

# IMPRESSIONS

AT THE JAMES R. THOMPSON CENTER

## Illinois Artisans Exhibit Paintings

The Illinois Artisans Shop, Chicago, showcased the work of 41 Illinois Artisans Program members in an eclectic painting exhibit June 20 through July 1, 2005, in the atrium of the James R. Thompson Center, Chicago. The different styles shown, from realistic to abstract, revealed unique and individual approaches to the painting process. This was part of a biannual series of Illinois Artisans Program exhibits that showcase two-dimensional art, including painting, drawing, photography, and printmaking.

Virginia Kondziolka of Chicago exhibited *Intimate View: Mental Tentacles*, an abstract watercolor. Kondziolka used the wet-on-wet technique to achieve soft washes on watercolor paper. The washes were juxtaposed with active brushstrokes to achieve a mix of textural effects. Normally painting in a more controlled manner, using crisp edges of color, Kondziolka expanded her repertoire of techniques by using a looser approach to paint application.

Yelena Klairmont of Highland Park exhibited *Ravine Drive View, Summer*. In this large oil painting, an unfinished brick structure in the foreground is the focal point. Klairmont painted a beautiful, secluded beach location in Highland Park that she often visits. The isolated quality of the landscape is apparent by the unfinished brick shelter and the rarely used picnic tables. Her painting captures the wild, mysterious feeling of the deserted beach and the unfinished, ramshackle look of the structure.

Beth Shadur's watercolor painting *Hand to Hand* uses the hand as a symbol of the artist-creator, healer and gateway to the soul of the female artist. Shadur's paintings are created in mixed media on paper, using saturated color and intricate natural forms of plants, birds, and decorative patterns and symbols that swirl in an abstracted space. Her most current work investigates the image and symbolism of the hand, especially as it

is used in cultures to express the idea of healing and as a source for protection, prayer, and unity. She has explored her own Jewish heritage through her work, and in particular her current series called "Tikkun Olam" (Hebrew for "heal the world"). In Jewish culture the hand is a symbol of luck, protection, and karma.

The work of Virginia Kondziolka, Yelena Klairmont, and Beth Shadur represents the exhibit's high quality and unique approaches to painting. The artwork was available for purchase through the Illinois Artisans Shop in the James R. Thompson Center. Over 10,000 visitors viewed the exhibit, and nine

pieces in the exhibition were sold. Many other viewers inquired about the work and expressed their appreciation of the show.



**Virginia Kondziolka**  
*Intimate View: Mental Tentacles, watercolor*