

ARTnews

TALK

Starting with Volkswagen

"Sometimes our guests do a double take when they see the painting," says Keith L. Reinhard. "They say, 'Isn't that where you work?'" It is. Reinhard works at DDB Needham Worldwide, the world's fourth-largest advertising agency. He is chairman and chief executive officer.

Reinhard is talking about a painting of the building on Manhattan's Madison Avenue that is the agency's headquarters and that he and his wife, Rose Lee, commissioned from the artist Max Ferguson. The painting hangs in the living room of the Reinhard's New York apartment.

"I was at the Gallery Henoeh [which represents Ferguson] in SoHo and admired his work," says Rose Lee Reinhard. "I decided to buy a present for Keith's birthday. We arranged to get together with Max in Keith's office."

The painting depicts what appears to be a typical Madison Avenue scene. On a sidewalk garbage can is a sign for McDonald's. On top of a cab is a plug for the New York State Lottery. On the back of a bus is a message for Bud



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Tipper Gore unveils Max Ferguson's service poster, as the artist looks on.



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Keith and Rose Lee Reinhard with their painting by Max Ferguson.

Light. A phone booth carries an ad for Michelin tires. In the foreground is a Volkswagen.

But, when you walk past DDB Needham headquarters, you won't find any of those signs, although you might happen upon a Volkswagen. "Volkswagen was the founding client of the agency in the 1950s," says Keith Reinhard. "All the others are also clients."

"Since people equate Madison Avenue with advertising, I got the idea to put into the painting in a subtle way some of the products they advertise," says Ferguson.

The Reinhard's have works by a number of other artists. "We're not big-time collectors, but it's fun," says Keith Reinhard.

Meanwhile, Ferguson's work can be seen not only at the Gallery Henoeh and on the imaginary bus but also on the side of hundreds of actual buses in about 20 cities throughout the United States, thanks to a commission from Transit Display, Inc. To promote awareness "of an issue of social importance," the company asked him to do a poster with the slogan "Mental Illness Should Not Be Faced Alone." "It's a portrait of a figure overlooking the reservoir in Central Park," says Ferguson.

MILTON ESTEROW