

New Art Center Director Here Sees Character, Identity in Every Painting



Photo by Newman, staff photographer

WHAT IS A PICTURE?—Each member of the Joseph Ishikawa family may have his or her own answer, but its merit rests on character, states the new director of the Sioux City Art center.

Mr. Ishikawa posed with his wife Olivia, holding the infant Kimi, and their other three children, Bruce, 6, Jesse, 4, and Chiyo, 3, at the center.

INTANGIBLES take form and the strange becomes familiar, visiting with Joseph Ishikawa, new director of the Sioux City Art center, and the delightful young family accompanying him here from Des Moines.

Art, especially the kind that comes and goes with exhibitions and once in awhile remains to enliven homes, is a thing that you find him from other intended pursuits, you learn, listening to the story of this quiet-spoken gentleman, born in California and arrived in Sioux City via New York, Tokyo and Lincoln, Neb., as well as Des Moines.

Mr. Ishikawa intended to be a writer. He still is, to some degree, but one subordinated now to museum work. He is not a painter, but rather a knowing person to whom pictures and similar media are a part of a broad conception of life, reached by all art.

Art has a common denominator, Mr. Ishikawa pronounces with assurance which he defines; in regard to pictures, as meaning "that they have life and identity of their own, apart from that of the painter."

"It is dangerous," he affirms, "for a museum director to have strong likes and dislikes or to recruit them to influence judgment of trends, some of which are important not so much in their present development, but in their potential influence."

Such — and the most important movement now in that regard — is abstract expressionism, which although "not fruitful" now is a trend in which the director says he expects may come important painting.

Mr. Ishikawa's basic is "catharsis," he adds, with paintings either "good" or "bad" rather than condemned or lauded because of the school to which they may be assigned.

And in painting, as of writing, he insists that the foremost goal is "to have something to say."

One of the major attractions at the Sioux City Art Center to the new director is the existence of the Artists group.

"No matter how big a center is, the program would be meaningless without the existing force of such a group of painters," he insists. "And the quality of the work here is remarkable," he credits.

Also, the impetus to paint, which the active exhibition of the program in the past few years is one directed by the development of area centers.

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At Center, it is well located, Mr. Ishikawa analyzes. The fact that people have an opportunity to see as well as to contribute to the exhibitions here is important, too, he adds.

Supporting organizations contribute tangibly to this development, Mr. Ishikawa says.

Not that art is a matter for galleries only.

"The comic strips are the best barometer of culture in our country today," Mr. Ishikawa states, and "most good motion pictures also are good works of art."

That art is for everyone is a family premise too with the Joseph Ishikawas, of whom there are six: Olivia, the director's wife; Bruce, 6; Jean, 4; Chiyo ("Daughter of a Thousand Generations"), 2; and Kimi ("Your Happiness"), 3 months.

Mr. and Mrs. Ishikawa laugh when they speak of their first acquaintance and early marriage.

"We had to marry off my best friend, whom I was dating, first," she confesses.

Daughter of Professor

Olivia is the daughter of a professor at Concordia college, Seward, Neb., where she was graduated. But she was still in school when she met her husband.

In 1942, Mr. Ishikawa became an education at the University of Nebraska; from 1949 to 1953 he was assistant director of the Art gallery of the University of Nebraska, and from 1946 to 1951, curator there.

The couple were married in Denver June 11, 1951; remained in Lincoln for a brief time, but went to Des Moines that same year and resided there until their recent arrival in Sioux City.

July 29, 1919, in Los Angeles; received an A. B. degree from the University of California, where his interests included wrestling — he won three letters — and activities of the International Relations club. He took graduate work at the University of Nebraska; at the Institute for Religious and Cultural Studies, New York; at Cooper Union, New York, and Keio university, Tokyo.

He was curator and assistant director at the Des Moines Art center.

Active in Organizations

His Des Moines activities included also the Des Moines Film council, the Torch club, the voters assembly and other committees of the Des Moines Adult Education council, Film Classics committee, and Des Moines Art forum of which he is a past president.

In Lincoln Mr. Ishikawa similarly was active in the Lincoln Artists guild and was a co-founder of the Friends of Chamber Music and founder of the Social Action committee.

He is editor of Palette, official publication of Delta Phi Delta, national art honorary fraternity, and has authored articles in the Art Digest, American Speech, The Iowan and newspapers of various cities.

Wife Former Teacher

Mr. Ishikawa is a member of Delta Phi Delta; the American Association of Museums, Midwestern College Art association, and American Association of University professors.

Mrs. Ishikawa, who was born in Brighton, Colo., October 28, 1927, is a former teacher at Lutheran schools in Nebraska, California and

Idaho and was a substitute teacher in the Des Moines public school system.

The Ishikawas are affiliated with Calvary Lutheran church, Leeds, and live at 1526 27th street.