Artrain gets 'landmark' graffiti

N.Y. artists hired to spice up gray paint job

By MARSHA MIRI
Free Press Art Critic

PORT HURON — Six graffiti artists from New York invaded the Grand Trunk Western Railroad's train repair depot here Thursday and started four days of work that will turn the exterior of Michigan's Artrain from matte gray to a moving piece of art in a myriad of colors.

"The painting of the train is a landmark," said New York art dealer Joseph La Placa, who represents some of the artists. "The resistance in America towards this art will change now. This is the first legally painted, above-ground train in the world."

In New York, the graffiti artists are viewed as vandals when they apply their designs to the outside of subway cars by night, usually dodging transit cops. Thursday, they were in the unusual position of working in the daytime and being protected from the curious public by railroad police as they paid their art.

The Michigan-based train can take art wherever there is a rail siding. It commissioned the graffiti project to spice up its pop art exhibition inside, scheduled to open at Detroit's Renais-
sance Center siding, March 5. The painting is scheduled to be completed Sunday. The artists are receiving room, meals and a commission estimated at $500 each from Artrain. It's a bargain. For canvas originals, the artists can earn from $1,000 and $10,000.

Artrain Director Daniel O'Leary said Thursday he could not state the total cost of the project.

The artists and their dealers hope the Artrain project ends the debate about the legitimacy of graffiti art. Proponents say it is a uniquely American phenomena and therefore of great merit as peculiarly American, like jazz. Painters say it is cartooning and has no basis in the scholarly tradition of Western art history.

Price of crude oil still falling

OIL PRICES, from Page 1A

ter a global agreement was hammered out.

But Yamani said OPEC, which has been shipping more than 18 million barrels a day, still would demand a share "definitely above 16 million barrels a day." Industry experts estimate that world demand for OPEC petroleum is 15 million to 16 million barrels a day.

In the last 10 days, wholesale oil prices have nosedived primarily because Saudi Arabia, OPEC's principal producer, has been flooding the market in an effort to force Britain to lead a drive among non-OPEC nations to lower output.

But Britain reiterated that it would not cut production. And Ecuador announced that beginning Feb. 1, it would sell as much oil as possible at market prices, formally abandoning higher fixed rates. Ecuador is a member of OPEC.

The glut of petroleum has resulted partly from conservation and fuel-switching that began in the 1970s, when a price explosion led to double-digit inflation, economic stagnation and fears of petroleum shortages. In recent weeks, warmer-than-normal weather in much of America and Europe has depressed demand for heating oil.

OPEC has announced that its oil ministers would meet in Vienna Feb. 3 to discuss prices and production strategies.

Interview ban spurs TV-radio strike

DUBLIN, Ireland — (AP) — Radio and television workers struck for a day to protest a government ban on interviewing members of the Irish Republican Army, Sinn Fein and some Northern Ireland Protestant groups.

Producers, researchers and broadcasting assistants who belong to the Federated Workers Union of Ireland struck RTE, the state-run broadcasting service, for 24 hours beginning at midnight Tuesday, forcing a halt to live programming.

They oppose a section of Ireland's Broadcasting Act, which prohibits broadcasting interviews or statements from representatives of paramilitary and terrorist-linked organizations.

The act was renewed last week for the 13th year.
Lucas makes pitch to local officials

By STEVE SPALDING

Times Herald

Wearing the toga he donned as 3rd Clinton Township officials Thursday night, Lucas County's state's-est governor.

Lucas Mayor Don Darke's top priority is part of a major city-county of the Michigan Democrats association that he would work closely with them.

"It's going to be a tight race," Darke said. "I don't know what the outcome will be, but I'm looking forward to participating in the election."

The local leaders would direct the governor's office, and the mayor would receive the governor's official message.

"I think the state is moving in the right direction," Darke said.

The Michigan Avenue will become a rolling symbol of pop culture this year, thanks to the efforts of New York-based artists. Each New Yorker represents a different style of subway graffiti painting. Two artists who call themselves Graffiti training

The Michigan Avenue will become a rolling symbol of pop culture this year, thanks to the efforts of New York-based artists. Each New Yorker represents a different style of subway graffiti painting. Two artists who call themselves

Graffiti training

New York subway artists bring work above ground

By MARGARET WHITMIRE

The Grand Trunk Railroad Car Shop at 5th and Monroe Street, an active group of people are finding groundswell train cars with new energy.

But for the artists, the railroad cars won't stop these graffiti artists. They are legitimately transforming the vehicles, adding a new symbol of pop culture.

"We're doing it in an effort to save these cars," said one artist. "The cars are valuable pieces of history, and we want to make sure they're preserved for future generations.

Artists have been commissioned to work on the cars, and the projects have been well-received by the community.

Training program pays off in higher wages for grads

By STEVE SPALDING

Students in the job training program in Michigan will receive a higher wage than those not enrolled. The program is designed to help students who are unemployed or underemployed.

The average wage for the respondents who were unemployed or underemployed was $8.55 per hour, while those who were employed had an average wage of $10.55 per hour.

The program aims to prepare students for jobs in the community, and it has already helped numerous students find employment.

Sanilac phone suit rings up $2,442 bill for county board

By JAMES DONAHUE

Sanilac County Commissioner Fred Mischke was charged with an unnecessary $2,442 bill for his phone. The bill was for a missed call, and the county failed to charge the commissioner for the call.

