

Art find adds funds to struggling library system

Signed prints head to art auctioneers

By MARTHA MENDOZA
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — A quick-witted librarian who spotted two valuable pieces of art tucked behind a shelf will bring a few more dollars to her beleaguered system, where no new books are being purchased and open hours are limited.

"I don't think those paintings really have anything to do with the budget," said Library Director Anne Turner, "but I'm glad we can turn something we can't use — art — into something we can use — written words."

Reference librarian Pamela Downing found the two modern French prints signed by Jean Dubuffet earlier this year when she was going through some old boxes which were part of the library's art and music collection.

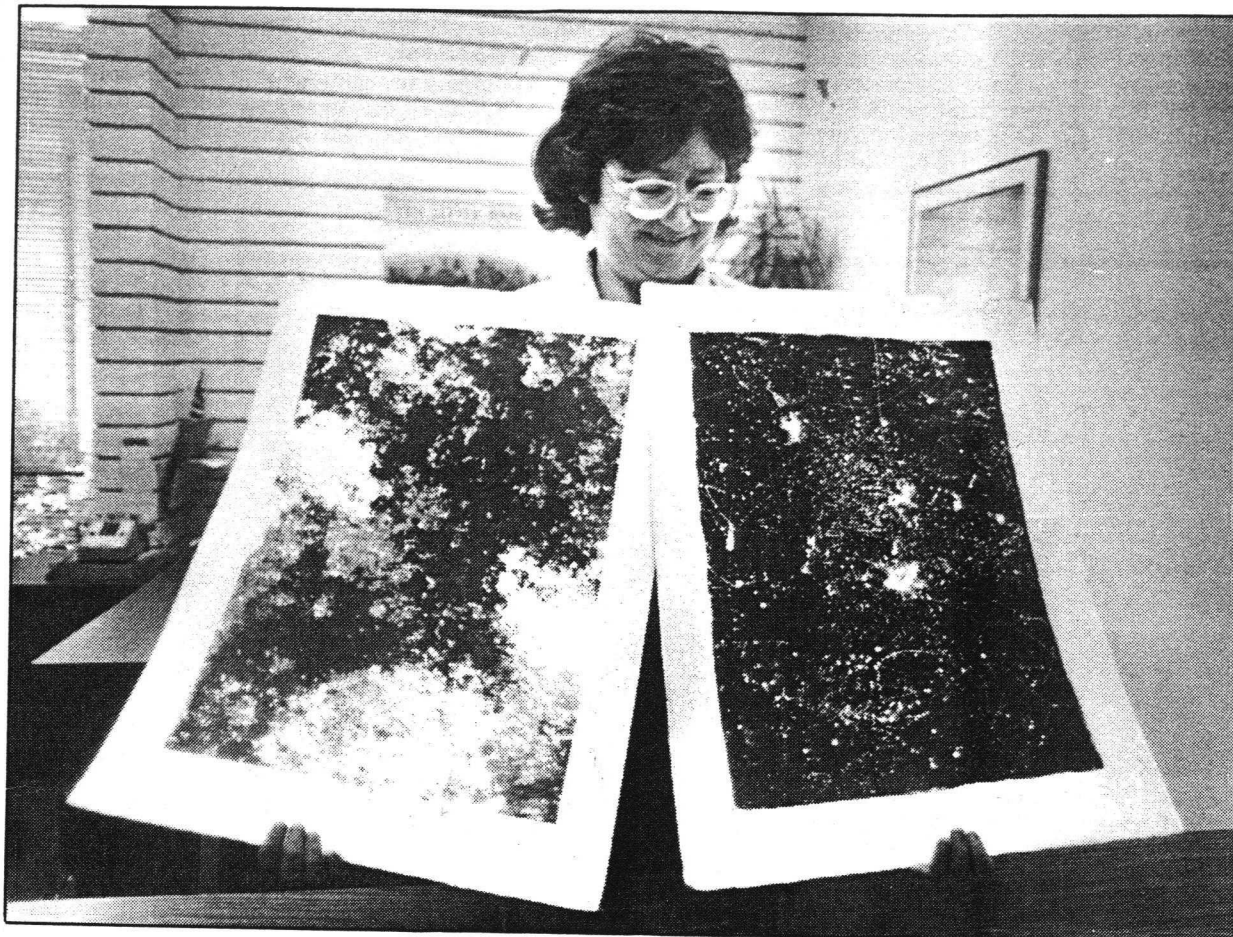
"I noticed they were signed by an artist and I thought they might be worth something," Downing said.

She sent Polaroid photographs of the prints to Butterfield and Butterfield, Auctioneers and Appraisers, in San Francisco, requesting a value estimate. Butterfield Print Department Director Barry Heisler wrote back last month that the art is worth \$800 to \$1,200.

"It was a pleasant surprise," Downing said. Turner, who doesn't know where the prints came from, is recommending that the prints be donated to the Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries Inc., with the stipulation that they be sold and the proceeds donated to buy library materials.

"This is an easier method of disposing of the property than selling through the City of Santa Cruz," Turner explained in a letter to the Library Oversight Committee.

Turner says this year's \$4.6 million budget for the system's 10 libraries is not enough to fund the purchase of any new books. Turner said 7.9 percent of the



Reference librarian Pamela Downing holds the two Jean Dubuffet prints she uncovered.

Dan Coyro/Sentinel

budget is used to purchase materials.

"It's very difficult," she said. "It's heartbreaking, since we've worked so hard to turn this system into a library system that meets the needs of the communi-

ty."

"One has a terrible fear that it's going to go down the drain," she said.

The 1991-1992 grand jury report says that in

Who uses the library?



Place of residence	Population (1990)	Registered borrowers	1991-92 use
Santa Cruz City	49,040	43,566	15,853
County Unincorp	130,809	73,181	26,532
Capitola	10,177	5,806	1,978
Scotts Valley	8,615	7,715	2,773
Watsonville	31,099	1,844	522
All other	NA	1,278	1,182
Total	229,734	133,390	48,840

Sentinel graphic

1990-1991 the Santa Cruz City Council and the County Board of Supervisors promised to augment the library's book budget, but never actually allocated the money.

"The result was an accounting nightmare, not additional books," the grand jury wrote, recommending that council and board "attempt to restore all or a major portion of those promised funds."

The library's annual report notes a 10.7 percent increase in materials checked out of the library, which officials attribute to the poor economy. Circulation rose from 1.18 million to 1.3 million, with increases at all branches except Scotts Valley, where hours and staff were cut by more than 40 percent.

Turner will be discussing the budget difficulties at a public meeting Monday with the Library Oversight Committee and the Citizen Advisory Committee at the Central Branch at 7:30 p.m.

SC Sentinel 7/24/92