

**ARTS**  
Wednesday

# DAYBREAK

1C

Wednesday, April 3, 1996



MARTHA  
STEWART  
ASK MARTHA

## Don't hunt for a basket; make your own

Each year as spring approaches I begin to plan my annual Easter egg hunt.

Last year I had more than 40 children scurrying through my garden and home in Westport, Conn., looking for brightly colored eggs to fill their baskets.

This year I've invited only my nieces and nephews and the children of a few close friends. Still, there will be 20 children in all, which means I'll be making 20 Easter baskets.

The baskets will be beautifully decorated with ribbon and filled with good things to eat. I've been collecting ribbons all year from gifts I've received, and the baskets make recycling them easy.

I know these baskets will delight my young guests, but they would be wonderful as decorations at a grown-up party as well.

Here's how to make them:

### THE BASKETS

Simple straw baskets come in all shapes and sizes. You can find baskets at discount stores and thrift shops.

1. Spray-paint the basket white or a pale pastel. (This should be done in a well-ventilated area or outside.)

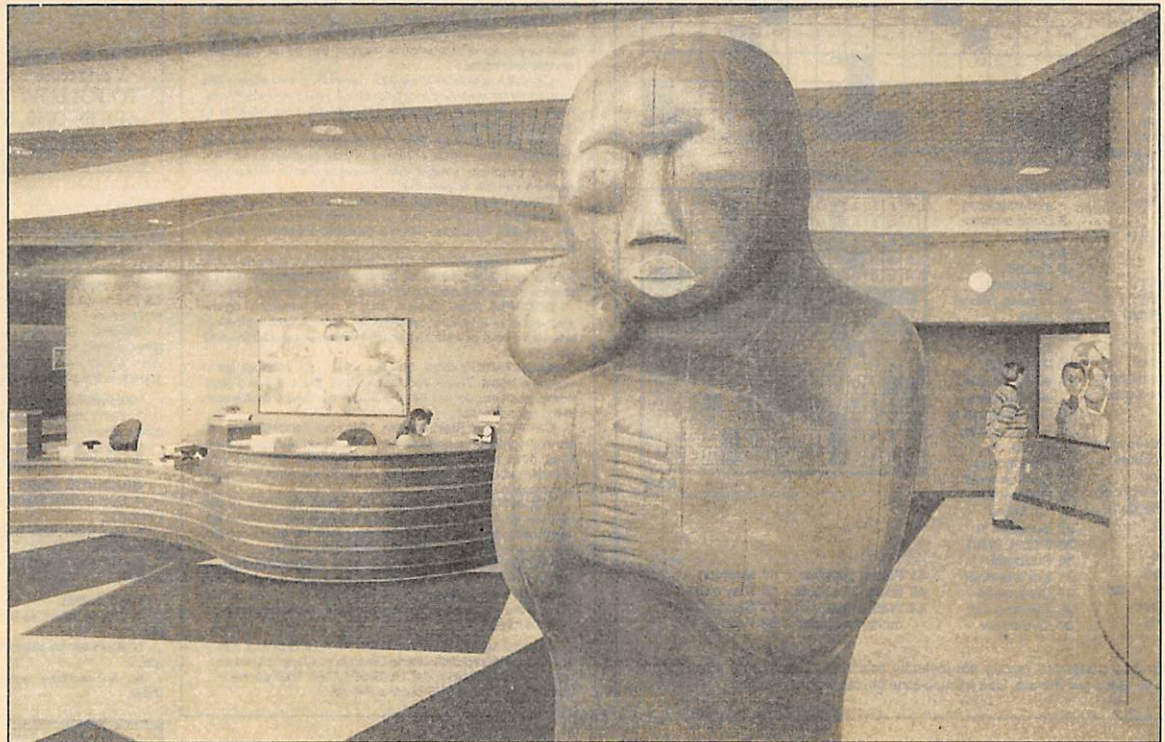
2. Make ribbon bows in various sizes using different decorative ribbons. Stripes, dots and gingham patterns are all good choices.

Attach the bows to the outside of the basket with short pieces of floral wire, or use a hot-glue gun.

3. Wrap the basket's handle with more ribbon. Glue each end to the basket.

Glue or wire one large bow to the top of the handle.