County Administrator John Davis said the bill was an error made by the county's phone service provider, a local company.

"It wasn't our fault," Davis said. "We think the report will be an important step in ensuring that this doesn't happen again."

Sanilac's phone bill is currently $1,320 per month, and the county is reviewing its phone service contracts.
Graffiti isn't art, it's vandalism

It is most unfortunate, indeed disgusting, to see the favorable media attention recently given to the painting of the Arttrain by some imported graffiti artists (Free Press, Jan. 24). It is either naive or unscrupulous to lavish such attention upon perpetrators of illegal practice. No doubt the artists are good, perhaps even excellent. However, the managers of Arttrain have succeeded in legitimizing an anti-social activity that has cost many cities, such as New York, millions of dollars to remove. Does compliance with law and order depend upon artistic content? Does everyone have a right to deface someone else's property (or public property) if the vandal believes his or her art to be socially relevant? It would appear that those associated with Arttrain would answer both questions in the affirmative.

Perhaps Arttrain's board and staff should consider how they would feel if such artists were to devote such activities to their homes or automobiles, or if the graffiti with which they adorned the railroad cars were to be obliterated by other, perhaps not-so-artsy, graffiti placed by other, not-so-talented artists. Would Arttrain then cry foul and call the police, stating that only "arty" graffiti should be allowed?

It is a shame that otherwise mature, responsible adults will legitimize an illegal activity on a vehicle that primarily attracts young students around this country. By setting such an unfortunate example, perhaps it would be fair to require Arttrain to pay for removal of the vandalism that may result from their ill-considered project.

JULIEN WOLFE
Windsor, Ontario

Hiring New York artists to decorate Michigan's Arttrain is a slap in the face to Michigan's artists.

JOYCE NAGEL
Southfield

Arttrain's latest gimmick to attract an audience by having its exterior spray painted with graffiti by New York graffiti artists has to be an all-time low in celebrating mankind's lowest defacers of property in the name of art.

By displaying this train at the Renaissance Center, I'm sure we can expect a rash of spray-paint defacers who have been afraid to display their talents to come out of the woodwork and apply their talents to the available space.

Graffiti artists from New York work on Michigan's Arttrain at a repair depot in Port Huron.

art on every overpass in the Detroit area and elsewhere. The People Mover, if ever it is completed, certainly will be a marvelous canvas for future graffiti competition. To condone, celebrate, glorify and encourage graffiti is unconscionable.

Artrain Director Daniel O'Lear should be informed by all responsible communities that his train is not welcome. How did Arttrain's noble purpose of bringing the enlightenment of art to the people of Michigan become subverted to this abomination?

RICHARD PEARCE
Southfield
Artrain is ready to roll

Carpenter Mark Roegner packs up his bag of tools after completion of work on Michigan's Artrain Friday. Decoration of the touring art attraction began in late January after artists from New York were commissioned to paint the outside of the cars. The work was done at Grand Trunk Western Railroad's train repair depot in Port Huron. Final touches, below, were added at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Artrain is scheduled to roll into Detroit and open its pop art exhibition beside the Renaissance Center on March 3.
They've been working on the railroad

The spray-painted Artrain carries a cargo of Pop art

By Joy Hakanson Colby
News Staff Writer

Don't even mention the word "graffiti" when the Michigan Artrain rolls into Detroit tomorrow afternoon, emphasizing with spray-painted pictures.

"We call them murals," emphasizes Daniel O'Leary, Artrain's executive director, referring to the work of 12 artists associated with graffiti painting on New York subway. After being screened by a jury of art dealers and collectors, the dozen were commissioned to paint the sides of four railroad cars that serve as a rolling art gallery.

What's in a word? Trouble, O'Leary discovered when New Yorkers denied permission for the artists to paint the cars at Grand Central Station, fearing that hundreds of kids with spray cans would follow the example and cover everything in sight with graffiti.

MICHIGAN'S ART community also reacted, with letters and phone calls expressing sentiments like those of Royal Oak art dealer Arnold Klein, who sees a graffiti-painted Artrain as "a kick and puzzle concept."

O'Leary, who signed on as Artrain's director last July, problematizes the problem in semantic. "The word 'graffiti' has destructive, sloppy connotations," he admits. On the other hand, he says, "We commissioned a carefully planned, professional kind of art. We selected young artists and challenged them to do their best."

The public gets its first chance to inspect the hotly discussed murals when Artrain pulls out of the Renaissance Center late tomorrow afternoon. The train has been under wraps in Port Huron, where it was painted late in January, and is now at Selfridge Air National Guard Base outside Mount Clemens, where a new exhibition is being installed.

Detroit is the first stop on a tour that will take in 12 Michigan communities over the next five months.

Each year, Artrain's staff mounts a different exhibition of original art, which

Please see Artrain/100
Artrain A cargo of Pop art

Bart Brat installs Mel Ramos’ 1967 painting “Virna” inside Artrain. Other hanging works include (top left) Ramos’ 1962 “Portrait of Hawkman” and (left) Robert Indiana’s 1963 “Highball on the Redball Manifest.”

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is explained by a slide presentation in the first car. Signs of the Times: Pop and Photo-Realism was selected for the ‘86 show because curator Cynthia Griege believes these art forms paved the way for the murals on the outside of the train.

