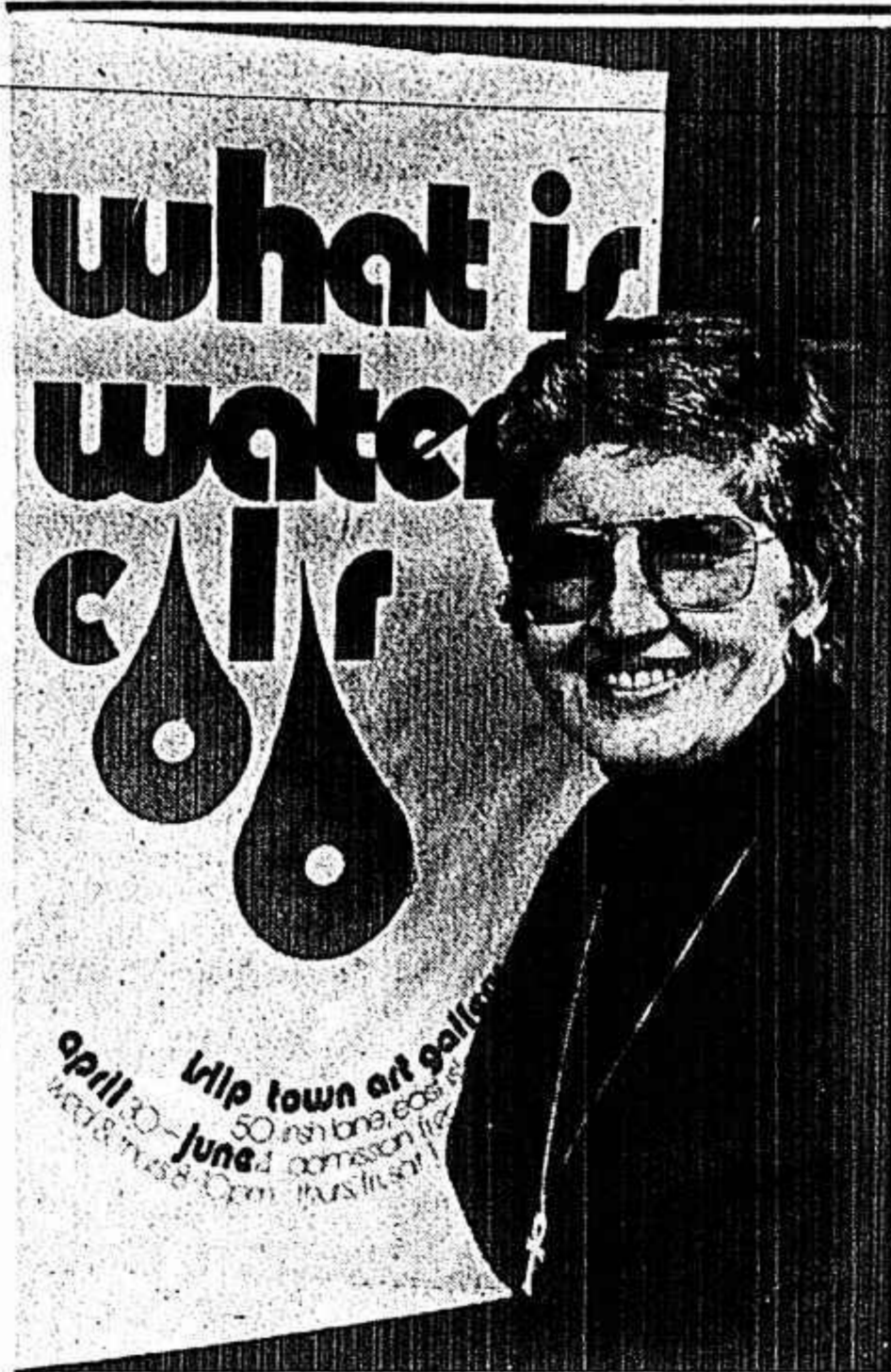


The Arts: Exhibit Of Oakdale Artist's Graphics



TOP GRAPHIC DESIGNER, Florence Bezruczyk of Oakdale poses with one of the many posters she has designed for the Islip Art Gallery.

