

A 'Basic Diet' and Scarcity of Furniture Fail to Shake Their Convictions

Young Couple Wedded to Art Keep Wolf From Door by Length of a Paintbrush

By MARVIN TIMS
Of the Register-Guard

Art is an indispensable need of humanity. It is part of the soul of a child just as it was a part of primitive man's.

This is just one of the many concepts of art held by a young Eugene couple who paint full time in an effort to keep the wolf from their door.

But Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gilmore, who produce framed oil paintings in an old, virtually unfurnished, dwelling in Eugene, are an unusual couple. They apparently don't place the dollar on a pedestal and certainly don't fear the wolf—even when he glares through the window at them.

Parents of three children, Miriam, 6, Michelle, 3, and Patrick, 1, Robert and Norma Gilmore have been painting for more than a decade, but it was only two years ago that they decided to make art their sole means of support.

Although life hasn't been easy, forcing the family to eat what Norma smilingly terms a "basic diet," the two artists have resisted the urge to raise the price of their oils. They still sell many of their paintings for less than ten dollars.

Robert, who often wears a tam when he works, said last week he feels that "in this democratic age art should be for everyone. Why should art be for just a few?"

"We are making a living while enjoying the wonderful satisfaction of doing the thing we love most. We don't even have a car, but we are happy."

Gilmore, who played the violin for 12 years before he discovered he wanted to be a painter instead of a musician, said art is a basic ingredient of life. "Some day when man goes to the Moon or Mars, he will take a good painting with him to keep from going crazy."

Norma, who obtained a Master of Fine Arts Degree at the University of Oregon, said people tend to place art too high or too low. "Art should be everywhere in man's life. It was, after all, the force that led the cave man out of the dark."

Art, she said, has allowed truth to come down through the ages. "Wrapped like a cotton ball, art was unrolled a little in the great temples of the early Greeks and has continued to unroll down through the era of the Gothic churches, the Renaissance to the present."

While science can "crack things apart, it doesn't put

them back together. Art in its many forms can do this. In a sense, art has been the salvation of mankind," Norma said.

Does the average person appreciate art? "I'm certain he does. I have talked to many people about art and have even gotten some to paint," Norma smiled. "But you must remember that people can't really see the value of art unless they are disposed toward it. You can't see it just by wandering through a museum. It will be there only if you want it to be."

Robert and Norma paint still lifes, outdoor scenes, paintings patterned along classical lines, and so-called abstract paintings.

"But in our abstracts, we have combined realistic elements," Norma said. "In one painting you can visualize a flute, for example, or a wine bottle. Most artists don't combine realism with the abstract, but we are trying to do something a little different."

To make an abstract, she explained, the artist must start with something concrete. "Paintings have to have parts. If not, they will be nothing more than framed wallpaper."

Most people, she said, think of paintings as a process of filling up space. "This is not it at all. You actually make space by taking away and then filling it up. Painting, in a sense, is a form of higher mathematics."

What about color in a painting? Can it, for example, conflict with the colors within a room? Robert doesn't think so. He says a painting will make "other surrounding colors come



BUDDING ARTISTS?—Miriam, 6, (left) and Michelle, 3, daughters of two Eugene artists, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gilmore, try sketching with a crayola. In the background are some of the paintings their parents have completed in recent months.



BIRTH OF A PAINTING—Robert Gilmore, a Eugene artist, works on an abstract painting while his wife, also a painter, watches with interest. The Gilmores say they are dedicated to the proposition that art should be within the reach of every man.

alive. Did you ever see a bird or a flower placed wrong in nature? Of course not. They look beautiful no matter where they are. So it is with a painting."

Although the Gilmores now get along on a low income, they are optimistic about the future. Says Norma: "Art is good for a man and tends to give him long life. And Robert and I can continue to paint as long as we live. Titian lived be-

yond 90 and some of his best work was produced late in life."

Robert, who said he started his painting enterprise two years ago with a three-dollar investment in water colors, mats, and oils, says when you have to sell paintings to make a living, "you will put something into your work that people can understand."

Life and art are closely inter-

woven, according to the Gilmores, but life passes and art remains. It is the only thing that is permanent.

"Art puts order into life that can be contemplated. Any number of things can throw our day-to-day lives into a scramble, but the painting stands unchanged—eternal," Robert said.

Then, glancing at his wife, he said: "In our own way I think we are discovering the truth."

Springfield C of C Endorses Annexation

Directors of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce Wednesday endorsed the March 1 election proposal to annex the region east of Springfield to about 72nd Street.

Robert Smith, Chamber manager, said Wednesday the Chamber will sponsor a newspaper advertisement explaining the annexation measure.

In another action, directors requested the Chamber's transportation committee to make a study of the airport situation in the community.

Smith said the committee will attempt to determine among other things, whether airport zoning might be needed sometime in the future.

Directors also instructed Smith to write to Chamber members, urging them to contact Oregon's Congressional delegation regarding the disadvantages of the Forand Bill.

This bill, now pending in Congress, would amend the Social Security Act by including certain additional benefits, thus raising costs.

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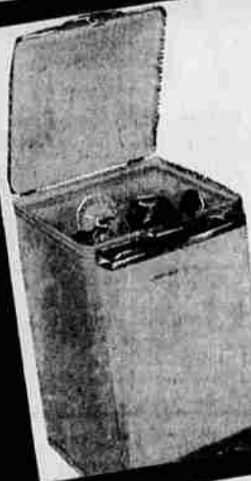
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