Standing on an isolated track at Hellbridge, the Artrain is a sight to behold: A riot of color wraps the four cars, making them look oddly surreal in the flat, open landscape.

Suzan Prit’s melange of Wild West and cartoon characters covers the side of one car, coming across as the most assertive, cohesive mural in the group. And she’s no graffiti artist who began her career painting subway trains. Ms. Prit graduated from Cranbrook Academy of Art several years ago and is building a reputation in New York as a painter and film maker. Her Artrain mural was brushied instead of sprayed, giving it a traditional look despite the imagery’s eccentric nature.

ARTISTS LEE and Dondi spelled their names, using giant letters as the center of their designs. Lee’s work is particularly successful, in the way the letters melt into abstraction and then regain their identity. The graffiti artist who calls himself Koor made a picture by spelling out “Artrain” in abstract letters. Delia, Phase II and Vulca did their thing in a so-called “wild style” that translates letters into symbols. Bill Blast combined the Statue of Liberty with a portrait of Martin Luther King Jr. on the American Dream car.

The murals make a lively introduction to Pop Art and Photo-Realism inside the Artrain. Pop art reacted against the high seriousness of Abstract Expressionism during the 1950s and 1960s by celebrating the techniques and images of the mass media, advertising and popular culture. Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns formed the link between Pop and Abstract Expressionism, and both are represented on the Artrain.

OTHER POP artists in the show include Andy Warhol, with his Campbell Soup can and a Marilyn Monroe portrait; Roy Lichtenstein, with his Sweet Dreams, Baby cartoon image; Wayne Thiebaud’s food; Claes Oldenburg’s sculpture of a girl’s knee; and Red Grooms’ double-decker bus. Among Photo-Realists included from the 1970s are Richard Estes, Robert Bechtle, Robert Cottingham.

JOSEPH LaPLACA New York art dealer

“We wanted the Michigan public to see what (these artists) can do on canvas.”

John Baerder, Noel Mahaffey, Tom Blackwell and Chuck Close.

Some artworks in the exhibit were loaned by Michigan collectors, including Florence and Brooks Baron of Franklin, Enid and Martin Packard of Grand Rapids, and Lila and Gil Silverman of Southfield. Museums loaning works were the Detroit Institute of Arts, Grand Rapids Museum, the Whitney and Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Hirshhorn in Washington, D.C., the University of Michigan Museum, the Flint Institute of Arts, and Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art.

Coinciding with Artrain’s visit to Detroit will be an exhibit by the artists who painted murals on the four cars. This show will be installed in a building at 400 Grand River at Times Square and will be open to the public between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. March 4-11.

THE MAN responsible for this exhibit, New York Signs — Graffiti and its Evolution, is Joseph LaPlace of the Gallexa-LaPlace Gallery in New York, who represents the Artrain artists. “I wanted the Michigan public to see what they can do on canvas,” the dealer says.

But does LaPlace call his painters graffiti artists? “No,” he replies. “Graffiti has connotations of vandalism and vandalism belongs to the past.”

So what does he call them? “We call them writers,” LaPlace says, “because their work deals with the evolution of letters as visual entities.”
Graffiti training

The Michigan Artrain will become a rolling symbol of pop culture this year, thanks to the efforts of 10 New York subway artists. Each Artrain car represents a different style of subway graffiti painting. Two artists who call themselves Vulcan and Koor demonstrate a wildly modern motif. The outside of the train is being painted in the Grand Trunk Car Shop on Minnie Street.

New York subway artists bring work above ground

By MARGARET WHITMER
Tribune Herald Reporter

In the Grand Trunk Railroad Car Shop at the foot of Minnie Street, an eclectic group of people are growing around whitewashed train cars with paint cans.

But for once, the railroad cops won’t stop these graffiti artists. They are legitimately transforming the Michigan Artrain into a rolling symbol of pop art culture.

Artrain, based in Detroit and founded 12 years ago, travels through the state every year bringing the latest in artistic forms of expression to schools and communities.

Artrain held a competition in New York and selected 10 subway artists — these graffiti lovers who help make a visit to that city’s subway system so memorable.

Michigan Artrain views it differently. They see the work as one of the few areas that low-income or minority artists could find to express themselves.

“Painting the train is a legitimate way for them to do their best work. It is something they are qualified to do,” said Nan Plummer, Artrain assistant director.

Twelve artists arrived Thursday and six more will arrive tonight, O’Leary said.

The train’s unusual cover will be appropriate for Artrain’s traveling show this year, entitled “Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Photo-Realism in America.”

Grand Trunk’s Car Shop was one of two in Michigan that could handle the task. Grand Trunk is an Artrain supporter and this is the way of helping out, said Ray Kelly, car shop superintendent.

A group of Grand Trunk workers did security, quietly watching the proceedings.

“It’s kind of ironic. This used to be the paint truck where we painted all the cars years ago,” said employee Greg McSweeney.

What also is ironic is these artists’ rocketing spiral to international fame.

While many started spraying subway trains when they were children, they now are represented by art galleries and their work is the hottest trend in European circles.

In America, their style is more controversial, tied as closely as it is with vandalism.

But muralist Susan Pitt, 40, compares the operation to the Works Progress Administration projects in the 1930s, when the government hired artists to decorate libraries and train stations.

