

Remembering the Russell

It was 1953 and the small town of Maysville was abuzz. Its hometown girl gone Hollywood, Rosemary Clooney, was about to premiere her first film, *The Stars Are Singing*, at the town's Russell Theatre.

"The lines started early that day," recalls Kaye Browning. "I was longingly looking out the window of our Third Street home just trying to get a glimpse of Rosemary. I was eight years old, I had chicken pox, and I felt like I was the only one in town not going to the theater that day."

Browning joins hundreds of other Maysville natives who have vivid memories of the colorful brick and terra-cotta structure on East Third Street, but she is certainly unique in how she's preserved those childhood recollections—by recreating them in one-twelfth-scale miniature.

The Kathleen Savage Browning Miniatures Collection at the Kentucky Gateway Museum Center is well known in the Commonwealth for its gallery of thousands of miniatures. None of the exhibits, however, is more personal to Browning or more beloved by the community than the diminutive buildings and storefronts with windows into Maysville's past. There's the Cox building that houses the former Kilgus Drug Store just as it was when Browning sat at the counter as a girl; the Bethel Baptist Church complete with tiny Bibles and hymnals; and the iconic Russell Theatre exterior—advertising the very premiere Browning missed that day. All the pieces were created by well-known Chicago miniature artisans Allison Ashby and Steve Jedd.



The miniature interior features private balconies, ceiling paintings and ornately carved Spanish décor. More than 1,000 pieces were used to handcraft the 100 theater chairs.

"Kaye wanted to encourage her neighbors to recognize Maysville's architectural treasures, in the hope that their renewed appreciation might result in the actual structures being renovated and saved," explains Ashby. In 2010, the display of the theater's facade helped to raise awareness for the need to restore the Russell, one of several atmospheric theaters remaining in the United States today.

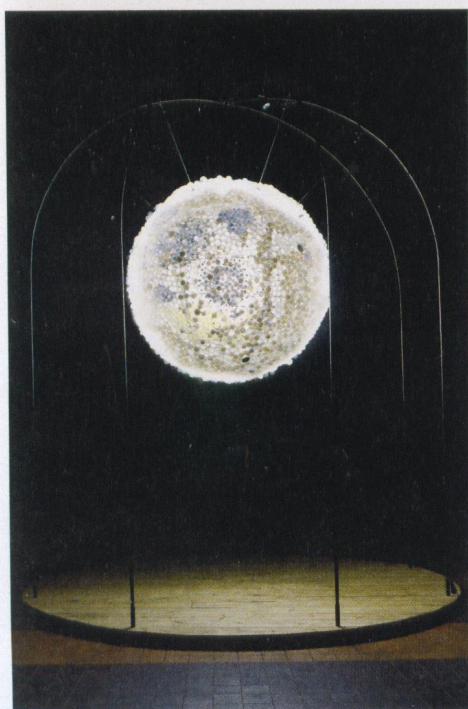
Browning hopes to again stir community interest by unveiling the theater's interior in miniature. "When they realize the historical accuracy Steve and Allison have created, they're going to want the Russell on Third to look like that again."

The Russell Theatre Miniature Unveiling of the Interior begins at 10 a.m., April 17 at the Kentucky Gateway Museum Center. Ashby and Jedd will be on hand to give a

behind-the-scenes look at the newest miniature in the collection. The event continues through April 19 and includes artist demonstrations and a silent auction of collectible miniatures.

Registration for the event is \$125 and includes admission to the unveiling, artisan demonstrations both days, entry to the museum through Saturday, lunch Thursday and Friday, dinner Thursday evening, and the closing party at the Russell Theatre on Friday night, where a documentary chronicling the history of the theater will be shown. For more information, visit ksbminiaturescollection.com.

— SHARON DODDROE



The nearly completed sculpture that will be installed in Lexington's Triangle Park.

Let There Be Light

There's a new bright spot in Lexington, showing what can happen when a community rallies for the cause of art. The product of Canadian artists Caitlind r.c. Brown [sic] and Wayne Garrett and welding students from Bluegrass Community and Technical College, the signature piece in Lexington Art League's *Luminosity* exhibition features a giant, interactive sculpture of thousands of used incandescent light bulbs donated last fall by members of the community. The clusters of bulbs on display in downtown Triangle Park are lit by LED lights that will react to viewers' physical movements.

"They knew it was going to be outside and took into account how people are going to interact with it," says Becky Alley, the curator of the Lexington Art League. "It's vulnerable, but it wouldn't be the same piece if it wasn't. It speaks to a level of trust the artists have with the community."

Regional businesses also contributed to the project, including Sylvania, General Electric and operators of Cincinnati's Great American Ballpark.

"People would just call and say, 'We heard you were taking light bulbs. Do you want some?'" says LAL spokesperson Candace Chaney. "We got an incredible response from the collection drive."

The *Luminosity* exhibition also includes an indoor display of light-based art by three additional artists. The sculpture will be on display in Triangle Park until March 31; the indoor exhibition at Loudoun House will remain open to the public through April 6. Check out lexingtonartleague.org for further information.

— JACKIE HOLLENKAMP BENTLEY