

## Carrier of the Month Farmington



Michael Watts, 13, of Farmington Hills, was selected carrier of the month for July.

Michael, son of David and Joanne Watts, began his Observer route three years ago. He delivers the Farmington Observer twice a week to residents on Bramwell, Stansbury, Twelve Mile, Alyce Kay, and Patricia.

Michael has two brothers and is in eighth grade at Warner Junior High. His favorite subjects are science, art and band. His hobbies include drawing, swimming, roller skating, skateboarding, and playing the drums.

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## Prefers originality to profit

# Artist paints mysterious surrealism

By MARY LOU DOCKSEY

On a desolate highway, late at night, a woman emerges from a wooded roadside. Her dress is from another era. Auburn hair cascades like tumbleweeds down her back. One hand is raised in greeting, the other beckons you forward.

As you approach her, she seems to glow with unearthly translucence. Her outlines dissolve into mist. She smiles, and you know she is from another dimension.

Impossible? Not in the art of Howard Weingarden.

Weingarden's lanky body leapt up from a corner armchair in his Birmingham studio. He fumbled in his vest pocket for a cigarette and peered at the canvas in delight.

"Look at her! Isn't she something? The world-beyond traveler... physical reality combined with the unknown... Just look at that paint application." Weingarden said, gestulating with his unlit cigarette. "Can you believe those colors," he asked, marveling at the woman's crimson dress. He readjusted the lighting, stepped back and, tilting his head, nodded in satisfaction.

When he finally looked up, his face was confident. He expected approval, having ceased to fear criticism.

"I no longer get upset when someone condemns my work with 'a bunch of mystical crap....' After all these years, I've learned to deal with it," Weingarden glanced at his painting, smiled complacently and added, "I no longer feel obligated to justify my vision."

BORN IN DETROIT in 1944, Weingarden began painting seriously at the age of 17. Social realism dominated his early work but "painting problems with no solutions" frustrated him. He described himself as having been trapped inside an existential painbox... knowing the exit was somewhere, but not being able to find it.

Weingarden found the exit from his "existential paintbox" during a trip to India and a two-year period of self-development and artistic re-evaluation. His work, once filled with "despairing reality," evolved into a borderline between the conscious and the unconscious. Weingarden's work now portrays the "twilight world between dream and reality; the mundane and the visionary, the visible and invisible," he said.

**CLEARLY VISIBLE** in Weingarden's work is the influence of the Old Masters, an influence most apostles of the avant-garde scorn.

"I've had a lot of flak from the contemporary art world," Weingarden said disdainfully. "I believe the Old Masters had a much greater knowledge of technique. I admire them; I do not copy them." He shrugged off criticism that his own originality has been lost in the use of classical techniques. "I don't have to seek originality," he scoffed. "I've always had it."

Part of Weingarden's originality stems from the juxtaposition of the physical and metaphysical in his art—angels soar over superhighways; phantom women wander through modern city streets.

Weingarden said he believes that "art is not at its highest state unless it is a mystical experience," he stressed the importance of fusing energy and spirit with the mastery of form.

"An exclusively mystical approach can make you too self-centered," Weingarden said, "too cut off from the external world."

It can also keep an artist's work from selling, he discovered. He recalled his fit of rage when a New York gallery owner refused to exhibit his work because it lacked current relevancy. Unfortunately, the target of Weingarden's anger was his own work, resulting in several mangled and shredded canvases.

"I have to work on my temper," he confessed sheepishly.

**ON ANOTHER VENTURE** to New York, a publisher told Weingarden his work was just "too good, too deep" to sell as reproductions, and suggested he produce simplistic, profitable paintings.

Weingarden, whose work was recently praised by author Anais Nin as highly original and poetic, has exhibited in New York, Palm Beach and Laguna Beach. His exhibitions have yielded only moderate financial success, making the chance to earn good money with bad paintings difficult to turn down.

"I know of a well-known artist who paints under a false name and makes \$80,000 a year," Weingarden said. He paused for a moment, stared into space, then shook his head slowly.

"It's tempting, but it's just not worth it."



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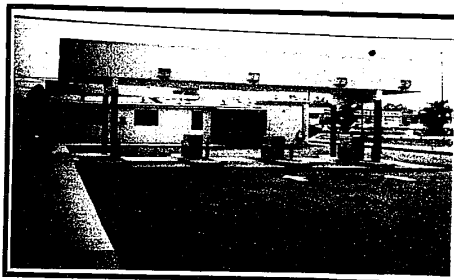
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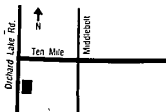
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