

# JANUARY THAW

## Brighten up winter's monotony with visits to two distinct art exhibits

Marking an impressive anniversary, *Associated Artists Celebrates 85 Years*, on display at the Manlius Public Library, delves into the group's past and present, referencing its history of presenting individual and group exhibits, including an annual juried members' show. The current display draws on the past 40 years and honors a dozen artists who served as president of Associated Artists during that period.

On one hand, the exhibition clearly has an organizational imprint. On the other, the show has its own identity, one derived from a mix of artistic styles and media. Put simply, Associated Artists has 50 members, and they take diverse artistic approaches. The show moves from Marcia Ferber's fused-enamel pieces to Helga Gilbert's collage "Ithaca Tapestry," from Sandra Abraham's nicely detailed "Passion Flowers" to Mimi George's acrylic "Fog Bank," with its rough surface.

It easily encompasses Ute Ostreicher's "Lincoln Park Stairs," depicting trees and bushes and the stairs running through the middle of the piece, and Sallie Bailey's fine work commemorating her grandmother. Bailey combines images of her "granmere" in youth and old age with subtle depictions of flowers.

That's not the only instance of "memento mori" within the exhibit. It displays works by several artists who have died, including George Welch and Roger Morris, both of whom showed their pieces in a variety of local venues.

The exhibit also displays an assortment of paintings by the late Alfred Bollinger. Initially, there were plans for a solo show focusing on his artworks but that format was expanded into this larger show with 12 artists.

Bollinger created varied pieces, and the exhibit provides a good sense of his work. "Sheep, Yorkshire, England," for example, demonstrates an ability to skillfully integrate the elements of a landscape. Indeed, Bollinger merges sheep, portrayed on a small scale; trees, which loom large; a farmhouse surrounded by a broken-down fence; a nearby hillside; a field that dominates the painting's foreground.

The show kicks off a year in which Associated Artists celebrates its birth in 1926 and all that's happened since then. The group will stage both its usual schedule of exhibitions at the library and a large retrospective show at the Onondaga Historical Association, 321 Montgomery St. Mimi George, Associated Artists' current president, says the exhibit will span eight decades, featuring works by winners of the juried competitions. The retrospective is slated to open during the spring.

In the meantime, visitors to the library will see ample evidence of its commitment to art. Associated Artists has long rented space there for its exhibitions. In addition, the Manlius Public Library does art programming on its own, running an art-rental project. It's possible for someone to take a piece home for two months after paying a fee and signing a rental contract. If the renter really likes a work, she or he can discuss purchasing it.

Artworks available for rental are displayed on an ongoing basis. The current selection includes Karen Kozicki's black-and-white images, James Skvarch's etchings and Elizabeth Hueber's watercolor, "Midnight Marauder," among other works.

*Associated Artists Celebrates 85 Years* will run through Feb. 4 at the Manlius Public Library, 1 Arkie Albanese Drive, near the swan pond. The library is open Mondays to Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call 682-6400.

—Carl Mellor

## Crimson and Clover

Looking at Deng Guo Yuan's canvases, on display at the Warehouse Gallery, is akin to checking out Monet at Giverny on a 1950s television: Black-and-white rules the day. And that should be reason enough to check out *In the Garden 2009-2011*. Through judicious use of brush strokes, Deng evokes wind-blown motion, flowers vs. bushes vs. trees, even garden paths. But the show holds a few, colorful surprises as well.

"Coming from our Western perspective," says Anja Chavez, Warehouse curator, "it feels very much like Monet and his Giverny series. Deng's work here shows the importance of ink brush painting today. As curator, I'm hoping that three elements come together here: the importance of nature, Chinese culture and tradition."

Based in Tianjin, China, Deng furthers the tradition of Chinese landscape painting while displaying knowledge of modern aesthetics. This show originated at the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts Museum and then traveled to Bucknell University and the Provenance Center in New London, Conn., before ending up in Syracuse. Still, notes Chavez, Deng created site-specific work just for the Warehouse, working around the large beams that dominate the basement-level space.

"We sent him images of the gallery via email, especially pointing out the beams, and he suggested how we should hang the panels," Anja notes. "When he



**Black and white and red all over: *In the Garden 2009-2011* provides a welcome mid-winter respite through Feb. 18 at the Warehouse Gallery.**

nine red bird cages (think Tweety) containing live plants, some of them stretching beyond the wires. Gold forms on the chairs hold test tubes with dried flowers inside, turning the flora into science experiments, something for study in the lab.

The birdcages and test tubes literally contain items, to either keep them from drifting away or to force them to be somewhere that's not natural. "Deng is questioning what we are doing to the environment," Chavez says.

In the adjacent gallery, a 20-minute film by Pierre Creton loops silently, showing Deng at work and some of the Chinese landscapes that formed his inspiration. *In the Garden* provides a needed contrast from the real landscape to the drab, not dull, painted landscapes next door. The fact that Creton's film begins with a Giverny-like scene, complete with arching bridges and lily pads, enhances the overall experience.

"We are hoping that the idea of nature is going to be revealed," Chavez says. Indeed, that hope is realized. Even in black and white, a visit to Deng's *Garden* will color your day.

*In the Garden 2009-2011* continues at the Warehouse Gallery, 350 W. Fayette St. through Feb. 18. On Feb. 16 at 5 p.m., Jonathan Goodman, art critic and professor in the Department of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute, will speak on "Into the Garden: The Contemporary Ink Painting of Deng Guo Yuan." Gallery hours are Tuesdays to Saturdays, noon to 6 p.m., and admission is free. For more information, call 443-6450.

—Molly English-Bowers

arrived, he looked at the layout and he approved." The layout of the panels, meant to be hung in a concurrent series, is deliberately mixed up at the Warehouse; images don't necessarily appear in numeric order.

Chavez's layout on the gallery's four walls, however, doesn't in any way take away from the overall exhibit's flow, its gradations of gray and black evoking trees, bushes, a garden path, stones and even a rainstorm. The feeling is repeated, even though the brush strokes aren't. "In the Garden, Series II" especially gives Deng room to expand those strokes, the larger canvas imparting wind-swept movement and including an even wider garden path leading toward a grove of trees at the back.

When you're done studying the four walls of black-and-white, consider the display at the center of the smallish gallery, a burst of red and gold among the gray. Four high-backed, caned chairs face each wall and sit underneath