Looking back at her career as one of America's foremost graphic designers, Florence Bezruczyk of Oakdale remembers a container for Easter chickens. They were pink and made of marshmallow.

At the time the Easter chicken people came to Ms. Bezruczyk and asked her to revamp a candy container, the young artist was struggling to make ends meet. She had no clients and saw none in her immediate future. Yet she refused to handle the account.

"I think I was living on mayonaise sandwiches at the time. That's how bad things were," said Ms. Bezruczyk on Tuesday. "But I had standards of design which I knew even then I could never compromise."

Ms. Bezruczyk, fresh out of high school and not yet aware she was about to begin a six and a half year relationship with the Museum of Modern Art as a MOMA designer, told the world's largest manufacturer of marshmallow chickens that she was overworked, completely booked up and could not possibly fit the company in to her busy schedule.

Then she went back to mayonaise sandwiches until she received the call from MOMA.

At the prestigious museum Ms. Bezruczyk experimented with designs for posters and created graphic title walls for all MOMA exhibits. She also designed Christmas cards for the MOMA collection and was commissioned by Nelson Rockefeller and Edgar Kaufman to design personal holiday greeting cards.

After leaving the museum, she worked as art director of Print Magazine, designed the 25th Anniversary cover for Fortune Magazine and began building up a free lance career at a time when graphic design was America's most vital art form.

The breakthrough in Ms. Bezruczyk's career came when she was hired as design director by Olivetti, a European company known for its sophisticated concern for corporate image. Olivetti was the first corporation whose products were the subject of a special exhibit at the

Museum of Modern Art to illustrate the emerging importance of product design.

At Olivetti, Ms. Bezruczyk handled all aspects of graphic design — from packaging to massive three ton corporate sculptures. Nothing was unimportant or too trivial to escape her discerning and tasteful eye.

"The corporate image at Olivetti was a philosophy — not a facade," said Ms. Bezruczyk. The philosophy of total commitment to excellence extended even to the mailroom where Olivetti's Ms. Bezruczyk designed an elegant form for workers which never left the company's headquarters.

"No one outside the firm ever saw the mail order. But the form was as important to the total Olivetti image as the famous Olivetti ads," she explained.

A student of the Swiss style of design which has become synonymous with modern art, Ms. Bezruczyk says the elements of her aesthetic are simplicity, honesty and an intense dislike for gimmicks. Those elements are what characterize a retrospective exhibit of the posters Ms. Bezruczyk has created as a public service to publicize the numerous exhibits at the Islip Town Art Gallery. The posters will hang for the summer months in the Town Board Room at Islip Town Hall.

In 1972, Ms. Bezruczyk left Olivetti to live on Long Island. She purchased the area's most unusual landmark, the Clock Tower in Idle Hour's Artists' Colony, and has spent the past years renovating her unique home while re-establishing herself as a free lance graphic designer. She is an adjunct professor at Dowling College and a professor at Pratt Institute.

She has received more than 40 awards for graphic design and packaging. She considers the highlight of her career a coveted invitation to join the 200 member Alliance Graphique International — the world's most prestigious graphic design organization. Ms. Bezruczyk is one of only 32 members from the United States.

Ideas: The Last Of The Grand Gestures

By Donald Bond

On Thursday, I got a phone call telling me an old friend had died suddenly in his Westbeth apartment. His name was George Spaventa and, at 60, he was famous enough to be called a "serious" American sculptor in a well-placed New York Times obituary the next day.

On Saturday, I attended a reception celebrating the opening of a summer exhibit at the Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton. The event — star studded enough to deserve the term — was filled with luminaries from the Golden Age of abstract expressionism. Those aging escapees from Manhattan seemed to be having as much trouble as I had comprehending the sensibility of a new, distinctly alien, generation of artists.

Yes, something was missing. And it was my effort to pinpoint the

missing something that made me keep coming back to George. Through some perverse inner logic, the two events are linked inexorably in my mind. In fact, the first event explains the second: Spaventa's sensibility, now gone, is what is missing from the paintings and sculpture proliferating from the pre-1980 brain these days like weeds in a cornfield. Or more appropriately, like tape from a computer.

Which brings me back to a summer night at least 15 years ago when none of the musicians and artists gathered at the Cedar Tavern that Friday had any idea we were about to witness the last of the Grand Gestures.

