

Dolls Keep This Grandmother Young

Creative Pastime Learned in Orient

BY MADGE LANE
Special Writer

It's never too late to learn something new, not if you have the joie de vivre of Mrs. R. G. Chestnut.

In 1956 when she was almost 80 years young, she found herself suddenly transplanted from Charlotte, N. C., halfway across the world to Nagoya, Japan.

It was there that she took up the hobby of doll-making, and by the time she returned to the States she had produced close to 100 "ningyo."

The Kenneth P. Taylor 174 Hillboro Birmingham, with whom she makes her home, lived in the Orient for six-and-a-half years. Her son-in-law was with the comptroller's office of the Fifth Air Force and was stationed first in Nagoya and later in Tokyo.

At the very outset, the white-haired grandmother of the two Taylor children, Lillis and David, decided she needed an outlet. "You'll see I'm not a lazy person."

AT THE OFFICERS' Club a number of courses were offered: flower-arranging, bonsai culture and other diversified Japanese interests. Among them was doll-making, a culture of Japan that dates back to the Heian period when "hina" were made for children of the nobility.

Dolls really came into their own during the Edo period (1615-1868). Their history had a strong appeal, and Mrs. Chestnut decided that she wanted to learn this specialized art.

While the Taylors were in Nagoya, they were fortunate to have rental housing adequate to hold the doll-making class there. The instructor and officer's wives came to the Taylor house, and both Mrs. Chestnut and her daughter began the series of lessons.

THEY FOUND that experts in the field of doll-making create heads and wigs, jewelry, musical instruments and all manner of authentic accessories used in making artistic dolls.

There are many classifications of dolls, but in Japan today it is the fashion for women to make sakura-ningyo, which means "cherry doll." These miniature figures assume rhythmic, graceful postures and the type of construction dates from the early 20th century or Taisho era, although the costume may be from a much earlier time. They are exquisitely dressed to represent people from all walks of life. Some of Mrs. Chestnut's include Kabuki dancers, a wrestling referee, the elaborately gowned emperor and empress in their bridal kimono.

"MY VERY FAVORITE is Ma-ma-san," Mrs. Chestnut brought out a figure of an elderly lady in simple country dress, grey hair streaked with white. The body and face were of a fine silk, stuffed with filling. Attached to a wooden stand, the doll stood about twelve inches tall.

"When the doll had been stitched together our teacher would show us how to bend the body and legs—even the fingers—in a graceful and suitable position."

"Wire is imbedded in the body and limbs of the doll, making it flexible." "And, it was very important." (See PASTIME, 5-D)



DOLL-MAKER WITH SOME OF HER 'NINGYO' Mrs. R. G. Chestnut of Birmingham



MORE OF HOBBYIST'S 100 DOLLS Japanese shown in all walks of life.



Prizes for Local Artists

Two prize winners in the 54th Exhibition for Michigan Artists are Phillip W. Wilburn (left), 30723 Fairfax, Southfield, and Laurence Barker, 45 Academy Way, Bloomfield Hills. In the background is Wilburn's entry, "Titled," which received the Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts Purchase Prize and the Campbell-Ewald Company Prize. Barker's entry, an untitled drawing, received the Mr. and Mrs. Lester B. Arwin (Arwin Galleries) Purchase Prize for a print or drawing for the permanent collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts.



ART FOR ART'S SAKE

Space, Control Are Elements Of Paintings in Michigan Show

I like pop art. The more I see of it, the more I like it.

This may seem quite inconsequential with last week's point of view, that the annual Michigan Artists' Show, on now at the Detroit Institute of Arts, is not representative of Michigan painters but more like a New York School pop art show. It isn't.

The Detroit show is very reminiscent of New York work. Many of the works look like those in the assemblage show that preceded this one. But if a show is selected in the prevailing style, it has to look like the prevailing proponents of that style.

A MAJOR characteristic about the show is space. There is a bold serenity about the simple, flat expanses of white or color. These paintings called "hard edges" because of the precise definitions of space and line, give a decisive look.

