

“Theater Deities’ Entry Into Detroit In 2014”:

Comments by artist Oscar B. Oscar on the second version (April, 2014)

11 April, 2014



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1. General background.

The title resembles that of the great painting “Entry of Christ into Brussels, in 1899”, by James Ensor. Both paintings have masses of humanity in an intense urban scene, but the two compositions are not close. Ensor’s work is a vicious satire about politics of his time. Mine is more an appreciation of Detroit’s merits and my wishes for its future in education, business and community. This is a time of ferment. I

distort buildings, the geography of the city, colors, and proportions. Within the masses are public figures, good, bad and otherwise. Dramas about politics, the vibrant arts scene, economic fortunes of the city and the spirited citizens color my impressions of Detroit and where could be going.

The Theater Deities loudly proclaim the needs for personal responsibility, integrity of our public figures, strong investment in education and recognition of local creativity.

The trumpeter celebrates the humanities and sciences. The magic square on building near the trumpet player is known as the Melencolia Magic Square. The sum along each row, each column, each diagonal and each corner quadrant is 34. This magic square appears in the 1514 etching Melencolia, by Albrecht Dürer. This year appears in the bottom row of the square and is exactly 500 years before 2014. The angel sitting near the upper right edge of the painting (near downtown Dearborn) is inspired by the angel in the Melancolia print. Those who love and hope for Detroit do feel melancholy at the many setbacks in recent history. In contrast, the timelessness of beautiful ideas is constant, whatever the fortunes of the moment.

There are other art historical references. Figures in Harlequin costumes (colored lozenges and triangles), representing pure or innocent emotion. The Byzantine images of Russian clerics go with the nearby Greek eastern rite church. Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo hover above the Detroit Institute of Art, repelling the Orr-Wolves who hunger after the treasures inside. Between the two Russian clerics' heads is a view of the Heidelberg Project, a significant work of contemporary art.

2. Systematic account of the many images in the composition.

A grid has been imposed over the second state of the 48x60 inch painting. Each square is 6 x 6 inches. Rows are labeled A through H and columns are labeled 1 through 10. Squares are labeled A1, A2, ... , H10.

Below are notes on the imagery, square by square. There was a similar set of notes for the first state. Images in the first state remain in the second state.



Some commentary, square by square A1, A2, ... , H10.

- A1. Chicken Rider. Such figures occur in eastern European art.
- A2.
- A3. Wiggled lady with mask greets inhabitants of a Renaissance Center tower.
- A4.
- A5. Greco-Roman helmet on the drummer.
- A6. Top of swaying One Detroit Center building
- A7.
- A8. Giant Harlequin figure, with a hat proclaiming Integrity and a slap stick labeled Responsibility.
- A9.
- A10. Chicken Rider.

- B1. Chicken Rider. Russian Cleric.
- B2. Russian Cleric. Belle Isle.
- B3.
- B4. Ghostly female peering into the Renaissance Center.
- B5. The great drum, bearing the Theater Deities' logo and announcing the current theme: Detroit in year 2014, a time of ferment.
- B6. Head of the trumpeter, who promotes excellent areas of knowledge and the creative and performing arts. View of Windsor, Ontario, riverfront.
- B7. Worthy Kym Worthy atop the Guardian Building, pointing down to the great crowd below in front of the Theodore Levin U. S. Courthouse.
- B8.
- B9. Glimpse of Dearborn.
- B10. Head of a great angel, representing melancholy. The angel gazes on a copy of the famous Melancolia magic square in C8, D8. These images are from an Albrecht Dürer engraving dated year 1514, exactly 500 years before the time of this painting.

