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JANUARY - JUNE 2013

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YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE MANY FACES, PLACES AND EVENTS OF METRO DETROIT

PIZZAPALOOZA

NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT, DETROIT'S PIZZA SCENE IS DELICIOUSLY HOT **PAGE 26**

MUSIC ALL AROUND

Tune into The D's eclectic calendar of musical festivities

PAGE 22

ART UNCOVERED

Cranbrook Art Museum lets visitors go beyond the exhibit halls

PAGE 34



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& Visitors Bureau
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BY Cynthia J. Drake

PHOTOS BY Cybelle Codish

MAGIC IN THE MUSEUM

**A TWO-YEAR, \$22-MILLION
RENOVATION INVITES VISITORS
TO PEEK BEHIND THE CURTAINS
AT CRANBROOK**



IT FEELS A LITTLE LIKE BEING IN WILLY WONKA'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY. OUR TOUR GROUP IS SHUFFLING THROUGH THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE CRANBROOK ART MUSEUM WHEN WE COME TO A MASSIVE, CURVED STEEL DOOR. GREGORY WITTKOPP, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CRANBROOK ART MUSEUM WHO COULD GIVE MR. WONKA A RUN FOR HIS MONEY IN THE CHARISMA DEPARTMENT, PAUSES IN FRONT.

"It starts with this curious wall," he said with a grin, punching in a code and sliding the steel mass to one side. We walk down a flight of stairs and down a long industrial-looking hall filled with shipping crates, which hold the latest exhibit pieces that have arrived at the museum.

"This is one of the moments we hope has a little drama to it," said Wittkopp, disappearing down a corner and flipping on a light switch to reveal a collection of Pewabic pottery from one of the nation's oldest potteries, which happens to be located in Detroit.

Welcome to the vault of the museum where, for the first time, everyone is welcome.

Backstage Pass

These little surprising moments, in which the visitor receives a backstage pass to what normally is hidden from view in the Bloomfield Hills art museum, is part of Cranbrook's \$22-million renovation of its Collections Wing.

Along with a top-down overhaul that restored the museum's original 1942 coffered ceiling lighting system and included state-of-the-art climate control, planners wanted to give the average visitor more access to all the things that museums normally keep tucked away when they aren't on display.

It was an instance of seizing an opportunity to create a public space that arose out of a dire need to implement proper storage conditions. When the building originally opened, it didn't feature "a single closet for storing a piece of art," the museum director told us.

Campus lore holds that Cranbrook founder George Booth would simply store artwork in his house when it wasn't on display in the art museum.

Wittkopp hopes that the renovation has not only remedied the storage issue, but has also achieved his intention to "institutionalize the 'wow factor.'" Forget the era of digital touchscreens and the latest flavor of museum pageantry — Wittkopp says that the experience of being in a beautiful space where the "attractions" speak for themselves will create a special memory that resonates with even the youngest patrons. He remembers the excitement of being in grade school and visiting a museum for the first time, and he wants to capitalize on that.

"We wondered, 'can we create this space that just captures the imagination of people?'" he added.

On tour, we are traveling on an elevator large enough to house a car. The doors open to reveal even more treasures.