Although now internationally known, Pitt said, “This is mass art, rather than an elitist, expensive phenomenon.”

Pitt’s work is a wild mixture of historical and artistic imagery: a herd of roaring horses painted in the style of the American muralist Thomas Hart Benton, or Minnie Mouse painting flowers in the style of one of the first woman artists, Georgia O’Keeffe.


Dennis White, 21, follows a free-form style. The only images he consciously uses are the ones his subconscious mind dreams up.

While painting his first subway train when he was about 13, his work is displayed in art galleries in New York and Europe.

The finished masterpiece will be unveiled Sunday when Michigan Artrain leaves the shop.

Muralists will remain intact — until some other aspiring artist comes along and takes to his proper place on them.
Artrain is canvas for street artists

Bill Blast, the assumed name or "tag" of one of the street artists who painted an exterior section of Artrain — the Michigan-based museum on wheels that opens to the public Tuesday outside Renaissance Center — has gone to unemployment after his career painting subway cars and New York City walls.

"I was this high," he said, measuring off maybe a nine-year-old's height. "I had to express myself. It's kind of the other side of me that got lost in school. It was something we could do and be productive and not harm anything . . . I can touch someone with my work. See these two symbols," he added, pointing to the Statue of Liberty and Martin Luther King which he had spray painted on Artrain, "they are of this day and age.

There is something poignant and universal about Blast's need to speak about his world. His feelings are those of a genuine artist, despite his lack of formal art education. Blast developed his style among his peers, Zephyr, Duster, Dondo, Vulcan, Futura and Lee, by painting a lot of trains when no one else was looking.

But these last few years a lot of people have been looking — intently — at such street art. Some see Blast's work and that of his fellows as defacing public property; others herald it as the newest pure American art style. Some street artists have done Hollywood movie sets, record album covers and backdrops for European fashion shows.

But when you see Artrain sitting on the track in the gray winter landscape, the debate becomes irrelevant. Artrain, graffiti-covered outside and loaded with pop art and photo-realism works inside, is as much a piece of urban American fabric as the Empire State Building.

What these urban youngsters have forged over 15 years is not a language of immediacy, of comic book dreams and color television literacy distinguished by grassroots guts and a stick-ball sense of adventure.

The different works on Artrain clash just as they might on a subway, where compositions are limited by the space and time available before someone else sprays them on.

ON ARTRAIN, the evolution of a graffiti style is traced. Lee's work is typical of early forms, where the artist's "tag" was used as motif in a block image. Dondo evolved this tag into a subtle, handsome image where his name is filled with the colors of an exotic, desert landscape. Wild style, the frenetic overload of complex colors and letters, reaches aerosol ecstasy in Vulcan's car, where the letters explode into a psychedellic haze of emotonal expression.

"Wild style is the most elite form of spray paintings," said Vulcan. "I practice to do it better all the time. I have total freedom when I paint, to do what I want."

Part of the appeal of this art style is that it's has been, so far, impossible to stifle. Authorities at Grand Central Station were unwilling to bring the Artrain there because they felt it legitimized vandalism. The best of these street artists, however, see their work as a way to beautify blighted neighborhoods.

INSIDE ARTRAIN, the exhibition of "Pop Art and Photo-Realist Art" is contemporary fine art that uses commercial and pop art as its sources. It is a polished, more refined commentary on capitalist society than graffiti.

A snow shovel by Marcel Duchamp, the modern master who opened fine art to the possibilities of street art, is the first object in the show. Claes Oldenburg's transformations of a lipstick, clothes pin or clavichord into giant sculptures are scrutinized through models, photographs and prints. Larry River's appropriation of advertising images are made lush as graffiti. Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol — all the masters of pop art are represented.

Photo-realists Richard Estes, Robert Bechtle, Audrey Flack and Chuck Close, who took everyday subjects beyond the realism of the camera, have good works on the train. It is a predictable but solid survey show, a basic introduction to these art forms of the 1960s. It is a shame curator Cynthia Grig didn't take the exhibit a few steps further with perhaps some more original, provocative juxtapositions.

What could have been a new look at older art ends up a tame accumulation of the same old stuff making the same old connections: Here's an Oldenburg giant lipstick. Here's a diner shaped like a giant hot dog. See how the two match — traditional high art using images of popular culture. Oldenburg deserves more. So does the general public.

Artrain will be open at Renaissance Center Mar. 4-11, at Frankin & St. Antoine; noon-6 Mon.-Fri.; 11-7 Sat. and Sun.
Graffiti goes legitimate, and Detroit lends a hand

The art exhibition at 400 Grand River is called *Evolution of Graffiti*, with an "X" drawn through the word "graffiti." This "X" is crucial, for it suggests that we shouldn't dismiss these 30 works by 12 artists because of a pejorative label.

As *graffiti*-spattered paintings have gained international currency, artists and critics have scrambled to develop a name for them. "Graffiti," with its connotations of vandalism, doesn't really fill the bill. So the organizers of the exhibition, which is being held at the Whitney Museum of American Art, have come up with a new name: "Evolution of Graffiti." This name is more apt, as it reflects the evolution of graffiti art from its origins in the 1960s to the present day.

The exhibition features works by well-known artists such as Keith Haring, Barbara Kruger, and Jean-Michel Basquiat, as well as emerging talents. The works range from murals to sculptures, paintings to installations, and reflect the diversity of graffiti art.

