

LOCAL

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— Yan Sun

Art professor at Muskingum College who has followed Wyeth shows all across the nation, but was seeing the "Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures" exhibition Sunday for the first time.



■ **UP CLOSE.** Art teacher Laura Connelly takes a closer look at the detail in Andrew Wyeth's "Black Velvet," which is on display as part of "The Helga Pictures" at the Canton Museum of Art.

Make room for Helga

Andrew Wyeth exhibit opens at Museum of Art

By LISA REIGOSKY
Repository Living Section writer

CANTON — Football was not the only attraction drawing people to Canton Sunday.

Watercolorist Lois Sturrock of South Euclid and Perry Nye of Hartsgrove drove south to see the most prestigious exhibition ever displayed at the Canton Museum of Art.

"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures," opened to the public Sunday. The traveling exhibit features 70 of Wyeth's 240 works portraying his neighbor and secret model, Helga Testorf.

Known mostly for his pastoral scenes of rural Pennsylvania, the revelation of the Helga Pictures, especially the many nudes, caused quite a sensation in 1986. He had spent 14 years devoted to his subject.

"Her face — it's hard to describe an emotion on her face," said Sturrock, who could see signs of pleasure in the slight smile on her lips. "I just like his composition."

North Canton Middle School art teacher Laura Connelly, who attended with her husband, Dan, appreciated the pencil sketches and unfinished paintings.

"I like the way you can see the work in progress. The color is even more subdued than what you see in books. That's what he was about," she said.

Jayna Kinder and Edward Rainsford of Canton attended. Although he had never heard of Wyeth, Kinder said a customer at their business, Coco's Cafe, told them they should not miss it.

"And she was absolutely right. It's phenomenal," Kinder said.

He was taken by Helga's beauty, especially the different colors in her eyes, shown in "The Prussian," and the softness of her face in "Crown of Thorns."

"Phenomenal, that's all I can say, phenomenal," said Kinder.

Yan Sun, an art professor at Muskingum College, has followed Wyeth shows all across the nation, but was seeing the "Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures" exhibition Sunday for



■ **ART ON DISPLAY.** Jack and Sandy Mulhofen of Silver Lake gaze at Andrew Wyeth's "Overflow," from "The Helga Pictures," on display at the Canton Museum of Art through Sept. 19.

the first time.

Sun first saw Wyeth in his native China, where Wyeth is extremely popular.

"That show was not at the national museum in Beijing, but a smaller gallery in southern China," he said. "People were flying in from all over China to see it."

"If this show (Helga) were to be put in the national gallery, I guarantee you more than a half million people would view it," he said. "Chinese people like his work very much. They have very much respect for his art."

Brent Payne, an art student at the Columbus College of Art and Design, made the trip from Columbus for the show's opening. He said he has been a fan of Wyeth's for about 15 years.

"This is my first time seeing any of his works, let alone the Helga series, so it's pretty exciting," he said, adding, "I'm familiar with the work, but seeing it in person is awesome."

Payne was most interested in Wyeth's dry brush techniques with watercolors. He said he was most impressed by the little things — for instance, the texture of her hair and the fur on her coat in "Sheepskin," a photo of Helga huddled in a heavy coat.

"How disciplined he had to be to get such details in the work," Payne said.

David Ward of Hudson has been a Wyeth fan for a long time. He knew of the Helga pic-

tures several years ago, but this is the first time he has seen them in person.

"They're even more impressive live, and they were impressive just looking at pictures of them," he said. "It's amazing the detail you see when you look at them closely. He has the power to capture an essence."

Dustin Bernhardt of the Virgin Islands moved slowly from one painting to the next, taking off his glasses and putting them back on. He planned to spend the day at the museum, looking "until they throw me out."



■ **INTERPRETING THE ART.** Laura and Dan Connelly of Malvern discuss the detail in the paintings from "Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures," which opened Sunday at the Canton Museum of Art.

Andrew Wyeth The Helga Pictures



■ **APPRECIATING HELGA.** Bob Liebersperger of Canton views one of the nudes on display as part of "Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures," which opened to the public Sunday at the Canton Museum of Art. The exhibit runs through Sept. 19.

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An artist and boat builder, Bernhardt appreciated the abstract nature of the pictures.

"There's a lot you can read into it," he said. "Step back and blur your eyes, and it's no longer a naked woman — see

the shapes."

"I thought I'd be standing in a long line to see them," he said, noting the small gathering of art fans. He added, "Everybody says (Wyeth) is being overshadowed by the Hall of Fame week

end, but these (nudes) are so transitory compared to his contributions to American history."

Staff writer Jan Kennedy contributed to this report.

"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures"

WHEN: Through Sept. 19.

WHERE: Canton Museum of Art, in the Cultural Center for the Arts, 1001 Market Ave. N.

HOURS: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

ADMISSION: \$8 adults, \$5 for senior citizens (62 or older) and children ages 6 to 12. Children 5 and younger admitted free. Museum admission is free on Tuesdays.

INFORMATION: Call (330)

453-7666 or visit

www.cantonart.org