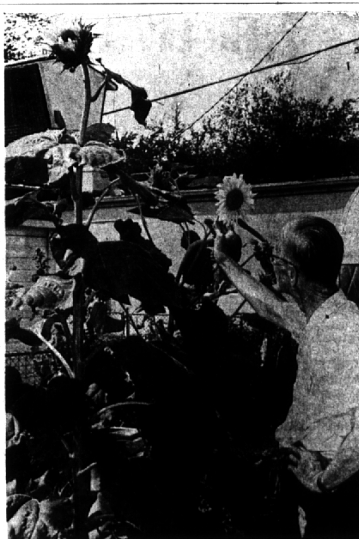
Another predominant element in all the works is control. Gone are the happy accidents of the abstract expressionists. Gone, too, is their basic concept that the work is flowing from their subconscious untouched by conscious or intellectual reasoning.

In place of this, and not too surprising, some pop artists feel that they are merely cyphers in humanity. Neither their conscious nor their unconscious thoughts are individually important. The result seems to have been conceived by a collective social conscience.

"The 'seems' is important in this statement. It means that no artist will forgo his individuality in some form. So these works are satiric statements."

SOME OF THE paintings in the show seem to say, "Well, this is what society thinks is important—"

(See PAINTINGS, 4-D)



Some Sunflowers!

R. L. Denison, 931 Ruffner, Birmingham, is nearly a six-footer but he's dwarfed by the giant sunflower at left, which he estimates is more than eight feet tall. "The leaves are up to 18 inches across, and the trunk is at least two inches in diameter," he says. The other sunflower, being examined, is slightly shorter and thinner but, according to Denison, has "at least 24 buds on it, with three or more in bloom." Besides these sunflowers in his yard, Denison says there is a 9-foot hollyhock behind the garage, covered with 200-300 blossoms and buds.

Festival Reawakens Memories

EDITOR'S NOTE—Through the years, Edith Rhett's Tilton, Mrs. Alfred C. Wilson for whose philanthropy the huge audience phantasm had been planned, has undoubtedly contributed more than any other single person toward bringing an appreciation and knowledge of good music to literally thousands of people in this area.

Dating back to the days of the late Otto Schindler, who enlisted her aid in helping promote the Detroit Symphony, Mrs. Tilton's name has been synonymous with that orchestra.

HER FAMOUS Young People's Concerts in Orchestra Hall and the Free Concerts for School Children series opened a door to youngsters whose lives might never have been touched by the magic of understanding and loving great music.

On an adult level, Mrs. Tilton's dynamic know-how was put to use when she helped form the Women's Association for the Detroit Symphony and, again, in organizing the Cranbrook Music Guild.

The Eccentric could think of no one better suited than Mrs. Tilton to write an impressionistic review of what Meadow Brook Festival means to the community of which she is a part.

By EDITH RHETT'S TILTON
Special Writer

Walking across the meadow on the July 23 opening night of the Meadow Brook Festival, there was confusion of anticipation and memories. Is it Hollywood? The pepper tree lane isn't here. Ravinia, Saltzberg, Bayreuth, Tanglewood, Robin Hood Dell and many others came to mind. Then suddenly there it was—the beautiful Howard C. Baldwin Memorial Pavilion that is different from all the others.

Our truly magnificent symphony orchestra took the stage as a body (not straggling on casually) for this was an occasion. They were followed closely by conductor Sixten Ehrling.

SEMON KNUDSEN, general chairman with Mrs. Knudsen, recognized the gifts of the Kresge

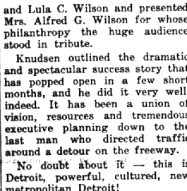
Hospital to Get Proceeds on Book Of French Verse

Children's Hospital in Detroit will benefit from the proceeds of a book of light French verse by Eleanor W. (Mrs. Ralph A.) Mayer of Grosse Pointe Park.

The book (a 32-page booklet) is available in Birmingham at L. La-Belle's, 137 W. Maple. It is titled "Cela Ne Rime a Rien," which translates into "No Rhyme Nor Reason."

MRS. MAYER belongs to a French-speaking organization and a few years ago began to write verse in French. "Our sense of humor is akin to the French," she says.

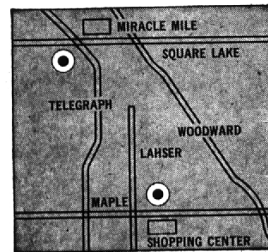
She had the book put together "solely for Children's Hospital." She describes its contents as "very light verse on various subjects."



(See FESTIVAL, 7-D) EDITH RHETT'S TILTON

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