

Art Adventure I Sam Dalkilic-Miestowski

The art of presentation

When I was an idealistic art student back in college, wearing mostly black, mostly ripped jeans, and dreaming of being the next Picasso, I always believed that art should "speak for itself."

What that means in translation is that a painting should stand alone as a painting. If you framed it, then it would "take away" from the actual artwork and your eye would be distracted from the piece. We believed the viewer should see the brush strokes right to the end of the canvas.

Also, a sculpture should stand by itself (without a base). This way the sculpture would be "one" with the viewer, and, therefore, more engaging or more of high art. The logic was that if it needed a base, then it was too small and therefore a "knick-knack."

Many of us at art school believed a beautiful gold frame was pure evil.

And besides, that made your piece look more commercial. Nobody wanted their art to look pretty or match anything. A rule of thumb was if your mom liked it then it wasn't art. I can even remember a professor who told us not to sign the front of our completed works as it usually detracted from the artwork. We were told the commercial art industry had made more importance of the signature than the actual subject matter, or idea behind the painting, drawing, sculpture, etching, photograph, etc. As a result, we resorted to just signing the pieces on the back or underneath.

When it came down to framing or presenting the art for an art show, many of us did a shoddy job. We had

to make our own frames from scratch. Most art students spent their money on art supplies, food and rent. That didn't leave much for framing or fancy sculptural bases. There were no Targets or Wal-Marts which sold inexpensive ready-made frames which would "go" with our art. There was no Internet to search. In fact there wasn't any sort of class which taught us how to present our art.

Boy how times have changed. In sixteen years there is a tremendous change. With the help of the Internet, Direct T.V., and the revolution of television shows like Trading Spaces, Designing for the Sexes, Extreme Makeover the Home Edition and Martha Stewart, to name a few, framing has become an art unto itself. Now more than ever, people can create a home with visual impact.

This impact is created by framing photos, memorabilia, limited editions, artwork, and so forth with frames normally used for fine works of art. In fact, the monetary value of the items framed may be less than the frame itself. What the frame contains is priceless, however - it's the cherished memories of a time, a place or an event which has emotional meaning.

Jim Betkowski, former St. John Chamber of Commerce president and owner of Elmwood Funeral Chapel, won first place in the Town of St. John's first parade. Dressed in period clothing, he drove an antique funeral carriage pulled by a horse. The photograph capturing this moment received fine art framing at the gallery. Mrs. Lou Betkowski surprised

her husband with this piece as a Christmas gift. The end product was fantastic.



If you don't want to display family photos or pictures of yourself, think about sports in "Da Region." Sports memorabilia is an industry in itself. Do the kids or grandchildren play sports?

When Woodmar Country Club closed last year, the Betkowskis purchased special reissues of a flag, a few golf balls, a ball marker, and some tees which had the insignia of Woodmar. This photo shows the end result of some creative shadowboxing.



Another example is the Betkowski's hand-signed limited edition winning "White Sox" photo-



graph, signed by White Sox 3rd baseman Joe Crede. This flat

black frame has the inscription "Chicago White Sox World Champions." This may be the only Chicago championship for many years to come.

Mrs. Lenore Obajtek of St. John, recently brought in her 2006 Chicago Marathon medal, photograph, bib number and other memorabilia to create a custom framed piece of art which showcases her fantastic achievement. The gallery offers a limited edition print showing the route of the Chicago Marathon. To personalize the piece she chose green and



yellow, the colors of the La Salle Marathon ribbon. The final touch will include a laser engraved inscription with a formal cursive script which will have her full name, with her time at the bottom of the frame. See the photos of the Chicago Marathon Route, and the photo of Lenore Obajtek.

What family heirlooms, novelties or treasures will you turn into fine art? Send an email to samowner@sbc-global.net

almanac
from the
Lake County Star

100 years ago

Nov. 23, 1906

Sheriff Daugherty has been dreaming lately of camping out, and in fact he has a right to, for no suitable house can be found in Hammond or Crown Point that will shelter the family until grass comes next spring, and he must soon leave the jail where they have been snugly situated for four years. His sufferings may yet exceed those of the defeated candidates.

Rensselaer, which is now a dry town with the lid on, from all reports have to contend some with "boot-leggers" who ship and bring in their "remedy" in bottles and jugs - just for home use - but the authorities there imagine that the city has "blind pigs".

60 years ago

Nov. 22, 1946

This Sunday, November 24, the high school football team will be the guests of George Halas, owner of the Chicago Bears, at the Chicago Bears-Detroit Lions game at Wrigley field.

Saturday is moving day for Crown Point Building, Loan and Savings association, which will go from quarters in Commercial bank building, occupied since the organizations' beginning, to its new location, in what was the first Peoples State Bank building.

20 years ago

Nov. 20, 1986

"Its historic Courthouse and downtown is a truly fine example of the architectural richness... the downtown is economically viable and is 'holding its own' against stiff competition from shopping malls."

"Many historic buildings have been insensitively changed over the years. Inappropriate changes, additions and modifications detract from the original intent of architecture."

The Crown Point Revitalization Study by Ball State University



Antiquing: The Greater Crown Point Chamber of Commerce held its annual Antique Show last weekend at the Lake County Fairgrounds. Shoppers found a variety of items for sale, including discounted jewelry, left. Above, Mackenzie Wilson, visiting her grandmother Julie Erb of Crown Point, takes a break in an 1880s wicker stroller.

Gene Milkowski/Star

