

Hanley

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The Art Donor Was Once a Belly Dancer

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SAN FRANCISCO—The Manets, Renoirs, Picassos and works by a score of other famous painters and sculptors are in the galleries, but all eyes are on the woman dressed in a green and orange chiffon caftan and gold turban who is standing on a bench.

Mrs. T. Edward Hanley, a former professional belly dancer, is giving one of her lectures on the million-dollar collection of more than 170 art works she has given the

M. H. de Young Memorial Museum here. After a tumultuous preview Tuesday night (5,000 people were invited, fire guards kept the crowd inside to 6,000, and by the end of the evening the head count stood at 9,300), the exhibition opened to the public Wednesday.

For the first week, Tullah Hanley is conducting tours each afternoon through the four galleries where the exhibition is on display. She talks on sex, diet, exercise,

how to marry a millionaire and does high kicks to demonstrate her fitness. She also talks knowledgeably of art. Comments from the overflow crowd, half of which is seated on the floor, range from "She's really crazy, isn't she?" to "What a groove!"

Mrs. Hanley, the widow of a Bradford, Pa., oil and industrial millionaire, variously describes herself as "over 20 and going on 40", and having been "40 for seven years." Outside the entrance to the

exhibition she has a display of her own—colored photos of her in brief dancing costumes or, in some instances, only a G-string and tiny breast coverings.

This caused some serious head-shaking Tuesday night among the more conservative (but greatly outnumbered) element at the preview, which was sponsored by the de Young Museum Society and the Patrons of Art and Music, the auxiliary of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. (The two museums, while retaining

separate buildings, were amalgamated several years ago.)

At the preview, social figures such as Mrs. Nion Tucker, whose family gave the de Young Museum to the city, were escorted inside while thousands waited in line outside. Some guests with invitations could not suffer the indignity of a line and left without seeing the show.

Those remaining in the queue made up a mixture of ages and costumes that one might see either on Park Avenue or in Greenwich Village: young, middle-aged and old, in elegant evening gowns, from midi to maxi length, mixed with pants suits, minis and the leather and beads of hippies. Men, with hair length as varied as the women's dresses, wore dinner jackets, business suits, sports jackets and home-mades.

No 'Scarkey Cat' He

Ian McKibbin White, the director of both museums (he was formerly assistant director of the Brooklyn Museum), entered into the spirit of the preview by wearing a lion's costume and a tailcoat because, he said, Mrs. Hanley had called him a "scarey cat."

He and Mrs. Hanley, dressed in a red jumpsuit by Balmain, gave Mayor Joseph L. Alioto a private tour before the preview. When Mrs. Hanley did a belly dance for him, the usually articulate and unflappable Mayor appeared nervous.

"When do the ceremonies begin?" he asked.

"There aren't any; very informal," said Mr. White, explaining that his costume signified Mrs. Hanley "had captured the museum lion."

As late guests began to arrive, an usher at the door shouted, "Please go to your extreme right or extreme left and not straight ahead."

Strait ahead, obviously, was where it was happening. Dan Hicks Hot Licks, a rock band, sent up an amplified cacophony from a stage erected in the staid Hearst Court. Painted young ladies clad in

nothing but color gyrated to the rhythms.

"We want Tullah," the crowd would occasionally chant and Mrs. Hanley, who changed costumes five times ("They get more brief each time, baby"), obliged the crowd with sexy dances. While Adam and Eve looked on from a 18th-century Flemish tapestry from the estate of William Randolph Hearst, Tullah danced with naked and costumed students, first to a Turkish band, then to a rock combo called the Existential Sandwich. A clown and a monkey cavorted with them to the delight of children being held up to see the action.

Almost everyone seemed to be having a great time. One sincere young woman told Mrs. Hanley, "Tullah, you've done more tonight to close the gaps than any other person."

"I know, I know," said the beaming Mrs. Hanley, who was having a better time than anyone. "I feel like a queen entertaining her subjects."

"This is my memorial," Mrs. Hanley said as she changed into her fifth costume in a museum office she had converted into a dressing room, "and I am enjoying it while I'm alive. All the men here tonight enjoy me because I did something

great. I want something great to be left behind. I aspire to inspire before I expire."

Then Mrs. Hanley swept out to the stage in a scanty gold costume to perform her finale, a wild dance with two undressed young women. She was also presented with the "Best Bottom" award by Jennie Lee, the Bazoom Girl ("44 and much more") who is also president of the Erotic Dancer's League of America.

Some Quieter Diversions, Too

Here and there, some middle-aged couples, nibbling their crepes and holding their plastic glasses of highballs, looked uncomfortable as they took in their fellow guests and the goings-on.

Meanwhile, the late arrivals who had been shunned down the corridor to the right found diversions, too, albeit quieter ones. Here, Neshama read fortunes based on the way people dropped paint on cardboard from an eye-dropper. Off this corridor, too, was the Hanley Collection.

Guests viewing the masterpieces of American and European geniuses of the last five centuries seemed as interested in "Tullah's Notes" as they did in the art. For an Epstein bronze head titled "Sunita," Mrs. Hanley's note read:

"Sunita, supposedly an Indian princess, but in any case the wife of a diplomat at the London Indian Embassy, adored art and dabbled in artists. . . . She was practically shacking with Epstein for years. . . . They produced a sweet little boy. . . . You can bet your assets that Lady Epstein wasn't delighted about the affair, but artists' wives must overlook their inspiration or run away, and she didn't run. . . . Don't you think it's far better to have 25 per cent share in a great man than 100 per cent in an ordinary man?"

A spokesman for the museum said it was considered judicious to withhold some of the more gossipy notes of Hungarian-born Mrs. Hanley, who burst upon the San Francisco scene in 1967 on a nationwide tour with art from her husband's collection. (A Harvard alumnus, he had received an honorary LL.D. from the University of Texas in response to a gift of books.)

Following his death in April, 1969, at the age of 75, his widow announced she would divide their 1,000-piece collection among San Francisco, Denver and Philadelphia. The art for Denver will be unveiled next spring at the opening of a new museum building. As for the Philadelphia Museum of Art,

it has now been "disinherited," according to Mrs. Hanley.

She said the museum wanted to wait until her husband's estate was settled before accepting the art. "It was implied that I was irresponsible," Mrs. Hanley said, adding, "I may be irresponsible, but I'm not irresponsible."

The president of the museum, George M. Cheston, said after learning of Mrs. Hanley's remarks that the museum couldn't have been "totally disinherited" because it had received paintings from the collection after Mr. Hanley's death, as well as before. He also denied that the museum had any intention of implying that Mrs. Hanley was irresponsible.

Mrs. Hanley said that pieces intended for Philadelphia were now part of the de Young collection. She saved some masterpieces to sell to pay inheritance taxes on her husband's estate. The Denver and San Francisco museums, she said, will not have to pay taxes on the art they have been given.

"If I live to be 300, I'd never be able to deduct [from taxes] half of what I gave away," she said. "I will pay the taxes even if I have to marry another millionaire."





Vince Maggiora for The New York Times

Tullah Hanley dancing at the preview party with Ian McKibbin White, director of the museum, who showed up in lion's costume with a tail and tailcoat.

Mrs. T. Edward Hanley, a former belly dancer and the widow of a Bradford, Pa., millionaire industrialist and art collector, lecturing last week at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco. She was there to help unveil collection of 170 pieces of sculpture, paintings and drawings she had given to museum.