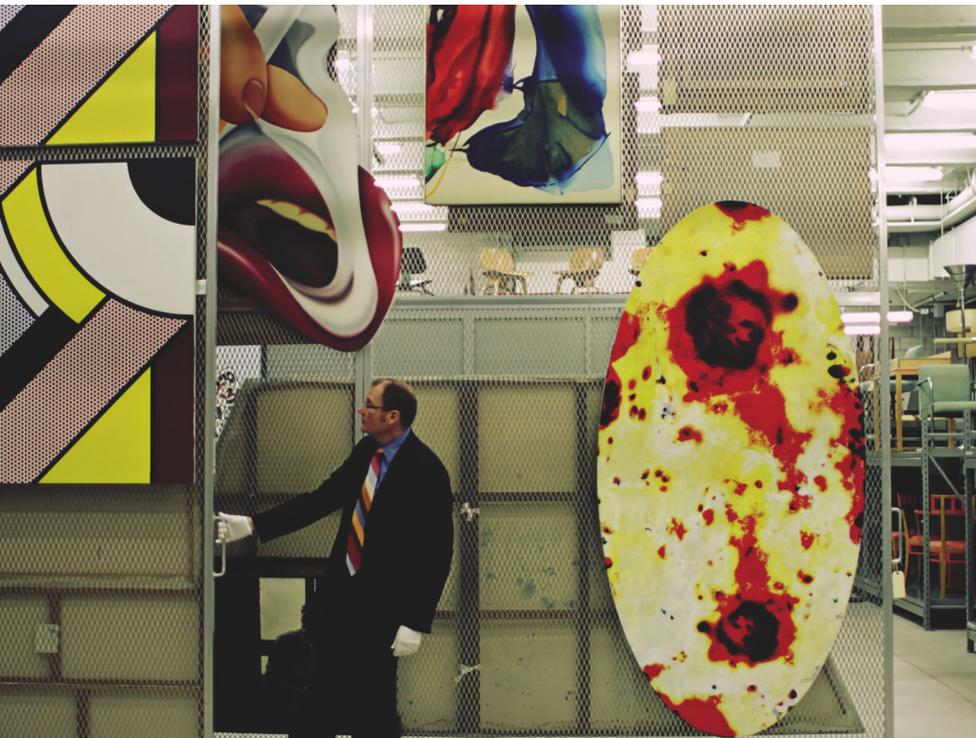
> OPPOSITE PAGE: CRANBROOK ART MUSEUM DIRECTOR GREGORY WITTKOPP OPENS THE ENTRANCE TO THE VAULT. ABOVE: THE MUSEUM VAULT HAS AN OUTSTANDING COLLECTION OF FURNITURE ON DISPLAY, INCLUDING DESIGNS BY CHARLES AND RAY EAMES, RALPH RAPSON AND LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE, AMONG OTHERS.

WHO IS SAARINEN?

Cranbrook founders George and Ellen Booth hired Eliel Saarinen, one of the most prominent architects of the 20th century, to design their art museum, which first opened in 1942. (Saarinen had already completed

Cranbrook's two schools and the Cranbrook Institute of Science.) His architectural contributions during the American Arts and Crafts Movement are legendary, and the entire Cranbrook campus showcases the best of his work.

> THIS PAGE FROM TOP: ART MUSEUM DIRECTOR GREGORY WITTKOPP PULLS OUT A RACK HOLDING A PAINTING BY ROY LICHTENSTEIN. BEHIND HIM ARE WORKS BY TOM WESSELMANN, PAUL JENKINS AND CRANBROOK ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE BEVERLY FISHMAN. *BODYBUILDER*, CREATED IN 1989 BY DUANE HANSON IS PART OF THE CRANBROOK ART MUSEUM COLLECTION. OPPOSITE PAGE: EACH RACK IN STORAGE IS ACCESSIBLE AND REPRESENTS A DIFFERENT PERIOD OR THEME.



Curated Curriculum

Wittkopp, who is tapped to speak to potential donors and art aficionados, said he's often heard from collectors who bemoan the fact that their donations to major museums sit unappreciated in back storage rooms for decades while waiting for their rare appearance on exhibit.

In response, he easily rolled out an oversized wall panel featuring works by Hungarian painter and former Cranbrook instructor Zoltan Sepeshy.

"There's absolutely nobody who's inviting 30 third graders from the city of Detroit into their vault," Wittkopp said as he studied the Sepeshy collection featuring glimpses of Detroit in the 1940s.

Here, those third graders can pull up a stool and sit nose-to-nose with their "curriculum."

And Wittkopp believes he now has a better answer for would-be museum donors.

"Even when [these artifacts] are in storage they have a life," he said. "It's actually, in many respects, more exciting. This has captured the imagination."

The tour winds through the Collections Seminar Room, off of which an archive houses original prints from the likes of, "Oh ... let's see ... this one says 'Bertoia.'"

As in, Bertoia-comma-Harry, noted 20th-century artist, sculptor and designer who once studied and taught at Cranbrook. Wittkopp whisks out two monoprints, which, he explained, were Bertoia's attempts to visualize sound. The monoprints (by definition, one-of-a-kind pieces) are part of one of the largest collections of its kind — Cranbrook owns 72.

"Every box, every print in here has a comparable story," he said, admiring the colorful, orbital print before tucking it back into its box and replacing it on the shelf among hundreds of others.

Staying True to Form

Frequent museumgoers to Cranbrook might be surprised that they won't immediately detect a complete overhaul to Eliel Saarinen's original genius architectural design — and that's kind of the point.