- C1.
- C2. Heidelberg Project indicated between the two Russian Cleric heads.
- C3. Male and female Harlequin figures dance on the Bling Casino, promoting the messages "Drink Sensibly" and "Gamble Sensibly". Distressed visitors exit the building, fleeing the demimonde into the night or to the refuge of the church.
- C4. Kissing buildings.
- C5. Spirit of Detroit statue, view of Hart Plaza and riverfront.
- C6. Joyous young child, wearing clothes with a curly D, borne aloft by Hart Plaza fountain.
- C7.
- C8. The Corktown Cork. Michigan Train Station.
- C9. Mexican Town. The Whitdel Arts organization.
- C10. Downtown Dearborn. The National Arab American Museum. Former Dearborn city hall, being converted to artist space. Mosque.

- D1. Female giant dancer.
- D2.
- D3. Bling Casino.
- D4.
- D5. Female centaur image on red tights of the Drummer Deity. People Mover car.
- D6. Statue group located at Campus Martius. These statues represent Detroit Families of many types. Several females are gravid with glowing fetuses. The uppermost statue gestures towards Hart Plaza fountain and demonstrative large child.
- D7. Media interviewing public figure Mortimer Snerd. Live corruption acts are observed by the public, by the media and by the justice system. Zajac Rated and associates looking a bit gloomy.

- D8. Police escort convicted public figures alongside the Theodore Levin U. S. Courthouse.
- D9. Immediate Past Mayor David Bing passes the basketball to Doggone Hopeful Mayor Mike Duggan.
- D10.

- E1.
- E2. Male giant dancer encouraging wayward gamblers and drinkers to consider visiting a house of worship. Eastern Rite Orthodox Church.
- E3. Demimonde.
- E4. Spirited crowd.
- E5.
- E6. Observers of the convicted, the suspected and the corrupt are ordinary citizens, representatives of organized labor and retired city workers; members of the media and justice department agents.
- E7. Both gawkers and concerned citizens watch the live corruption show.
- E8. Paprika juggles airports and airplanes, what fun! Figaro begs anyone within earshot to vote for him.
- E9. Floating formation of visiting Chinese businesspeople, eager for opportunities.
- E10. The blissful lady says 我们可以买很多的工厂! (Wǒmen kěyǐ mǎi hěnduō de gōngchǎng!). This translates from Chinese to “We can buy very many factories!”.

- F1.
- F2. High-flying Detroit public school teachers on their way to teach. Mies van der Rohe buildings in Lafayette Park.
- F3. Performers from local dance group, flying high.
- F4. Teacher flying into high school.
- F5. Detroit Opera House. People Mover car passing by.
- F6. Local jazz group in entertainment district.
- F7.
- F8. Another casino. The number of Stooges was greater than three.
- F9. Alonso del Arte, Derek Weaver and Bryant Tillman commune near Studio 4731 by the Creative Corridor.
- F10.

- G1. Detroit Eastern Market. In Hamtramck, the Islamic Center and the Planet Ant Theater. A January, 2013, performance of Lambert Street spills outside the Planet Ant building.
- G2. The Muscular Industrial Center, providing workspaces for creative people.
- G3. College for Creative Studies. Scarab Club. The Charles Wright Museum.
- G4. A few members of Black Women Rock.

G5. Detroit Symphony Musicians boogie on the street. Fox Gryphons grope their way back to their perch.

G6. Wayne State University campus. Teaching, learning, transforming.

G7.

G8. Midtown Entrepreneurs dance on air, in ballet formation.

G9. Aaron Timlin lounges by Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit.

G10. A lady investor and a gentleman inventor discuss products and marketing.

H1. Royal Oak and Ferndale areas. Lawrence Street Gallery, where this work was first exhibited in March, 2014. Members of the community talk and make plans.

H2. Cathedral of the Most Blessed Scarament.

H3. Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo hover over the Detroit Institute of Arts, beating back the Orr-Wolves who threaten to take the art treasures inside.

H4. Rackham Building. Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit.

H5. Workers get started on the Woodward Avenue light rail project.

H6. Synagogue along Woodward Avenue.

H7. Religious leaders discuss their missions.

H8. Old cemetery.

H9.

H10. Glimpse of singer Eminem near 8 Mile Road.