

ART, MARRIAGE DOUBLE TIES FOR NORTH SIDE PAIR

Free Lancers Win Prizes for Paintings, Murals.

BY PHYLLIS FORD.

Frances Foy and Gustaf Dahlstrom are two successful Chicago artists, muralists, winners of prizes. They have, in fact, been making a fine living at all this since 1923, the year in



Frances Foy.

which they were married.

Miss Foy is a smiling, comfortable, motherly looking person with curly white



Gustaf Dahlstrom, hair which she ties back with a ribbon. She looks as if she fondly devoted all of her time to taking care of 10 children, canning tomatoes, and making preserves. Part of this, at least, is true. The Dahlstroms have a 12 year old son, Lars Michael, and Miss Foy keeps house, looks after a wild flower garden in her back yard, and makes such specialties as wild black raspberry jam.

Looks Like Professor.

Dahlstrom is tall, distinguished looking, white haired. He has a kindly face and is deliberate in his movements. He might be a professor of philosophy at some university. Just now as a staff artist, he is designing exhibits for the anthropology department of the Field museum.

The two of them seldom collaborate on their work. "You might say we confer, tho," Dahlstrom will say, looking at his wife to see if she agrees with that. She nods and says, "We certainly don't go around criticizing each other. That would be terrible." And Dahlstrom takes this up, "If either of us gets stuck, then we consult. It's very helpful." They laugh together. They find it most satisfactory to be interested in the same thing, and can't see how they would get along if they had to be all the time around people who weren't sympathetic with what they were doing.

Use Attic Studio.

In the summer they go to their cabin along the Little Manistee river in Michigan to work. In the winter their studio is the attic of their house at 2637 Dayton avenue. It has white walls and is lighted with fluorescent lamps. "We work all the time," Miss Foy and Dahlstrom say, "day and night." There is a clutter of drawing boards and easels and chairs and paintings everywhere in the studio.

To a visitor they prefer to talk of the other's work, rather than their own. Dahlstrom will tell about the murals Miss Foy has done and the children's portraits she has painted, bringing out samples of her paintings and sketches. He tells of the prizes she has won, among them the Municipal Arts league prize of this year and the Logan award a few years back.

Brings Out Medals.

Miss Foy digs around in a desk and comes out with one of the gold medals her husband has received for his painting. She talks about such awards as the Chicago Society of Etchers prize in 1933. Then she must show the collection of landscape drawings he exhibited last year in the Renaissance society at the University of Chicago, and tell about his wood carvings. "You might say we are versatile artists," Dahlstrom says.

He was born in Sweden and his family came to America in 1901. Miss Foy was born in Chicago. Neither of them has any relatives who are artists. They met when they were studying at the Art Institute during the first World war. Both had jobs at the time. Dahlstrom was doing office work and Miss Foy was a commercial artist. They think they just grew into the idea that they might get along as free lance artists. They saved a lot of money and when they were married gave up their jobs, determined to get along at free lancing.

No Hunt for Work.

Remembering this now, Miss Foy laughs and says, "We were crazy." But it worked, and in less than a year people were coming to them with commissions. It's been like that ever since. "We didn't have to hunt for work at all after that first year," Dahlstrom says. In 1927 they went to Europe on the money left from that original savings fund.

Each of them has done about six murals in various cities in the middle west. The commissions for these are awarded by the United States treasury department, on the basis of sketches submitted in competitions. For one series of 12 murals that Dahlstrom was to do he and Miss Foy and Lars moved to St. Joseph, Mo. It took him two years to finish that series. He used casein paint for murals and had to make his own.

Crowds Hamper Work.

At first, when they begin a mural, both of them find it hard to work, since crowds of people come in and stare, at an artist perched high up on a scaffolding. Soon, however, they don't even notice the crowd. "It's hard to keep up enthusiasm for what you're doing when it takes as long as a mural does," Dahlstrom says. "You have to work carefully. You just can't afford mistakes."

Miss Foy likes flowers and once, in a gay mood, submitted a mural design based on the wild flowers of Wisconsin. Her design won the contest and the finished mural is now in the postoffice at West Allis, Wis.