



"Progression" by Charles McGee.

For The LOVE Of Art

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.

Photography by Brett Mountain



Joyce and Dr. Myron LaBan in front of a tapestry depicting the flora and fauna of Michigan in its four seasons, created by Mollie Fletcher, head of fiber department at CCS.

Joyce and Dr. Myron LaBan have been “hanging out with the art crowd” for several decades now. Neither studied art in college nor started out with the intention of becoming art philanthropists, but they have made significant contributions to sharing the beauty and healing powers of art in so many people’s lives.

Recently, Joyce was awarded a Special Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cultural Council of Birmingham. The inscription captures her many contributions: “In recognition of and appreciation of the many ways your love of art, your volunteerism and your philanthropy have become woven into this community and beyond.”

Her legacy of art touches some major art projects in Southeastern Michigan. She served on the art com-

mission that put art in the People Mover stations in Downtown Detroit and served as a docent for the Cranbrook Gallery of Art. The LaBans are also active at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center (BBAC), where Joyce served as president of the board. The couples’ name is on an important gallery in the

“Color provokes a psychic vibration. Color hides a power still unknown but real, which acts on every part of the human body.”

— Wassily Kandinsky

BBAC in acknowledgement of their contributions and ongoing support for the center’s mission.

Joyce not only cares about art, she also strives to share it in unexpected places. If you walk through the halls of Royal Oak’s Beaumont Hospital, laden with worry for a friend or loved one, you will find moments of peace and your spirit elevated by the magnificent art she has helped to place.

The Beaumont Art Collection began in 1992 when Joyce quietly gathered a committee of fellow art lovers and philanthropists to convert the walls of the hospital to a place of beauty and comfort for visitors, patients and staff.

They began by identifying public spaces for the placement of art — none was destined for administrative offices, but for common spaces where the broader population of the hospital

community could benefit. Funds for purchasing the art were privately raised; but the hospital, through the Beaumont Foundation, agreed to maintain the donations entrusted to their care.

The committee originally commissioned seven pieces. They invited proposals from artists, specifically Michigan artists. The collection holds pieces created by Charles McGee, Gerhardt Knodel and Gerome Kamrowski, among other renowned artists.

“The project is wonderful for everyone involved. It’s a committee of equals, and I’m the liaison to the foundation,” Joyce says.

Entering the South Tower, the multi-layered installation by Gerhardt Knodel sweeps you in. The three-part, three-story installation titled “The Continued on page 42

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Above: The “Drinking Fountain Surround,” designed by Genevieve C. Sylvia, was made from Pewabic tiles. Far right: “The Echo of Flora Exotica,” created by Gerhardt Knodel, is suspended from the third story of the South Tower of Beaumont Royal Oak hospital. Right: The mylar screen overlaying the flower prints of the multi-layer installation spells the names of 36 innovative physicians.



Echo of Flora Exotica” represents the collaboration between patients and healers. It reflects the way medical professionals nurture human life, allowing it to grow and flourish in an exuberant garden.

A carved Mylar screen, suspended three stories, reveals the garden-like background of flower prints, inspired by Jacques Hnizdovsky’s block prints. The screen cutouts spell the names of 36 physicians whose innovations had a profound effect on medicine, such as Christiaan Barnard, Marie Curie, Jonas Salk and William Beaumont.

Walking through the first floor, you’ll see “Progression,” a black-and-white polychrome aluminum wall sculpture by Detroit artist and 2008 Kresge Foundation Eminent Artist Award winner Charles McGee. The work symbolizes the human struggle to purify our environment of disease and the healing made possible through advancement in medical science. The character of this piece contains the thread of rhythm and energy witnessed in all of McGee’s work.

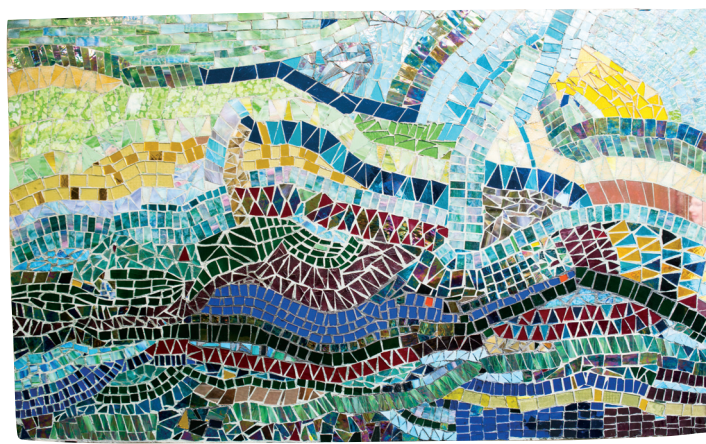
The “Drinking Fountain Surround,” made of Detroit Pewabic Pottery pieces and designed by Genevieve Sylvia, ranks as among the most beautiful designs executed in Pewabic pottery. Joyce says she enjoyed her involvement with Genevieve during its design and creation.

The four Gerome Kamrowski mosaics on the second floor can be viewed from the first floor, but are worth the elevator ride for closer examination. Entitled “Red River Landscape” and “Light Fantastic Blue River Landscape”

“Red River Landscape,” they count as some of the last pieces he completed before his death in 2004. It’s possible to become lost in the beautiful shapes, colors, flow and intricacy he created.

Many studies have shown a direct link between images and the brain’s reaction to pain, stress and

anxiety. Joyce LaBan has known this intuitively for many years. She has spent many years dedicated to promoting healing and spreading the joy and inspiration of art throughout our community. **NS**



“Red River Landscape Luminous Rhythm” and “Light Fantastic Blue River Landscape” mosaics created by Gerome Kamrowski shortly before his death in 2004.