoning of the past. They were good solutions to living so people continue to follow their heritage instead of eternally questioning.

Artists, as well as other creative people, try to re-evaluate ways of seeing things. They question existing patterns and thus forge new guides for future tradition. But the process is upsetting to people who like to KNOW what they think rather than be baffled by something new.

IT IS DIFFICULT to believe that the old master's paintings, so much a part of our heritage, were once new and daring concepts.

Michelangelo is regarded with awe as one of the greatest sculptors of the past. Yet one of his magnificent sculptures had to be buried to keep objectors from smashing it.

Rembrandt, too, was harshly criticized for his portraits which are now masterpieces.

Both of these men deviated from the common styles of the day, styles that were established by good artists preceding them. These two masters changed because they saw things differently and had the courage to express their new vision. Certainly every painter can learn a great

deal from the past but most artists prefer to forge their own trails.

NOWADAYS THE PURPOSE of a painting is to search for "truth and beauty." Seldom does painting record events photographically as it often did before the advent of the camera.

All this is not to say that every painting in town is on a par with Rembrandt. Zow! Many are quite mediocre. Time will cull out the pictures of dubious quality and positive direction. From this will emerge styles of art explained by future art historians as reflective of our era.

HOW DOES ALL this help a wondering neighbor who is a little suspicious of modern art? The foregoing is a plea for a long view; an attempt to see the current art trends as part of our ever changing, ever vital art scene.

So much of the culture people absorb now is presented in an easy to understand, simplified version. This is fine. (Just what I'm trying to do for art in these columns, as a matter of fact.) There is so much to know that any real aid to learning is desirable. But in every field, the pure research is often understandable only to people who really work at it.

ARTISTS ARE the researchers of the visual world. Even though many may not like or understand modern or experimental paintings, this art's contribution to our life has been impressive.

The geometric lines and squares of Mondrian's paintings have directly influenced architecture and magazine layouts.

The bright forms and colors of Matisse now make for simple, gay illustrations in children's books.

SO, NEIGHBORS, when confronting a strange painting remember that the purpose of the artist may not have been to make a pretty picture but to explore a new vein of painting.

Try going along with the artist in his probing. You may discover that you enjoy the trip.



Engineers' Art

Mrs. Bruce Allen (seated) and Mrs. Tex Ragdsdale discuss the merits of a painting by Mrs. William Rodger. The painting will be exhibited at the Society of Automotive Engineers convention art show at Greenbrier, Va. The show is open to all SAE members and their wives. Amateur painting and sculpture may be entered.

DOWN TO EARTH

Few Tips Can Extend Flower's Life

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME

Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

In this garden world there are two kinds of gardeners, those who grow flowers to add color to the garden and those who grow flowers to cut quickly and use for color introduction in the home. Chalk me up as being a member of the first cut.

If you do cut your flowers for inside home arrangements, here are a few pointers to assure you of the best results in keeping your flowers in prime condition:

- WHEN YOU CUT your flowers use a knife and make a cut on the slant so that the stem does not set flat on the bottom of the container. Scissors will pinch the stem together and hinder the flow of water up the stem by osmosis.
• Before arranging the flowers in a container place them in warm water which is allowed to come to room temperature for about an hour. Remove the leaves which will come below the water line to curtail decay. If you have a cool place to store your cut flowers in the container of water immediately after cutting so much the better.
• Keep the finished arrangement away from direct sunlight. If some flowers seem to appear wilted, place a piece of plastic over

developed to their maximum this is or mice nibbling on your shrubs or a good time to draw on paper your sunny spots and shadows in your garden area so that you may be an intelligent future planter. The light which really is the best is where the sun will shine during the morning hours.

If you place a flowering tree where it will get mostly shade you will be disappointed in the beauty of the tree. As long as you are investing dollars, why not do it intelligently?

WE ARE GETTING away from the idea of placing plant material around the total perimeter of the house. Instead planners are allowing grass as well as patio accents to come right up to the structure.

HERE IS A FACT I gleaned for you while in the northland to file how other people handle their plant problems. Frank Chapman, from Royal Oak said the other day, skunk use tomato juice generously if you have trouble with rabbits and it will counteract the odor.

THANKS, "SKYLINER," FOR A STORY WELL TOLD!

The following article about Grand Trunk commuter service appeared in the June 6, 1963 edition of "Skyliner," the magazine of downtown Detroit. It is reprinted with the publisher's permission.

MOST CHARITABLE organizations have volunteer groups which help them in their work, but it's not often that a group of volunteers will band together to promote a commercial enterprise. However, that's just what happened when the "Friends of the Grand Trunk" formed early this year.

The "Friends" have a very definite purpose. They're interested in spreading the word about their favorite commuter train, the Grand Trunk Commuter Shuttle, which travels the route from Pontiac to Detroit and back again eight times daily.

While commuter service may be a common mode of transportation for people in Chicago, New York and other big cities, many Detroiters don't even know of the existence of their own commuter line and the "Friends" have set out to see how they can change all that.

On its morning trips into the city, the Grand Trunk makes regular or signal stops at Bloomfield Hills, Charing Cross, Birmingham, Oakwood Boulevard at 12 Mile Road, Royal Oak, Pleasant Ridge at 10 Mile Road, Ferndale and Highland Park. The trains then make two in-town stops, one at Milwaukee Junction, and a second at the Brush Street Station.

Businessmen and women have their choice of three morning trains which will bring them into town anywhere from 7:35 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. The last

UN

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commentator, at their annual UN Day celebration. Last year, McVane had to cancel his talk here at the last minute as the Cuban crisis broke; Dr. Marion Edman of Wayne State University filled in for him.

MEETINGS (ALL of which are open to the public) begin with a coffee kick-off each year in September. Next is the annual UN Day celebration. Thereafter regular programs are held monthly (except for December) through July.

Other activities of the organization include encouraging groups of individuals interested in the UN such as the BUNA at Seaholm High School and the UN World Government Club at Cranbrook. This year they presented a citation to George Miller, advisor to the Seaholm Club and a scholarship to a student "for outstanding service to the organization and objectives of the AAUN." This year's award went to Charles Holtz, Jr., also of Seaholm High School.

Newly elected chapter officers include Spanier as president; A. M. MacLeary and Dr. John Caldwell,

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