The team from Detroit firm SmithGroup that worked on the 20,000-square-foot addition was "very respectful of Saarinen's design," said Wittkopp. "It doesn't scream at you. It allows Saarinen's building to take center stage."

Charles Di Piazza, a visitor from Austin, Texas, was appreciative of the enhancements.

"I think it's very successful," said Di Piazza, an architect himself. "It's light, big and airy. You don't need to step into a small space to see the exhibits. A visitor can create his or her own path."

You get the sense that Saarinen, along with all of the men and women whose paths have crossed through Cranbrook long ago, would be proud.

Cynthia J. Drake is a Mount Pleasant writer who harbors a secret wish to spend the night at a museum.

RECENT VISITOR TO THE CRANBROOK ART MUSEUM?

Tell us what collection or exhibit inspired you.

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UPCOMING ART EXHIBITS

**Soo Sunny Park: "SSVT
(South Strafford, Vermont)
Vapor Slide"**

Through March 17. Wainger Gallery

**Vision and Interpretation:
Building Cranbrook, 1904-2012**
Through March 24. Lower Galleries

**"From Here to There:
Alec Soth's America"**
Through March 30. Main, North
and South Galleries

**2013 Graduate Degree Exhibition
of Cranbrook Academy of Art**
April 21-May 12. Upper and Lower
Galleries and Cranbrook Art
Museum grounds

**Michigan Modern™:
Design that Shaped America**
June 14-Oct. 13. Upper Galleries

GETTING THERE

Cranbrook Art Museum
39221 Woodward Ave.
Bloomfield Hills, 48303 **O**
(248) 645-3323
www.cranbrookart.edu/museum

Pewabic Pottery
10125 E. Jefferson Ave.
Detroit, 48214 **DD**
(313) 626-2000
www.pewabic.org

Thinking how nice and simple your visit to metro Detroit would be if you had a customized online map with only these featured destinations plotted? We agree.

www.visitdetroit.com/features/117-cranbrook-art-museum

IT'S YOUR TURN

You, too, can check out the incredible collection of works in the Cranbrook Art Museum vault during a scheduled Collections Wing Tour.

The website (www.cranbrookart.edu/museum) has a listing of upcoming dates and times. General admission will cost you \$8. Children 12 and under are free, seniors 65 and up are \$6 and students are \$4. The museum is open Tue.-Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.



DISTRICT CODES

- BD** Beyond Detroit
- DW** Dearborn/Wayne
- DD** Downtown Detroit
- GN** Greater Novi
- M** Macomb
- O** Oakland
- WO** Windsor, Ontario

ART BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Cranbrook isn't the only place to get a unique, behind-the-scenes glimpse of art in Detroit. Here are a few not-so-typical, under-the-radar art experiences you should add to your itinerary.

DETROIT ARTISTS MARKET

A nonprofit gallery for contemporary Michigan artists since 1932, the DAM showcases the work of emerging and established artists. Open Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

4719 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, 48201 **DD**
(313) 832-8540
www.detroitartistsmarket.org

HAMTRAMCK DISNEYLAND

What is locally referred to as "Hamtramck Disneyland" is the kitschy collage work of one former General Motors assembly line worker, Dmytro Szylak.

12087 Klinger St. (in alley around back)
Hamtramck, 48211 **DD**

THE HEIDELBERG PROJECT

This "outdoor community art environment" started by Detroit artist Tyree Guyton is a thought-provoking look at the future of Detroit following an era of abandonment.

3600 block of Heidelberg St.
Detroit, 48207 **DD**
(313) 974-6894
www.heidelberg.org

THE ILLUMINATED MURAL

This is a nine-story building dripped with colorful paint, a collaborative project by artist Katie Craig, other artists and neighborhood children.

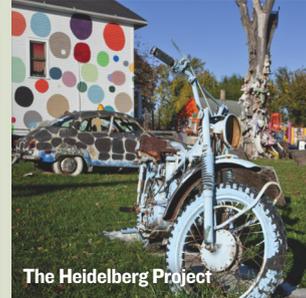
E. Grand Blvd. at Beaubien St.
Detroit, 48207 **DD**

MARVIN SHAOINI



Detroit Artists Market

MARVIN SHAOINI



The Heidelberg Project

BILL BOWEN



Hamtramck Disneyland