# The Art of the Matter



Slate Journal photos/L. ROGER TURNER

Francis Nnaggenda's sculpture 'Mother and Child' looms in the lobby of Promega's BioPharmaceutical Technology Center. His paintings are hung around the lobby.



"Administrator" uses bright planes of color to create a multidimensional portrait.

By Susan Blocker  
Arts reporter

**T**he 7½-foot black walnut sculpture of a mother and child can bring visitors to the BioPharmaceutical Technology Center up short.

After all, you may enter this glass facade building expecting the sterile, detached atmosphere of a scientist's laboratory.

Instead, this simple, stylistic sculpture and dozens of colorful works of East African art greet you.

"The impact this collection has had just being in this building accomplished a lot of what we want to do," said Bill Linton, president of Promega Corp., which built BTC on its campus in 1994. "We want to reflect the creativity and imagination of people."

But that's getting ahead of the story of how this art came to rest in BTC's lobby.

The story begins with Francis Nnaggenda, a Ugandan native teaching art at Indiana University South Bend in 1975. While there, he met then student Daniel Swadener and they became friends.

By that time, Nnaggenda had been in self-imposed exile from the dictatorship of Idi Amin in his native country since 1967. Throughout this time, he had been creating art in Nairobi, Kenya, Europe and the United States.

He decided to return to Uganda in 1978 but left his paintings in Nairobi, for fear of the still unstable political situation in his home country.

In Nairobi the paintings floundered, passing from hand to hand until 1995, when Swadener came back into the picture.

Visiting East Africa with his wife, Swadener looked up his old friend, who talked of his lost art.



Nnaggenda's "Ganda Woman" exemplifies the artist's melding of African traditions and his European-based art instruction.

"It was pretty incredible to see him after 20 years," Swadener said. "All these things I remembered about this incredible man were true."

Nnaggenda urged his friend to find the missing art and gave Swadener some phone numbers as leads.

Swadener finally tracked down the art in a garage of a house that was leased by the Swiss consulate. Because of his nomadic life, Nnaggenda had used plywood, cardboard, bark paper, unstretched canvas and construction paper for his work. When Swadener found the 50 or so paintings, they were

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chipped, had flaking paint and some were missing.

"Nobody knew what they were," Swadener said. "They had value as building material."

Unfortunately, Nnaggenda had no place to keep the collection, so he offered it to Swadener.

"I felt it was an important enough project to bring it (the collection) back" Swadener said. "It was an important aspect of his East African art."

That's when Swadener turned to his friend Linton, who has had a longtime interest in the arts. Linton helped Swadener buy the work sight-unseen.

"I didn't have a clue" what was in the collection, Linton said. A package of photographs Swadener had sent of the work never arrived.

When the art itself arrived in Madison, "we took a look at it, and it was remarkable," Linton said.

The paintings are rich in

color. Some are disturbing, almost lewd — reflecting the chaos of African cities, Swadener said. At the same time, a recurring theme among others is the mother and child.

Nnaggenda often broke his subject into planes of color — reflecting both his African roots and the European cubist style that borrowed from African art.

In his "Delusion," for example, two, three or four faces emerge from one in blocks of deep blue and orange-red.

Nnaggenda's works were first exhibited at Indiana University-South Bend last year, at which time Nnaggenda also visited BTC in Fitchburg.

The artist told the corporate president there should be a sculpture in the center of the lobby.

"Do you have something in mind?" Linton asked.

With that, they walked over to some woods by the Promega campus and found a large black maple tree, from which they had a block cut. Swadener and Nnaggenda escorted the 7½-foot piece back to Indiana, where the artist carved it over five weeks.



## IF YOU GO:

The art of Francis Nnaggenda will be on display at the BioPharmaceutical Technology Center, 5445 E. Cherly Parkway, through the end of August. The public is invited to check in with the receptionist in the lobby and view the art.

The sculpture, along with the paintings came back to BTC in February and will be on display there through August. BTC is encouraging the public to stop by and view the collection.

After all, a public exhibit fits in with the center's mission to reach out to the community as well as to the international visitors who frequent Promega.

"We wanted to have a space that is very public. we have 20,000 square feet of classroom space, an auditorium and labs. All of which is community oriented," Linton said. The art helps employees remember "the social context of what we're doing here."

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## INSIDE

### Company keeps art

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Many area golf courses opening