

Art Adventure | Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski



Poet — teacher and art collector

On occasion rather than asking artists why they create, I ask art collectors why they collect. Munster resident Mark F. Arendt has been a loyal Steeple Gallery art patron since the gallery opened more than nine years ago.

He has been collecting art for more than 25 years. Arendt is a poet, fiction writer, and teacher — an adjunct faculty member at DePaul University in Chicago.

For the past several years he has served as a judge for “The Society of Midland Authors,” a literary organization which has been around since the early 1900s. I’d like to congratulate him on his recent marriage and he would like to share with our readers why he collects art.

Mark F. Arendt

I once had a contemporary painting of the Madonna on my wall, done in the style of the Renaissance masters. I used to stand before the painting with my morning cup of coffee and observe how the early light played across the canvas.

The poet Donald Revell, in *The Art of Attention: A Poet’s Eye*, writes, “And now I see that poetry is a form of attention, itself the consequence of attention. And, too, I believe that poems are presences, themselves the consequence of vivid presentations, events.”

This powerful insight could easily refer to painting.

Critics and artists throughout history have perceived and written of the affinity between poetry and painting. Indeed, many artists practice both art forms. Poets paint and painters write poetry. Michelangelo, at the age of sixty,

began writing love sonnets, becoming the first great painter-poet of the European tradition.

Chinese scholars as early as the 11th century said that “Poetry is painting without form, painting is poetry with form.”

Michelangelo’s elder rival Leonardo da Vinci, responding to early critics who privileged one form over another asserted, “And if you call painting dumb poetry, the painter may call poetry blind painting. Now which is the worse defect? To be blind or dumb?”

Both forms, poetry and painting, cultivate the art of attention, a profound awareness of the world around us. As we embrace the disciplines we begin to see and hear, and continue to see and hear, clearly and vividly.

This clear sightedness, this new perceptiveness, is reason enough to seek out new encounters with painting; to view it; to collect it; to study it.

In a post-modern world that contrives to distract us with demands, painting demands stillness and re-engagement with presences around us. Let me cite some examples, near at hand.

I purchased an elegant art book on Vermeer for a friend,



a poet. Look at any of Vermeer’s quiet, contemplative paintings. They compel us to be still. Beyond the domestic particulars of his scenes, and their allegorical content, his subject is time itself.

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Photos provided to the Star

Classical works of art, such as the portrait of Michaelangelo, attributed to Marcello Venusti after 1535, above left, or Jan Vermeer’s of “The Milkmaid, done in 1660, are what art collector, Mark F. Arendt, calls contemplative pieces.



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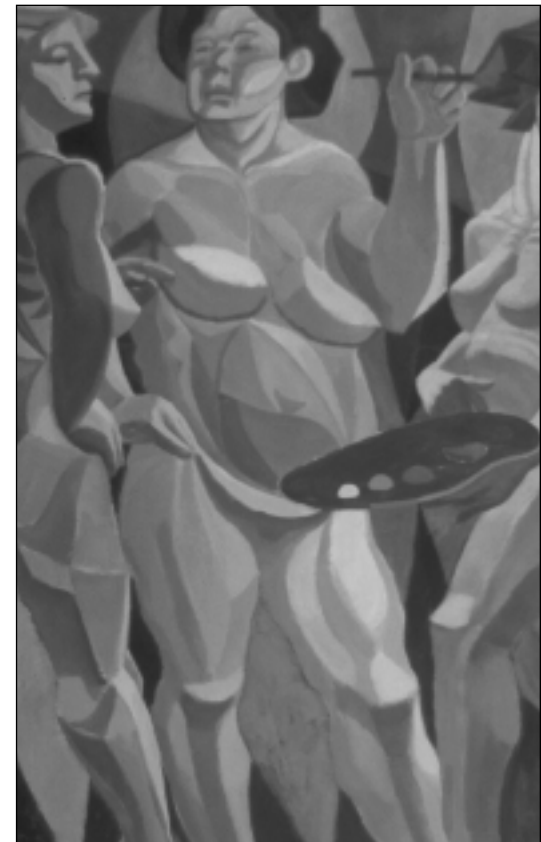
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He captures both its brevity and its continuance without, and all because he is an artist attentive to the present moment.