The exhibition is open to the public, and visitors are encouraged to interact with the works. The organizers hope that this will help to break down the barriers between the art world and the city of Detroit.

BUT THE "graffiti" stigma persists: When Artrois announced in 2000 that he was going to create a large-scale graffiti mural for the city of Detroit, many were surprised. Artrois, who was known for his "graffiti" murals, decided to use a different name for his work, "Evolution of Graffiti." This name is more apt, as it reflects the evolution of graffiti art from its origins in the 1960s to the present day.

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**Merrill Lynch Weekender Pops Series**

**Patti Page**

Songstress Patti Page is known worldwide for her highly successful recordings -- her Tennessee Waltz has sold over 30 million copies.

Patti Page is back on the scene, with a new album of songs that she's been working on for the last two years. The album features a mix of old hits and new material, and it's sure to please fans of all ages.

Patti Page will be appearing at several venues across the country, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Detroit Opera House, and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Tickets for these events are available now.

Join the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Patti Page for a wonderful evening of popular music.
Artrain: A Unique Tool for Community Arts Development

by Deborah Jahn

Over its fifteen year history, Artrain has been a dynamic and effective tool for community arts development and education. Artrain began in 1971 as a novel method for delivering art to a wide audience, many of them in communities without museum facilities, while at the same time involving a broad spectrum of the community in the arts. The train, with its on-board audio-visual introduction to art and self-contained, climate controlled galleries, has been able to bring quality art works from national collections to any community with a railroad siding and a willingness to organize volunteers. The Artrain staff supplies materials and assistance in structuring and carrying out the tasks necessary to insure a successful Artrain visit—site preparation, fund raising, promotion, etc. Artrain also provides the host community with an art education program complete with exhibition-related filmstrips and handbooks for classroom teachers and volunteer gallery guides.

Artrain has been tremendously successful in stimulating arts involvement and education in the communities it has visited. Nearly two million people have come on board Artrain in over 230 communities located in 26 states. Many of the visitors are first-time museum goers who may have been intimidated at the prospect of visiting a big-city museum but are intrigued by the idea of visiting a train in their home town. Half of the visitors have been school children who tour the train on field trips. Local artists have come on board in each community to do live demonstrations in the train’s studio car along with Artrain’s two artists-in-residence. And in each town the train has visited, the many people who have worked to make the visit possible—from the volunteers who bring in shrubs to beautify the site to the business owner who provides a sound system for the preview party—all come through the train to view the art and take pride in their accomplishments.

Many communities continue to reap the benefits of Artrain’s visit long after the train has gone. A great number of Michigan’s community arts councils grew out of the enthusiasm and organizational know-how generated by an Artrain visit. Artrain has also been the catalyst for artist-in-residence programs and annual arts festivals. Many train depots have been renovated as a result of a visit by Artrain. In some cities, the train has been used as an attraction to draw attention and crowds back to the heart of the city as part of a downtown revitalization plan.

The 1986 tour is providing fourteen Michigan communities and eight non-Michigan communities with a special opportunity to publicize and promote the arts. This year’s exhibition, “Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Photo-Realism in America,” contains paintings, prints, and sculptures by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, and other well-known artists of the nineteen-fifties, sixties and seventies. But this year as much attention is going to the outside of the train as to the inside. Artrain commissioned twelve of New York City’s best “subway artists” to paint murals on the exterior of the train. The dazzling designs have been a focus for media attention and have generated much excitement and record crowds in each community the train has visited.

The 1987 tour promises to be a blockbuster as well. In honor of the Michigan Sesquicentennial, the train will spend its entire March to November season touring all sections of the state. Inside, the train will feature highlights of the art and architecture from Michigan’s own internationally acclaimed Cranbrook Academy of Art. The outside will again be painted with designs selected for the sesquicentennial.

The application process for Artrain host communities will begin in May, 1986. When preliminary applications will be sent to arts and civic organizations throughout the state. Communities will be selected on the basis of geographic distribution and the ability of the host organization to involve a broad cross-section of the community in a well-organized visit. To receive more information on Artrain or the Sesquicentennial tour, communities should call Deborah Jahn, Director of Community Relations, at (313) 871-2910 or write Artrain, 316 Fisher Building, Detroit, Michigan 48202.

Artist Suzan Pitt combined images from fine art, Walt Disney, and super-hero comic books in creating a mural for the outside of Artrain.

Detail from “Dreams,” one of the twelve murals covering the exterior of Artrain.
Pop art and photo realism

Artrain '86 brings New York subway art to Michigan

By Martha M. Loestron
staff writer

Artrain has started off a new season with a spectacular dash of color both inside and outside of the nation's only art museum on a train.

"Monkeys by young inner-city artists make the train easy to spot from quite a distance. New York subway art of the highest degree gives one a pop art impression of America," said a passenger.

For the past five years, the Artrain has made its debut in the city of Detroit and this year's opening reception on Monday evening, March 3, showed a special excitement in perhaps the train's most unusual exhibition ever.

"I know this exhibit was a long time in coming," commented Joan Hartsook of Farmington, a trust officer for the Artrain with Comerica Bank Detroit.

"I've been impressed with what I've seen...we're off to a great season," she said. Hartsook also admitted that the new exhibit is likely to be controversial.

