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Texture, Variety Abound at Orinda Art Show

By Cathy Dausman



Alex Meckes' origami display at Orinda Library runs through January Photos Cathy Dausman

finds the holy land's ancient architecture and old stones fascinating.

Roland Nunn makes about four rugs a year, using his own dyed and slit wool cloth, and will show about 18 of the 65 pieces he has completed to date. He said he never paid attention to rug making, despite his mother's love of the craft in the 1950s, until deciding he needed a "sit-down hobby" for his retirement. He's been "hooking" now for 22 years. Although he started using commercially available patterns of geometric shapes, Nunn now designs his own landscape scenes. Nunn says designing hooked rugs has given him a better understanding of color.

And Alexander Walchek, 89, who began drawing people, animals, detailed local landscapes, trains, cars, and fantasy inventions at age 3, calls himself an artist, not a cartoonist. His line drawings are a showcase for his wit and appreciation for humanity. Except for the occasional adult course from area art institutions, Walchek is self-taught.

When asked to advise his nearly 80-year-younger co-exhibitor Meckes, Walchek suggested: "Have fun with your art. Be flexible: [be] open to other media, knowing you can stray and then come back to your art and bring something different to it each time."

Travel, humor, whimsy and texture abound in the latest special art exhibit showing through Jan. 2 at the Orinda Library. The diverse display features four local artists, ages 10 through 89, and includes origami, giclee paintings, hooked rugs and line drawings.

One of the four exhibitors, fourth-grader Alex Meckes, got hooked on the Japanese art of folding paper when he was 5. "I really like geometry," he said, explaining that it's "just you and the paper," pointing to a hand-folded flower tower which incorporated a fractal design. He transformed a simple square of solid colored paper - "prints make it hard to find the crease" - into a crane in just minutes, and enthusiastically discussed his inspiration from Bay Area Rapid Folders and the East Bay Origami Convention. Alex's house is covered with origami; he expects to present about 30 pieces of his work.

Fellow exhibitor George Wahbeh, after 26 years in Orinda, will have his first local showing of giclee paintings - artwork reproduced from his original oil paintings. His subject matter is Jerusalem, where he was born and lived for 19 years, before studying art in Sweden. Wahbeh feels his paintings are especially suitable for the holidays, and



Alexander

Self-portrait by Alexander Walchek

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