There now hangs on my walls a painting from an artist, Peter Xiao represented by the Steeple Gallery.

Done in the cubist manner of a Picasso, two lovers embrace in a starry and sunlight landscape. The cubist form presents what is called a multiplicity of perspectives: one scene is opened up before us by the artist. We see things from many angles, even times in one encompassing whole.

These powerful insights, the result of the artist's powerful and profound art of attention,



Photos provided to the Star

Poet, art collector and teacher, Mark F. Arendt shares some of his art collection in the above photos. From far left, an original Picasso, "Woman Playing the Mandolin" was done in 1909 and would be priced in the millions of dollars. At top center is a work by cubist, Peter Xiao, titled, "Three Mothers on the Go," and below left, "The Journey." Above is another Xiao work, "The Beholders, a 48-inch by 54-inch oil on canvas, priced at \$3,600.

are ours to share. "

If fond of Picasso's works but can't afford an original for millions of dollars, I would invite you to visit the Steeple Gallery and review the portfolio of Peter Xiao. Xiao has many stylistic similarities to Picasso at affordable prices.

Visit www.thesteplegallery.com or call (219) 365-1014, or email samowner@sbcglobal.net.

Underage drinkers pay price for actions

BY KITTY CONLEY
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CROWN POINT — On July 5 at approximately 12:30 a.m., Derek Johnson, 20 was driving a red 1998 Chevy 1500 pick-up truck southbound on Mississippi Street.

He allegedly went through the stop sign at 101st Avenue and drove into the ditch. Johnson was arrested and charged with operating while intoxicated, operating while intoxicated endangering and minor consumption of alcohol. His court date was July 14 before Judge Kent Jeffers in Crown Point.

When asked to take more field sobriety tests back at the station, Johnson refused; he also refused the portable breath test and the chemical test.

Alyssa Housty, 19 was the passenger in the above truck. She agreed to take the portable

breath test and recorded a .06 percent BAC. That is not legally drunk in the state of Indiana, yet inconsequential as she was charged with illegal possession of alcohol by a minor. She also had a July 14 court date with Judge Jeffers.

Both were separately transported to the Lake County Jail. Johnson also had a 15-hour hold.

According to the narrative report filed by Crown Point Police Officer Stephen Meece, the rear of the vehicle was still in the roadway. There was no damage to the truck, but it came close to hitting a telephone pole. Meece asked Johnson to exit the vehicle and walk to the rear of the truck. As Johnson pulled himself out of the truck he slid out and almost fell over when landing on his feet. He then staggered to the rear of the truck with the officer assisting him to walk for his safety. Dispatch told the officer that Johnson's license was suspended because of an infraction.

In his narrative Meece said, "Johnson was

mumbling and slurring his speech and was having a hard time keeping his attention to my questions as well as trouble standing." Eventually Johnson told the officer that he couldn't stop in time for the stop sign while he was traveling south on Mississippi Street.

Meece states that he could smell a strong odor of intoxicants. When asked if he had been drinking alcoholic beverages, Johnson said "yes." Meece asked how many and Johnson told him "12 beers".

Meece transported Johnson to the Lake County Jail. According to Meece, during the transport Johnson mumbled and slurred what sounded like hostile comments but Meece could not tell what he was saying due to the slurring. Once at the jail Meece had Johnson remove his earrings. While he was taking an earring out he started to fall forward. "If I didn't catch him he would have landed on his face.

The medics had him sit on the floor to take his blood pressure, instead of the bench due to him being unsteady and unable to keep himself up," Meece said in his report.



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