IN ADDITION to the extravaganza of subway art on the outside, "Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Photo-Realism in America" brings visitors into the glossy world of commercial imagery and commonplace objects.

One of the first exhibits to be confronted as one rounds the corner into the exhibit is a Brillo box. From that moment on, the world of today takes on new meaning with a variety of artistic conceptions that few have seen before.

It's a good thing that a seven-minute program on the forerunners of pop art and the art and culture of the 50s, 60s and 70s warms one up before the impact of Andy Warhol's symbol of clean pots and pans. And, the Brillo box is on display courtesy of its owners, Lila and Gil Silverman of Southfield.

"My husband and I were on the committee that planned the current exhibit," explained Lila Silverman. "We met with the artists in New York when we had the original meeting to select the graffiti artists."

Lila Silverman admitted that she expects some folks to be turned off by the exhibit, but uses her own personal...
Artrain gets new look

Continued from Page 1

philosophy to justify the value in Artrain '86. "Life is a risk... the exhibit will be controversial, yet fascinating."

HER SON, Paul Silverman, 19, is excited as his parents of the current collection.

"The art on display is stuff you live with. It's really excellent art and very precise work. I have a small art collection and I'm considering buying a small piece of avant-garde art. You buy art because you like it," he emphasized. He's really been impressed with New York artist Allan Revulis's train painting outside of "Aerosol Ecstasy".

"There's a real art to it. The letters are very intricate and it's amazing how he's able to get such depth with the letters."

Inside, besides the pop art focusing on the manufactured symbols and popular images of everyday life, there's a large display of color transparency photographs of pop sculptures too large to fit inside the gallery.

Two gallery cars have a collection of paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures by America's best-known pop artists and photo-realists on loan from major American collections such as the Whitney Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C.

Included in the exhibit are Roy Lichtenstein's print "Sweet Dreams Baby" and "Cartoon Balloons," both done in the style of comic book art; Robert Bechtle's five-foot high oil painting " 40-Poster," which resembles an oversized family snapshot; and "Campbell's Mushroom Soup Can," another Warhol exhibit. There are 40 more works of such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg and Chuck Close.

ROSANNE SCHLUSSM, a Birmingham fashion designer, grows when surrounded by the pop art works.

"I love these things...it's like visiting old friends. Part of the experience is that you look at the world, but don't really see it."

"I think it's great (this exhibit). There will be people this train will reach that will never have seen anything like this in their lives."

Linda Lyles Daniels of Southfield looks at Artrain from another point of view, serving as Ameritech Publishing Corp.'s representative for exploring the possibility of the Troy firm being a corporate sponsor.

"I think it offers a unique perspective on American art that isn't available. There's really no other collection like this," she commented, while surrounded by a particularly huge canvas called "Strawberry Tart Supreme."

According to the exhibit notes, "food is often the subject of the traditional vanitas painting, symbolizing the transience of material things."

THE AUDREY FLACK original, done in 1974, uses reflective surfaces and air-brushed technique of acrylic on canvas to achieve a startling mouth-watering reality of the art. It's sure to make both big and little kids hungry as they near the end of the usual 45 minute tour of the train.

In the last exhibition car, the Helen W. Milliken studio, local artists and craftspersons will have the chance to join Artrain's staff painter and ceramist in demonstrating their skills to visitors.

Artrain's Detroit appearance was made possible in part through the support of Hudson's. The store group annually contributes over $1 million to community-based arts organizations and human service programs in the 30 communities which the stores serve.

"The Artrain provides a unique mobile art experience," says Richard A. Cascio, Hudson's Store Group Vice President. "Hudson's is pleased to sponsor the Artrain's primary 'whistle stop' in Detroit as it begins its 1986 tour that will run in Michigan from March through August."

ARTRAIN RUMBLED on to Charlotte after the March 4-10 showing in Detroit and headed towards the northern lower peninsula.

Residents of the greater Detroit suburbs will get a chance to view the pop art on the train's sweep back in June with expected stops in Flint and Pontiac.

Artrain has visited more than 250 communities in 38 states, ranging from populations as small as 600 to as large as three million. Artrain was founded in 1971 by the Michigan Council for the Arts and has been administered by its own non-profit corporation since 1975.

Funding for Artrain comes from public and private grants, corporate and individual donations, fees from communities visited, and sales of items on-board. Railroads donate the services of engineers and crews to move the train, and provide guidance in scheduling and repair.
Artrain ’86 brings New York subway art to Michigan

By Martha M. Losstrom

Artrain has started off a new season with a spectacular splash of color both outside and inside of the nation’s only art museum on a train.

Martha M. Losstrom, art critic for The Detroit News, visited the New York subway art of the Artrain project, a traveling art exhibition that has been on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and now is being featured in Detroit.

Losstrom was impressed with the variety of artists represented on the Artrain, including well-known names like Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, as well as up-and-coming artists.

The exhibit consists of 16 cars, each decorated with a different artist’s work. Losstrom noted that the diversity of styles and themes on display is a testament to the power of public art to engage and inspire people.

Losstrom also highlighted the significance of the Artrain project in bringing art to a diverse audience, particularly in cities like Detroit where access to museums and art galleries can be limited.

"The Artrain project is a great way to bring art to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to see it," Losstrom said.

