



Photos by ROGER WILSON / The Leader

Artist James Owens works on a piece called "Pie Crust and Cheesecake" on Tuesday. His paintings are influenced by film noir, he said. He loves the old detective stories of the 1930s and '40s and pulp fiction novel covers from 1930s. "All this stuff is in me," he says.

CHANGING THE OILS

Burbank artist will show his boldly colored Car-Noir paintings at free downtown festival.

By Joyce Rudolph
The Leader

The Downtown Burbank Fine Arts Festival will have essences of the past, offering works inspired by 1930s and '40s film noir and classical music in addition to its mainstay of fine art pieces.

Burbank resident James Owens will be showing his Car-Noir paintings done in brilliant colors and featuring sultry femme fatales at the show this weekend.

He starts with a sketch inspired by photographs he's taken of hot rods and custom cars.

"Most of my work is oil on canvas," he said. "I have a lot of friends who are actors and models, and they model for me. I assemble my reference material before I start my painting."

Owens admits that he does take a little license with slight changes to the design of the cars.

"If you don't draw the cars right, the car enthusiasts will call you on it," he said. "So I want to be as accurate as I can be and still be painterly."

His work should especially interest people in Burbank because of its large number of car enthusiasts and film buffs, said Gail Stewart, business district manager for the city of Burbank.

"I love James' work," Stewart said. "It has a lot of energy, and there is a distinct and original feel to his work."

Owens said growing up in Detroit

FYI

WHAT: The Downtown Burbank Fine Arts Festival
WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. today and Sunday
WHERE: San Fernando Boulevard from Magnolia Boulevard to Olive Avenue.
ADMISSION: Free
CONTACT: For the festival, (818) 238-5180 or visit www.downtown-burbank.org; for the artist www.jamesowensstudio.com

created his love for the automobile. "I've got automobiles in my blood," he said. "My grandfather worked for 40 years for the Ford Motor Co. He was a general laborer and became a tool and dye specialist."

His paintings are also influenced by film noir, he said. He loves the old detective stories of the 1930s and '40s and pulp fiction novel covers from 1930s.

"All this stuff is in me," he said. Owens shows his work mostly at car shows, and the Downtown Burbank Fine Arts Festival is the only art festival he does.

One of his works on display is his faux movie poster titled "Drag Strip Delinquents."

"Because they are all hopped up and going nowhere fast," he said.

It features old Ford hot rods. "The big thing about my painting is that I'm not documenting a specific automobile," he said. "I'm more about the mood of the piece. I want my viewers to be entertained by my work and that they tell a story."

Other fine art items in the biannual show are paintings, ceramics, photog-



See OILS, Page A12 A detailed shot of James Owens' artwork, "Pie Crust and Cheesecake."



"He Came For The Car But Ran Into Trouble" is a piece of artwork by James Owens.

Courtesy of James Owens

OILS

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raphy, stained glass and jewelry, Stewart said. For entertainment, Stewart has invited a trio that will play classical music.

Flutist Salpy Kerkonian, a tenured member of the Glendale Symphony Orchestra, will be joined in the chamber ensemble by cellist John Krovoza and his wife, violinist Anna Stafford.

They'll be playing Franz Joseph Haydn's "London Trios,"

Antonio Vivaldi's "Trio Sonatas" and Georg Philipp Telemann's "Trio in A minor," Kerkonian said.

"We'll be strolling along, and people will be able to see the beautiful art while hearing beautiful art music," she said. "The music will add a festive, happy and colorful backdrop."