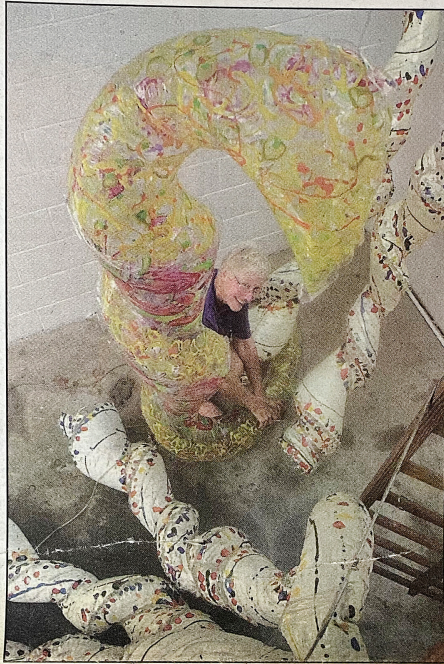


A statue of a girl by artist William Ramage, who used to teach at Ohio State University, is part of the Collingses' collection.

RIGHT: Betty Collings amidst her inflatable sculptures, "Experiment from 1998" in her studio gallery in Upper Arlington.



The Collingses' dining room wall is adorned with a drawing by William Ramage, a former OSU faculty member.

RIGHT: Betty Collings' inflatable sculpture sits on a bench by George Nakashima in the Collingses' living room in their Upper Arlington home.



Photos by KELSEY ROLLINS

Home Art Tour 2000

Collingses offer a wide approach to art experience

By BILL MELVILLE

Upper Arlington News Reporter

At a glance, the living room of Betty and Dr. Ted Collings' home could pass for a modern art gallery.

Having traveled the world and had much experience with regional art during their years in the United States, the Collingses have amassed a collection representing a range of artists, styles and cultures.

The Collingses are originally from New Zealand and have lived in Upper Arlington for several decades. Dr. Collings is a research scientist in the Ohio State University's Department of Material Science and Engineering, and Mrs. Collings is former director of an OSU gallery, in addition to being an artist who has had exhibits around the world.

She has had the chance to show art from around the world and from artists close to home, Mrs. Collings said.

"I like the idea because we have a substantial collection and a lot of artists from the region," she said.

The Collingses' home is part of Home Art Tour 2000, which will be held from 2-5 p.m. Sept. 24. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the Upper Arlington Municipal Services Center, 3600 Tremont Road, through the day of the tour.

New Zealand to New Hope

When the Collingses first moved to the United States, they settled in Swathmore, Pa., and often spent time in nearby New Hope, a village along the Delaware River known for attracting artists. The work of one artist, Japanese-American woodworker George Nagashima, appears in several places around the Collingses' home.

According to Dr. Collings, Nagashima would design the pieces as customers wanted them. Several small tables in their home were built by Nagashima, but the dining room table and server were constructed by Dr. Collings following a Nagashima design.

When a Nagashima piece proved too expensive, Dr. Collings went to a local sawmill in Swathmore, found a few slabs of walnut wood and built their kitchen table in Nagashima's style.

Homemade helix

While the living room contains a wide range of modern art, several of the pieces are made by Mrs. Collings, either from her home studio or are the products of courses she has taken.

Many of Mrs. Collings' inflatables pieces, which are often shaped like helixes, sit in the

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■ Home Art Tour 2000 will be held from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 24. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the Municipal Services Center, 3600 Tremont Road, through the day of the tour.

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room. It was that shape's importance to biology which attracted her, she said, referring to DNA's double helix.

"The spiral was essentially the beginning of life such as sea cucumbers."

Other pieces she has created follow a biological theme, including several shaped like marine life such as sea cucumbers.

Other exhibits she has done in the past have included inflatable helixes up to 60 feet long. She has had exhibits in New York City, throughout Central Ohio and many other places.

While not designed by Mrs. Collings, the wall hanging which appears to be protruding from the wall is a part of an exhibit Kentucky artist Dave Gibbons had at OSU several years ago.

At the time, Gibbons covered the floor of the gallery with powdered paint and polyethylene, then added carpet rounds, concrete and glue. According to Collings, he had not told gallery staff what he was building.

"By that time we were starting to get a little worried," she said.

But when the glue and concrete dried, Gibbons broke it into pieces and built tents out of it in the gallery.

When the exhibit closed, Gibbons gave Collings one of the pieces as a gift and it has been attached to the living room wall ever since.

Near the fireplace sits part of a female torso, sculpted by Mrs. Collings, with the arms, legs and head broken off. According to Mrs. Collings, the piece was originally a standard full-body sculpture she made for a class.

"I hated not doing something with it," she said, adding she might have a bronze made from it in the future.

The Iron Curtain and beyond

The Chinese and Russian displays in the Collingses' collection are on the second floor of their home, but they might as well be half a world away.

A poster of Karl Marx stares back from the wall. Several other posters fill the room, but said Dr. Collings, it is a promotional poster from an exhibit Mrs. Collings arranged with local artists while the couple was in Kiev.

"My science used to take us across to Kiev a lot," he said.

China has been another place the Collingses have traveled, with both Dr. and Mrs. Collings lecturing in their respective fields.

While they visited most of the major cities, the art adorning the walls in the Chinese room is primarily peasant art from Shaanxi Province.

The paintings depict aspects of their daily lives in surrealist tones. The first painting to strike the

eye is one which shows weeping the ponds, a daily ritual in rural China. According to Dr. Collings, the farmers drag nets through their ponds and gather all the fish in the shallow end. From there, the best fish are removed and taken to the markets to sell.

Painting and sculpture by peasants often take a more modern approach than with classically trained Chinese artists, Mrs. Collings said.

"These people are quite different from the mainstream cultural tradition," she said.

Oh shelves in the Chinese room sit more traditional items created by peasants, including Buddhist figures, vases and pots.

"I like the idea because we have a substantial collection and a lot of artists from the region."

-Betty Collings
on sharing art by area artists