

# CHARLES BRYAN RYAN | A Retrospective of a Curious Mind.

In the spring of 2003, Rhoda Ryan placed a telephone call to Sandra Miller, owner of the Sunbird Gallery in Bend, Oregon. She was wondering if Miller could come out to her home and help her price some art work for a garage sale. Mrs. Ryan, age 97, was recently widowed and wasn't sure what to do with all the paintings her husband had created and carefully stored around the house.

Expecting to find a few amateur drawings, Miller was amazed to find a plethora of framed paintings. When asked about their origin, Mrs. Ryan explained that for 30 years, her husband Charles Bryan Ryan was Professor of Architecture & Allied Art at the University of Oregon (1946-1974) and this was some of the work he had created during that time frame.

Miller immediately knew that this was a 'body of work to be exhibited en masse', not to be tagged for a garage sale. Miller mounted an exhibition of Ryan's work at the Pickney Center for the Arts at Central Oregon Community College in Bend, Oregon in October of 2003. Soon after the close of the exhibit, Miller contacted MJ Koreiva, Executive Director of the Coos Art Museum to see if the exhibition could travel to CAM.

Upon further research, Koreiva discovered that Ryan served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army's (now famous) 10th Mountain Division stationed in the Italian Alps from 1942-1945. During that time, Ryan managed to secure a position as an art instructor at the University of Florence, Italy, where he led soldiers on tours of the local churches and lectured on paintings, sculptures and architecture of Italy. Ryan returned to Oregon in 1946 where he joined the staff at the University of Oregon as a Professor of Fine Arts. While teaching, he was able to create and exhibit art. Ryan exhibited his work at the Seattle Art Museum, The Lincoln County Art Center, the University of Alberta, Canada, the University of Oregon's Murray Gallery and galleries in San Francisco, CA. The Portland Art Museum honored him with a one-man show in 1954.

Ryan's works on display were created during his 30-year tenure at the U of O. These works range from geometric abstractions, to figurative, to Cézanne inspired landscapes. In the 1960's, Ryan struck up a friendship with R. Buckminster Fuller - over five hundred of Ryan's 3-dimensional works based on Fuller's theories on synergetic-energetic principals, are housed in the Fuller Archives at Stanford University. Copies of letters between Fuller and Ryan are also on display

Upon retirement from U of O, the Ryans relocated to Bend. From 1975 until he passed away in November of 2001, Ryan was a member of the 'Over-The-Hill-Gang' - an active group of senior citizen snow skiers who were seen daily on the slopes of Mt. Bachelor. Ryan, who was an avid outdoorsman, holds a patent on a combination camping tool for back-packers and campers. Some hand made teaching tools as well as hiking and skiing gear also accompanies the exhibition.