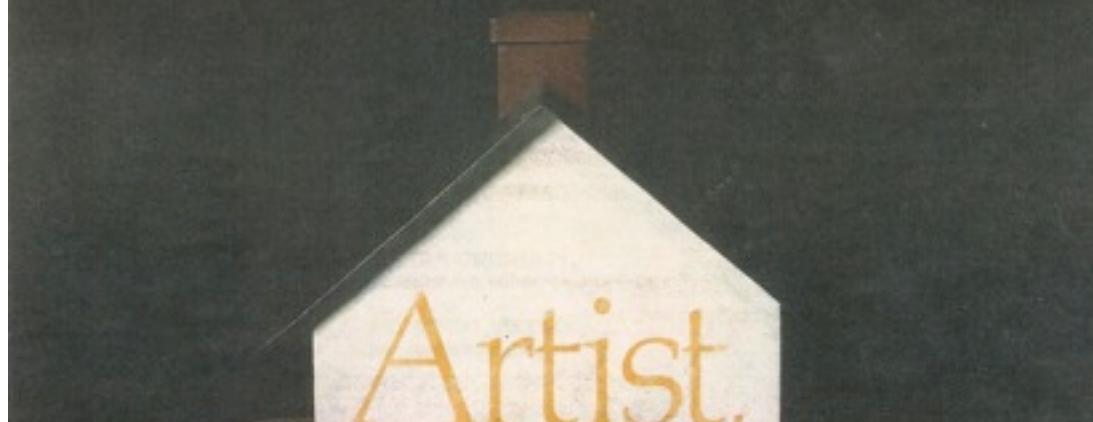


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MAGAZINE

EVERY FRIDAY IN THE BULLETIN
APRIL 7, 2006



Affairs of the art

Alan and Helen Post have been collaborators and spouses for most of their 90-plus years

By Andrew Moore

The Bulletin

Ninety-one-year-old painter Alan Post is struggling to slow down. He paints fast, he said, "perhaps too fast." He wishes he were more meticulous, and would like to spend more time on his paintings.

"It was a watercolorist to begin with," he said. "I learned to paint fast," explained Post. "My teacher said if you can't paint a watercolor and finish in a half hour, it's no good. Well, he's crazy."

Perhaps, but more than 70 years after that lesson, Post still paints "fast and furious," Post said, in his studio.

Hanging long ago in her studio, Post likes to point toward his wife and still likes that mask made with the man-made world. His work "evokes an expressive mood" and "pays tribute to post-impressionists such as Rousseau and Cezanne," according to a catalog of his work compiled by the Solonex Dubnick Gallery in Sacramento, Calif.

But the prolific Post is only half of an artistic team. His partner is Helen, his wife of more than 65 years who is also in her 90s. She is a full-time sculptor, and an exciting one, said Post. Her works are "solid and stark," according to the same Solonex Dubnick catalog, and "provide a sensory depiction of the figure rather than representation."

"Their art really complements each other," said Shelley Hall, a Bend artist who tonight will celebrate the grand opening of her new contemporary art gallery in downtown Bend with an exhibition of works by the Posts (see "If You Go").

"It's a great love affair," said Hall of the Posts' relationship.

"Homage to Richard Shookhara II" is a bronze by California sculptor Helen Post.

A native of Alhambra, Calif., Post met his wife at Princeton University in the 1930s. They were married in Yuma, Ariz., in 1940. Because of the difference in time zones between California and Arizona, Post said he would leave for work at the state Capitol, turn off his left brain, turn on his right brain, and immerse himself in his art.

Painting made my life, which was extremely hectic, much pleasanter," Post said.

Post's introduction to art came during the Depression. Forced to drop out of Occidental College in Los Angeles to help his family make ends meet, Post took a job at a bank. The only classes he could take, he said, were night classes in art offered by a junior college. He became hooked, and it started a lifelong addiction to art.

"Painting made my life; I would have been an alcoholic," he said.

Post went back to college, and then enrolled at Princeton. When he met Helen, she, too, was a painter. But after three months, they decided outside of painting to end their relationship. The result has been a lasting relationship anchored in art, Post said.

"Both I and my wife have made art a real passion," he said. "We compare and judge, and that makes life extremely interesting."

Although both had always been artists, the duo didn't start garnering accolades until they were in their 60s, after Post retired. They purchased a studio in a residential town near Valencia, Spain, and would spend one month a year there chasing their muse.

Spain was wonderfully inspiring for both, Post said, and it kept them busy. In fact, one of Post's works have a Spanish flavor, as it features matadors and flamenco-dancers or warm Mediterranean colors.

Continued next page



MUSIC

Speech from Arrested Development and Tre Hardson of Pharcyde bring hip-hop to The Grove, PAGE 3

FINE ARTS

Shelley Hall Gallery opens tonight in Bend, PAGE 26

MOVIES

"Lucky Number Slevin," "Take the Lead," and "The Benchwarmers" open, PAGE 10

RESTAURANTS

The Dish visits Vino Mercato in Bend, PAGE 30

IF YOU GO

What: "Faces and Figures," a retrospective of works by Helen and Alan Post

When: Through May 4, reception from 5 to 9 tonight

Where: Shelley Hall Gallery, 833 NW Wall St., Suite B, Bend (above the former Sage House store next to the Tower Theatre)

Credit: Free

Contact: 382-6666 or www.shelleyhallgallery.com

All the while he was in government, Post painted. Economics, Post joked, is sometimes called "the dismal science," and he made work less dismal by falling back on his art. It was no problem, he said, to come home from work at the state Capitol, turn off his left brain, turn on his right brain, and immerse himself in his art.

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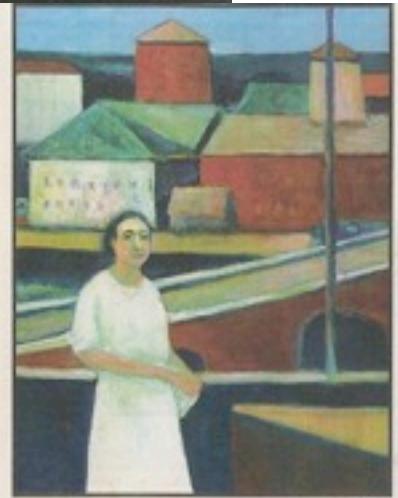
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"Spanish Maid" is a 48-by-36 inch oil on canvas painting by California artist Alan Post. The 91-year-old painter likes to combine nature with the man-made world in his work, many of which were inspired by life outside the Posts' studio near Valencia, Spain.

From previous page

"Contemporary art means 1950s to the present, and that's what's kind of a misconception," Hall said. "It's not a formal term but kind of a style of modern, not traditional, still lifes and landscapes. It's a very broad umbrella."

As artist-in-residence, Hall recently moved to Bend from Southern California, although she was born in Palmano, Wa. Opening her own gallery fulfills a lifelong dream, and Hall is excited to help individuals learn about contemporary art.

"It's different from anything else they offer here now, but I see that as a healthy alternative, not competition. We're going to have what that's unique," Hall said.

In addition to works by the Posts, Hall's inaugural exhibit, titled "Faces and Figures," will showcase paintings by other artists, including Julie Brown Smith, Kelly Vivanco, Ashley Wells, David Bogley and Sooey Asante.

The gallery is located above the former Sage House store on Wall Street, and can be accessed via a staircase that opens onto the sidewalk adjacent to the Tower Theatre.

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