

# Bob Lane's ARTSWORLD

By BOB LANE

"We are made of star stuff." That claim opened the unusual series of 13 segments called simply *Cosmos*.

Produced by Carl Sagan, KCET in Los Angeles and the BBC, *Cosmos* brings together the best of special effects, imaginative use of the medium of television, and the intelligent script delivered by host Carl Sagan.

Dr. Sagan is well-known to many people as an astronomer from Cornell University, as an author — his *Dragons of Eden* is an excellent and readable book about human consciousness and its dim beginnings back there in Eden — and as a popularizer of scientific concerns. He was also a NASA director involved in the Mars shuttle-craft operation. His credentials are impressive and his enthusiasm catching.

Quasars, black holes, super novae, pulsars; we "saw" all of these phenomena on the first show as our imaginary space trip through the cosmos proceeded from the edge of the universe to our own home planet — earth. The trip was a marvel of sight and sound; a light show of color and order giving us some indication of the conceptual status of present theorizing. On the "space ship of imagination" we zipped through space-time at an impossible speed to gain a glimmer of the vastness of space.

Zooming through clusters of galaxies the camera returned on occasion to the human head, to Sagan as pilot, to remind us the trip was speculative, was of the imagination.

"This is a world of wonders," says Sagan, while reminding us that ours is but one sun in the 100 billion trillion stars in the sky. "Why should this modest planet be the only one with life?" he asks. "There must be other planets on which matter has grown to consciousness" is his speculative answer.

On the next part of the journey we were in Alexandria in 300 B.C. at the then-largest library in the world. We watched the intellectual discovery of Eratosthenes who had speculated back then that the earth was round and had a circumference of about 25,000 miles. How he came to reason that way is one of the most exciting examples of how the intellect can work.

*Cosmos* is on Channel 9 Sunday night. It is worth watching. Get all the family together and watch television at its very best: intelligent, exciting and oh, yes, educational.

This show reminds us of the awe, the wonder of this world and of the excitement of the organizing human intellect. After watching it one wonders why anyone wastes time with key-bending magicians and the like, except as light entertainment.



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"One is never tired of painting," wrote William Hazlitt in *The Pleasure of Painting*, because you have to set down, not what you knew already, but what you have just discovered. There is a continual creation . . ."

One gets a sense of "continual creation" when visiting the studio of Nanaimo artist Leo Kushino, and for a couple of reasons. First, the activity: Kushino is working on several large canvasses and small canvas boards all at once. Pallettes are everywhere, cans of paint stacked on shelves, brushes, hunks of wood, knives, tubes — all the materials needed are stacked neatly around the studio/living room where the artist's easel commands the room.

Kushino is an amazing man. He came to Nanaimo just over a year ago with his young wife. At 60 years most people are settling down; Leo Kushino was immigrating to Canada from his native Japan where he had painted and taught. He has been painting for about 40 years now and during that productive time has had several one-man shows in Japan. We are lucky to have him in Nanaimo where we will be able to see his first one-man show in Canada. About 60 pieces, mostly oil on canvas, will be presented at Rutherford Mall from May 2-7. The works on display have all been completed since October, 1982, while Kushino has been in Nanaimo.

With the able assistance of translator Noriko Van Antwerp, I was able to talk with Leo Kushino recently about his work. He told me that he used to be obsessed by abstract painting and produced works to show, or try to show, what his interior feelings were.

Lately he has been more interested in doing scenic works in a representational style. He told me that he chose Nanaimo because it offered a quiet and clean place with the opportunity for immersion in a new culture. He was drawn to Vancouver Island by the rugged beauty of the coastline and surrounding islands. Working from sketches, in his studio, he has already brought to life the house and barn from the Tamagawa University farm in Cedar. Leo said: "Since arriving I have been overpowered by the beauty of this Island and found myself returning to a scenic representational style to celebrate what is around me in my new country."

Sitting in his studio I look up at a large abstract piece of Chinese characters (signs) in dark blue on a blue-green background next to a large oil showing water and rock. Both have lots of movement — the force of the water seems to be present in the painting eroding the rock, tossing a large log around.

The new subject matter includes structures, roads and other man-made objects as well as trees, water, rock — the natural images that catch the eye and display the power of nature.

Leo Kushino's work has a steady craftsmanship and an interesting fusion of styles. Those of you who like your paintings to look like something recognizable will be pleased. And those who seek the painter who expresses an interior vision through the landscape will not be disappointed. "There is a continual creation . . ."