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It was twi-light, a time to count oneself among a handful of Cedar regulars who routinely ignored the temptation to

relocate in East Hampton for the weekend. Earlier that day, I had spoken to George about two things — the Long Island weekend he was planning with his girl friend and his driving lesson on Monday.

A city boy, Spaventa had just weathered a routine middle age crisis which resulted in nothing more neurotic than an overwhelming urge to finally get a driver's license. I, who had abandoned the subway system for a Pontiac when I moved to a New Hampshire farm in 1960, found myself with technological supremacy, a car and an eager pupil on my hands.

Assuming he was on Long Island, I was as surprised as anyone when the door at the Cedar opened and in walked George.

"Weekend was cancelled," he reported abruptly. "The little b- - - left without me."

The tale finally unfolded. Not an unusual tale, but a universal tale. Love most true had gone sadly awry for George and his lady friend.

After several years of suspended courtship, she had made a final break in an impassioned declaration of freedom and had walked out of George's life that night carrying nothing but the clothes on her back . . . and all of George's paintings. She was headed for their place in the Hamptons.

Seated silently among friends, George dwelled on the unexpected turn in his life. Nothing was said. The drinks were set up again. Still nothing was said.

Then he stood up abruptly, pushed a drink out of his way and leaped toward the door. "I should have learned to drive last

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Theater: Workshop Hosts "Night Music"

by Helene Katz

The Sayville Musical Workshop's final production of this season, "A Little Night Music", opened last weekend to an enthusiastic audience.

The book by Hugh Wheeler was suggested by an Ingmar Bergman film, "Smiles of a Summer Night," which is a six-in-the-round comedy set in Sweden at the turn of the century. The hero, Fredrik Egerman, a prosperous middle-aged lawyer, has married a child bride, Anne, in hopes of reclaiming his lost youth. Anne, who, after eleven months of marriage, is still a virgin, is the love-object of Henrik, her stepson. He, in turn, is pursued by the lusty family maid, Petra.

When Fredrik learns that his former mistress, Desiree Armfeldt, is in town, he seeks solace from her loving arms. He encounters Desiree's current lover, Count Carl-Magnus, a military man who lets his wife, Countess Charlotte, know the number of hours of his furloughs that he plans to spend between her and Desiree.

The resolutions of lovers and liaisons take place at the country home of Madame Armfeldt, mother of Desiree, herself a former darling of a Belgian king.

"Night Music" is lovely to look at, from the moment the curtain opens, when the audience feasts

its eyes on the elegantly-costumed company of players standing before a luxurious red velvet backdrop. Stephen Sondheim's haunting musical score is played and sung in waltz time in a variety of tempos, from the lilting "A Weekend in the Country" to the mellow and popular "Send in the Clowns." A chorus of two men and three women sing out each coming scene, like a musical narrator or stage manager. They are then blended in with the leading characters to give a subtle continuity to the production.

The show was perfectly cast — in looks, voice and acting.

Brent Erlandson played an imposing Fredrik, displaying the proper amount of confusion of a middle-aged man who perhaps was not ready to be at that stage of life. Ricky Lynn portrayed Anne with enchanting child-like illusiveness. Joan Bowman was excellent and in fine voice as the seductive Desiree. Maureen Kashkin's performance as the lusty Petra added easy humor to the show. She was a favorite of the audience. Tom Whittaker ably played the bumbling, naive Henrik and the elderly Madame Armfeldt was acted by Mary Thompson, who also produced the show. Her short philosophies carried through the play nicely,

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LEMONADE IS SERVED — but the subject that Charlotte Malcom has come to discuss is hardly conducive to refreshments. Pictured above are, left to right, Laurie Frost of Patchogue, Ricky-Lynn of Centereach as Anne Egerman and Carol Samela of Commack as Charlotte. Sayville Musical Workshop again offers the talents of local residents as it closes its twenty-ninth season with "A Little Night Music". Final performances are Friday and Saturday evenings June 23 and 24 at the Sayville High School. Box Office open now at Unique Stationers, Grand Union Shopping Center, Sayville, from noon to 5 p.m. thru Saturday. Ticket prices are \$3.75 general admission, \$2.00 students. Call 589-2667 for further information and reservations.

Photo by George Kuntz