

Oregon Notes Vast Increase Of Artists Since End Of World War II

By MATT KRAMER
Associated Press Staff Writer

A solitary figure appeared on a dock at Astoria and began sketching the waterfront. Another was on a coastal headland, sketch pad in hand, and still another beside a highway in Southern Oregon.

Gradually they appeared at places where none ever before had been noticed—beside airports, in rail yards and even on city streets, something was up, and the public should have suspected it, too.

But the artists said nothing, and, since they are not known for their reticence, it is probable they did not realize themselves how big the boom was in Oregon art.

Artists are not much given to keeping statistics anyway, and often seem able to pursue their work only in isolation, which sometimes is a place behind a clump of brush and sometimes is a state of mind.

It is disturbing to minds other than artists, but in this age nearly everything can be measured—land by surveyors, health by insurance companies, and art by supply houses.

It isn't easy, however, to get the measurement of art in Oregon, for artists also have infiltrated behind sales counters. With their minds fixed firmly on other matters, they are vague about statistics.

"Sales of art supplies are up, all right. Maybe 10—no, maybe 30 or 40 per cent in recent years. But there is no easy way for me to determine exactly how much," said one sales head, who instructs art classes in Portland at night.

It was the same story at another Portland supply house,

where the increase was estimated at perhaps 50 per cent in recent years.

But measurements creep in everywhere and a businessman knew how much the sale of art supplies had gone up in the last decade at the state's largest art supply house, Gill's in Portland.

Nine hundred per cent. That means 10 artists behind the bush that used to hide one. No wonder they are beginning to push each other into the open.

Most of the new ones are Sunday artists, who have multiplied as income and leisure time have increased since World War II.

It is the Sunday artist you will find on the coast, squinting at a landscape and drawing lines on a canvas he later will entitle, "Vichyssoise."

But you also will find him, along with the full-time artist, at the art centers that have sprung up in Oregon communities, the Portland Art Museum, the state fair, and even the Portland Rose Festival.

The Oregon Society of Artists is an example of the increase in recent years. The society started with 15 members and no money in 1926. At first growth was slow. Then came the post-war boom. Four years ago the society acquired its present headquarters—a sleek building in Portland's West Hills. Today it has 660 members, 110 of them upstate.

It offers classes and lectures for the amateur and the professional. It is one of the principal headquarters of the Sunday artist.

Art groups have bobbed up all over the state. To name a few of them: The Art League of Grants, Pass, the Coos Artists League, the

Coquille Valley Art Assn., Corvallis Arts Guild, Salem Art Assn., Inc., Snake River Valley Art Assn., Eugene Art Center, Lincoln County Art Center, Yaquina Art Assn., and the Sage Brushers.

There are thriving art programs at Oregon State College, the University of Oregon and other colleges, but the biggest art center in the state is, as might be expected, in Portland.

It is the Portland Art Museum, which was the first art museum established in the Pacific Northwest. That was in 1892. It nearly went under in the depression, and the museum had to appeal to the public for \$5,000 to save it.

Now the museum, occupying a square block beside the South Park blocks in downtown Portland, is on safer ground. It has nearly doubled its membership since World War II, to a total of about 2,000.

It is operated by the Portland Art Assn., which holds to the purpose announced by the founders in 1892: "to make a collection of works of art and to erect and maintain a suitable building in which the same may be studied and exhibited; to develop and to encourage the study of art."

Some 85 persons study art in day classes and 300 in evening

classes there. In addition, 1,200 persons visit the museum weekly. The building, located at SW Park and Madison, is closed only on Monday. Wednesday it is open from noon until 10 p.m., and from noon to 5 p.m. on the other days.

Besides the extensive collection of paintings, statuary and other objects the museum puts on display, the museum has been showing increasing interest in Oregon art.

Max W. Sullivan, director, estimates the museum singles out an Oregon artist for a one-man show on four or five occasions a year. In between, there are exhibitions of Oregon sculptors, print makers and painters.

The next will be for painters and sculptors, Oct. 18-Nov. 16. Entries come from many unknowns. A panel of judges selects those considered worthy of exhibit. The aim is to reward talent with recognition, not to discourage it. Some years up to 75 per cent of the entries reach the exhibit floor.

An example: An ex-shipyard worker took a line of poetry for his theme and with welding torch, a few pieces of metal and five-foot length of bamboo put together a piece that won recognition.

Not all Oregon art is so ingenious, but give it time. At the rate

it is growing, it will capture half the state's ingenuity—in the next few years—and hence half the years.

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BILLY SUNDAY is acting as chairman on the Klamath Agency road construction crew which is building a new 12-mile two-lane gravel road to replace a one-lane dirt road on the reservation that is virtually impassable in winter. The new road will be an all-weather road and starts at the town of Sprague River, ending about four miles north of Beatty. The "chain" in use is actually a 100 foot steel tape. Formerly surveyors used a chain to measure distance, and after the advent of the steel tape, the name chain still persisted. —Nelson Sharp Photo

UNDER KNIFE
NEW YORK (AP) — Librettist Oscar Hammerstein II, 63, underwent an operation yesterday at Doctors Hospital for diverticulitis, an intestinal ailment. A hospital spokesman said his condition was good.

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