Losstrom ended her article by encouraging readers to visit the Artrain exhibit in Detroit and take in the art for themselves, describing it as a "must-see" experience.
Artrain Exhibit Is a... Surprise To Some

By Susan Collins

LOWELL — Ten-year-old Brian Cook had never been to an art museum before and, being a "pretty good" artist himself, didn't want to wait any longer than necessary when he heard the Artrain was coming to town.

Although his class plans to tour the train Thursday, Brian rushed over Saturday afternoon with his friend Jeremy Clore shortly after the portable gallery opened its doors.

The boys were in for a surprise when they saw what artists of the 1950s, '60s and '70s considered to be art.

An Andy Warhol print of a Campbell's Soup can, a four-foot vinyl light switch, and a sculpture of Mickey Mouse with movable ears greeted visitors who strolled through the exhibit. One of the boys' favorite pieces was what looked like a miniature bus made of cardboard, complete with passengers.

"I didn't think it would be so much fun," Jeremy said.

"I liked all of it," Brian said.

The boys were among hundreds of people Saturday who toured the Artrain, a five-car train that has been bringing art to small and large towns throughout Michigan and surrounding states for 15 years.

The train will be open to visitors today and Monday from noon to 8 p.m., and Tuesday through Thursday from 3 to 8 p.m.

This year's show — a collection of 52 paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures — focuses on pop art and photo-realism (the reproduction of photographs).

The train, which is funded by the Michigan Council for the Arts as well as by private and corporate donations, visits approximately 25 communities a year between March and November, displaying its exhibits at no charge.

Lowell is the Artrain's only Kent County stop this year. From there it will go to Mt. Clemens.

Alecia Maxey, the Artrain's assistant manager, acknowledged that this year's show of contemporary art has raised more than a few eyebrows, but said that in general it has been popular among the people who have toured it.
Artrain will roll into Manistee on July 4

By RENEE DZIEWIT-COOMBES

Visitors of Artrain should find "a funloving visual surprise, a real delight" says local artist Dale Johnson, a member of the Arts Connection that is bringing the art museum on wheels to Manistee during the National Forest Festival.

The Arts Connection, little more than a year old, targeted this project as the main gift to Manistee County for the 1986 year, said president Sheri Wild, who along with a volunteer steering committee have been working for months to bring Artrain to Manistee. The Michigan Council of the Arts is a co-sponsor of the Detroit-based Artrain.

Artrain is composed of three gallery cars, two housing a museum exhibition, a studio car for live demonstrations by local and traveling artists. This year's Artrain exhibit, "Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Photo Realism in America," features a variety of works by artists who made use of the techniques and imagery of mass media advertising and popular culture of the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Splashes of dazzling bright colors will adorn Artrain inside and out, in keeping with the Pop Art theme, the exterior of the train has been painted with murals of young, inner-city artists. "It's such a delight to see all the color, the train mural are the largest collection in the world," said Johnson, who also is a professor of art. Johnson operates the Grey Raine Gallery on River Street.

"Artrain gives people of all ages an opportunity to see first-hand, some very fine art," Johnson said, "and should remind us of the origins and kind of delights of popular society. And also to help us look at ourselves in an enjoyable light.

"We are really excited to have a chance to bring people in from all over the region to come and see and enjoy Artrain."

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'funloving visual surprise'

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Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sherron Weiderman said the Artrain has enabled the chamber to expand activities for the Forest Festival. "We have tried to expand the festival to include cultural events and the Artrain is one of the best opportunities we have to draw a new audience to the festival activities," she said.

Manistee County Transportation system will provide shuttles to the Artrain from parking lots along Memorial Drive. The Artrain will be located at the west end of the bridge, and will be open to the public from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Those needing a ride to Manistee, can contact Dial-A-Ride for pickup times and routes. There is no admittance charge but a small donation is requested.

Local artists will also be showing their works on the Artrain as well as demonstrating their techniques. Johnson is coordinating the local visiting artists, who so far include Paul Slichter, a clay artist; Mida Hudson, water color artist; Julie Scott, water color artist; Sue Picarello, pottery; Leah Spencer, wearable art; Stewart Wolf, clay artist; Tammy Harst, carving; Dianne Simmons, pottery.

"It will be a fun-loving visual surprise," said Johnson, "so when you enter it will be a delight to see all the color ... the young spirits should really enjoy it, it will be great for me to take my kids and walk through the train together, and have some fun — Artrain is a really special.

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By RENEE DZIEWIT-COOMBES

Article from 1986 Artrain Tour
News-Advocate, June 26, 1986
Manistee, Michigan

Wild said bringing Artrain to Manistee is a way to expose the community to the arts, including the young. She said she hopes the Artrain serves as a catalyst for more art events being brought to Manistee. Currently the Arts Connection is striving to develop the Performing Arts Center in Manistee.

Last year the Arts Connection brought River Street. "Alure with the Arts," along with a student's exhibition as the contribution to the Forest Festival.

