

KÖRMENDY

Elizabeth  
Painter, Born Bpest

wife of Eugene Kormendy, Sculptor

Who's Who in Amer. Art NY 1953-P227

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**The Rambler**

..... Talks to  
A Mosaic Maker

By MYRA MacPHERSON

Mrs. Elisabeth Kormendy, slim with blue eyes, silvery hair and a Hungarian accent, stood before her mosaic, almost as tall as she is.

Around her were other artists and entries in the

George Kennedy is ill. He will resume his column on his return.

fifth annual Washington Area Religious Art Exhibition in the Gas Light Co. auditorium. At a glance, it looked as if art had gone to a new generation and its ideas. Young girls in blue jeans placed welded steel sculptures on pedestals, young men were hanging up abstracts.

Mrs. Kormendy, an artist all her life, has pre-World War II memories of exhibitions in Venice, Paris, Budapest, but neither her work nor her thoughts are in the past. There is an abstract tucked in a corner of her basement workshop and her religious art show entry of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers, is, as she says, "a little unusual."

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"ALWAYS HE IS pictured as an old man, but I could find nothing in the Bible which designates a certain age. Do you know the story? The story is he was bringing a child on his shoulders by water. St. Christopher was a giant at 9 feet. He didn't know why the child was so heavy. He was carrying the Christ child. I thought it over and decided just to do the head of St. Christopher—and on his shoulder a small child."

Mrs. Kormendy carried out this concept in a Venetian glass mosaic, 5 feet high and 3 feet wide. The colors range from the deep blue of water to the rust color of St. Christopher's beard, and the lines flow from the figure of the man to that of the child.

"I try for simplicity in all that I do," Mrs. Kormendy said. In her home she is surrounded by much of her works and those of her late husband, internationally known sculptor Eugene Kormendy.

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**THE KORMENDYS KNEW** each other as children in Budapest. After their 1922 marriage, their travels began. Mr. Kormendy studied under Rodin in Paris and they traveled all over Europe exhibiting. There was a vacation trip to America in the late 30s and soon after that Hitler was trampling over their homeland.



The Kormendys stayed in the United States, looking for places "where the rent was low and the ceilings high" for their massive sculptures and mosaics.

Mrs. Kormendy seems the least-likely Hoosier, but she and her husband lived 13 years in South Bend, Ind., while her husband was sculptor in residence at Notre Dame.

"You work when you are there. Nothing is there except your work." At Notre Dame she met the medical missionary Dr. Tom Dooley. "Although he was not an art student, one day he came into the studio and somehow he never went out."

**DURING HER INDIANA** days the petite Mrs. Kormendy also climbed high up on scaffolds to create a 200-foot panoramic painting of the life of Christ for a seminary chapel.

"Most of my commissions were for religious works," Mrs. Kormendy said. Looking around her basement she said, "That abstract is a relaxation. When you work for churches, there is a definite tradition to follow. You have to have certain colors and forms. For example, the Madonna's robe is always a precise shade of blue."

The Kormendys came here five years ago. Earlier Mr. Kormendy did a bronze relief profile of President Truman and the 22-foot statue of Christ on the National Catholic Welfare Conference Building.

They both entered the first religious show. Mrs. Kormendy did not enter then for the next three years; her husband died three summers ago. Her most recent work until St. Christopher was a mosaic Madonna plaque in the entrance hall of Dunbarton College's new girls' dormitory.

"And then I entered the show last year with 'The Birds and St. Francis.' It now hangs in the waiting room of the State Department. You know where you go to get your passport? Well, there is my St. Francis and my birds."

