

Ford Motor Company
News Bureau
New York World's Fair
Flushing 52, New York
Telephone: 888-4532
(area code 212)

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MANY WORKS OF FINE ART IN FORD WONDER ROTUNDA

A visit to the Ford Wonder Rotunda at the New York World's Fair is in many ways like a stroll through a fine arts gallery. The Ford Pavilion offers a collection of fine works of art -- from miniature carvings to gigantic murals.

Included are paintings by artists from each of the 50 states -- some commissioned by Ford especially for the Fair, others taken from the Ford Times Collection of Fine Art.

People who love art find something to delight them at every turn in the Ford Pavilion.

As they enter, they behold a three-dimensional mural with sand and stone surface, telling in semi-abstract sculpture the legend of man's great ideas and accomplishments from the dawn of civilization.

This is Ford's symbolic treatment of the World's Fair theme, "Man's Achievements In An Expanding Universe." There are sculptured designs to memorialize paleolithic man, the Sumerians, Phoenicians, Etruscans, cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, advances of the Industrial Revolution and the inventions of modern man.

The mural was designed by John Hench, long-time associate of Walt Disney, who created the entertainment and exhibit features of the Ford Pavilion. Hench is art director of Disney's WED Enterprises, Inc., of Glendale, Calif. His design was executed by sculptors at Display and Exhibit Company, Detroit.

Meanwhile, artists with air brushes scaled the heights of the Ford Pavilion -- tall as a seven-story building -- to paint a mural 200 feet across as a background for the prehistoric portion of Ford's "Magic Skyway" ride. The mural, with dramatic mountain and sky effects, forms a backdrop for flying reptiles and dinosaurs that roamed the earth ages ago.

Sculpturing this menagerie -- all animated by Disney -- was a work of art in itself. Former Yale art professor George H. Snowden, whose works are seen in New York, Washington, and many capitals of Europe, joined with WED's Blaine Gibson to head a team of Disney sculptors who formed the immense figures out of clay. Plaster casts were made of their finished works and the figures were molded in flexible plastic for animation.

Artists again were called into play at Disney's WED studios to color the prehistoric figures as research dictated. Meanwhile, assemblage artist Glenn Michaels worked through the winter in a garage studio to produce a mosaic mural for the "hospitality" area of the Ford Pavilion. Its abstract design is a representation of the 50 states and U. S. territories, and of the locations of Ford Motor Company dealerships throughout.

Michaels' revolutionary technique makes use of imported ceramic tiles set edgewise in a special adhesive. The result is a three-dimensional effect that is emphasized by special lighting.

Another semi-abstract mural, designed by William Schmidt of Detroit, depicts the role of the modern automotive dealer in his community. Entitled, "Hometown, USA," the 40-foot-long mural is a line drawing in blue of images seen in a typical community, with raised reproductions in full color of 22 civic, fraternal and youth organizations that might be supported by the average dealer.

Artistic talents are pronounced in the International Gardens, one of the first displays to be seen by Ford visitors. In forming miniature houses from around the world, for example, artists used the wooden end of their brushes to outline stones in walls and streets. More than 700,000 feet of fine wire went into tree branches and twigs in the miniature "gardens." Realistic "grass" was formed by brushing velour cloth with green paint and glue.

As Ford visitors leave the International Gardens, they are carried on gliding ramps past a series of tableaux formed by paper sculpture. Another Disney design, the tableaux depict with humorous animation the early days of Ford Motor Company and the auto industry.

Next to appear are stylized paintings of famous people from the fields of entertainment, sports, industry and politics, representing "Five Decades of Progress."

A novel form of assemblage is the tower of glass made up of windshields, air vents, windows and other items manufactured in Ford's glass factories. The tower rises to the Rotunda ceiling from a base of green glass fragments chipped from the base of a glass furnace.

After guests complete the "Magic Skyway" ride, they disembark in an area where Ford stylists -- artists in their own right -- have been given free rein in developing futuristic shapes that defy the very name "vehicle."

Some of the backgrounds for these displays, called "styling atmospherics," were executed by Betty Conn, of Birmingham, Mich., following the designs of the auto stylists.

One is a mobile formed of brass, reminiscent of a Gothic sculpture. Another is a background of abstract wrought aluminum shapes with crater-like peaks and valleys.

The Ford Times World's Fair collection of art includes a painting from each state in the union, done by a native artist. Several of these paintings were commissioned especially for the Fair, and will join the touring exhibits of Ford Times art.

###