The last time Artrain visited Manistee was over a decade ago. "I hope the interest in the arts continues to snowball in Manistee, and at this point it looks like it will," she said, noting the large amount of volunteers from the area working on the project. About 90 volunteers will serve as gallery guides on the Artrain, from July 4 to July 8, from service groups, and arts students from the area high schools. Serving on the steering committee are Sheri Wild, Gary Draheim, Doug Fairies, Colleen Walker, Bonnie Swiderski, Betsy Faye, Ronald Steinberg, Lena Becker and Dale Johnson.
Look what's roaring back

A year removed from its darkest hour, Arrain brings its most successful tour ever to the Heritage Festival

By HARMEN MITCHELL
CHARGEABLE

Covered with Rust-o-blem (yes, Rust-o-blem!) like the subway cars of New York, a particularly grandiose Arrain pulled into Ypsilanti's Depot Town station last Saturday. But the cars weren't vandalized in the dead of night; they were painstakingly crafted by some of New York City's finest "wild style" graffiti artists. They have reached the point where they no longer dodge the third rail and the police to follow their muse. The commitments to create works to be seen in broad daylight instead of on dark subway platforms were rare treats for the likes of Hunt "Wheat" Gardner, Susan "Pit" Lee, Leo "Quak" Lemieux, and Deutsch "White," and artists who go by only one name: Kil and Xeron, Vulc, Kicr, Phase, Pash, Delta, Zepphi, Duster, and Delto.

The bold (and controversial) stroke of having the train covered with what would be a crime in other cities symbolizes a major change the Arrain has gone through in the last year. In February 1986, after 14 years as an in-house outreach program of the Michigan Council for the Arts, the train was in deep financial trouble and, as a result, creatively dead. A Council investigation found that Arrain had been chronically mismanaged and "less than sustainable" in reporting its financial operations, Arrain's executive director resigned, and the Council suspended its $80,000 annual appropriation.

But the train seems to have found a home in Ann Arbor. Once Daniel O'Neary, recipient of four advanced degrees from the University of Michigan, got the job as executive director, all the pieces fell into place.

Aiding with a staff largely populated by Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti residents, local musicians stringing Sam Dunitz's Place of Ann Arbor, the Sticky Diner, and Great Lakes Federal Savings are providing support. Ronald Weber, chairman and chief executive of McKinley Properties, is Treasurer of the Arrain board. With the aid of other local organizations, including Chelsea Milling Company, the train is "here, back on track and more successful than ever," as O'Neary puts it. "All we have to do now is find a place in Ann Arbor to store the train." It is currently housed, when not in use, at Southridge Air Force Base in Macomb County.

But it is more than a little fitting that, though it is now administered from Ann Arbor, the return of the Arrain to the area is linked to this weekend's Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. After all, the train's purpose, message, and mission is "outreach," to bring art out in theory and practice; and the concept of a gallery to communities that have no regular access to such work. The combination of the work of the famous, the up-and-coming, and the chances that Dersevich has been exceptionally successful. Add to this the fact that one car contains artists at work, and the concept is almost too good to be true.

Founded in 1971 by the Michigan Council for the Arts, the train has been a nonprofit corporation since 1975, soliciting the aid of railroads around the country. In its time, it has visited 258 communities in 38 states and, O'Neary says, has been "the most successful outreach program of any kind in the country." Inidentally, when the Arrain visits, everyone is invited to visit it. - It's barrier-free and there is no admission charge (although a small donation is requested, and they sell T-shirts).

The exhibit touring in the train's three gallery cars during the current run is "Signs of the Times: Pop Art and Post-Realism in America," an ambitious collection including works by Richard Serra, Chuck Close, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Warhol, and others.

See ARRAIN, B2
still least a "Dreams" is a styli- "Hermitage," a 1927 "Marley*'s (Continued) Whether the train is continuing its most successful run ever (as many as 20,000 visitors in six communities), O'Leary and Co. are looking ahead. Next year is Michi- gan's sesquicentennial, and they're trying to find a theme as dramatic as this one. If you've got an idea, get on board!

Eastern Michigan University presents Atrain as part of the 1986 Ypsilanti Heritage Festival. It is open to the public for free guided tours from noon to 8 p.m. today and Saturday, and noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday. For more information, call 482-6371.

The train's staff visits towns to help city councils in areas that have no access to knowl- edgeable professionals in the field. And the bottom line, of course, is the depersonalization of the art and something beyond the ken of anyone without a degree or that infallible "artistic sensibility" (lastly suspect as a euphemism for "frig- wack").

Keeping the train on the tracks has never been easy (and a sixth of its funding comes from the Michigan Council) and staff people are constantly seeking help from railroad lines and the cities and towns they visit, so after O'Leary succeeded John Hofmann, he tried to come up with an idea for this year's exhibit that would truly catch the eye. The results are the vibrant, enthusiastic, passionate paintings that now cover the train cars, but accomplishing it wasn't easy.

Originally, O'Leary wanted to have the cars painted by the artists on their own time--New York's Grand Central Station, New York was horrified. "No one in any public capacity, from the mayor's office down, wanted anything to do with the idea," O'Leary says. In New York, graffiti and car-paintings are widely viewed as vandal- ism and perfect examples of the in- ability of the mayor, the police, and just about any other public ser- vant you'd care to name, to control crime. Needless to say, permission was denied.

So, O'Leary turned to Michigan, and Michigan said yes. At the Fort Huron train yard, the staff and security people agreed to keep the yard open beyond normal business hours for the artists, and the community, rather than worrying about a sudden influx of New York street kids, put them up and made them comfortable.

Some of the artists did entire sides of cars by themselves, while others paired up and did cars to- gether. Some of them took as many as four 14-hour days to finish, and the results are breathtaking.

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