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Diamonds

Exhibit features sculptor's work

Millard Sheets Gallery will display pieces by Swedish American artist Carl Milles.

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By Munira Syeda / Special to Inland Valley Times Millard Sheets Gallery at the Pomona Fairplex will showcase Swedish American sculptor Carl Milles' work in February. Milles, who studied with Auguste Rodin, is famous for his exquisite fountain sculptures he created in the 1930s through the 1950s. His masterpieces include "The Fountain of Faith," in Falls Church, Va., which has at least 21 figures.

"The chance to see a sculpture exhibit, particularly a traditional exhibit, doesn't come along that often," said Christy Johnson, curator at the gallery.

Forty bronze sculptures and 20 drawings by Milles will be on display at the opening

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Milles will be on display at the opening reception 4-6 p.m. Feb. 24. Keynote speaker will be Staffan Carlen, director of Millesgarden in Sweden. After his death in 1955, Milles' home was converted into a museum called Millesgarden. A local sculptor, Betty Davenport-Ford, who observed Milles' work in the 1930s and 1940s, will also be present to answer questions. A range of Milles' sculptures will be on display, from the early Impressionist works similar to Rodin's style, to sculptures with Greek mythological characters, to later projects that highlight spirituality and death. Other works include whimsical characters such as mermaids and dolphins. The exhibit will also showcase some of Davenport-Ford's pieces and feature a class on bronze casting.

Milles taught at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Detroit from 1931 to 1951, where Davenport-Ford was a student. His work is on display at the Rockefeller Center and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. His work is more popular in the Midwest where he was commissioned for public projects such as the Falls Church project, Johnson said.

"He's very well known. This [exhibit] gives the West Coast a chance to get to really know Milles and his work," she said.

Johnson said she hopes that the exhibit will serve to educate the public,

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especially young people, about sculptures, she said. The gallery encourages visits from junior high and high school students. School tours and hands-on workshops will be available Tuesdays through Fridays.

A donation of \$5 is suggested. Group tours are free. Gallery hours are 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays. The exhibit ends March 31.

For information: 865-4560 or www.fairplex.org

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