

Paintings and ceramics make a compatible show

Story: CORINNE ABATT
Photos: DWIGHT CENDROWSKI

If they work right, two-person art exhibits are often more interesting than when one person solos. They work when there's a good balance and each enhances the other.

Troy Art Gallery has an uncommonly fine balance in the new show there, "Paintings and Ceramics."

Paintings are by Johanna Haas and ceramics by Mary Lark. Both women bring strong backgrounds to their work.

Mrs. Haas teaches oil painting at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association and has two graduate degrees from Wayne State University in addition to her bachelor's degree. She draws her inspiration from her travels around the world as well as locally.

Mrs. Lark, also a graduate of Wayne, taught art in the Detroit schools before leaving to raise a family, continue her study of art and finally develop as a studio potter.

She is an inveterate experimenter, never content to coast along on what she already knows. That's probably why ceramics holds so much interest for Mrs. Lark.

"THE MORE YOU learn," she said, "the more you want to learn." So she moved from building clay pieces to the wheel several years ago, from simple firing to doing saggers and salt glazes. Saggers, said she, are pieces fired inside a container with wood chips or another material to change the atmosphere and give a finish other than glaze.

Three instructors contributed to Mrs. Lark's work. She credits Marie Woo with helping her develop a philosophy about pottery, Jan Sadowski with teaching her wheel throwing and Jim Powell of Pewabic Pottery with her understanding of glazes.

Mrs. Lark favors functional pieces.

"I like to use the things I make. My husband loves to cook and he's very flatterer — he chooses my pots to cook with."

Her experimental nature carries over into her designs which range from pure classical to almost funky.

"I love to do big pieces," she said, adding that she works in both porcelain and stoneware.

She and her husband, Jim, are art as well as antique collectors. In the living room of their home is a painting by Johanna Haas, "George Pierrot's Garden."

To Mrs. Haas, the whole world is a garden of sorts — George Pierrot's being one of many.

SHE IS A COLORIST in the truest sense, using nature and what she sees as a take-off point for her own feelings. These feelings may originate in Germany, Hawaii, Italy, Mexico, Pennsylvania or Detroit.

Mrs. Haas has a sketchbook that fits easily into her purse. Using a type of magic marker which she gets in Europe, she sketches in color what she sees. The sketchbook, to the average person, would be a work of art.

To her, it serves the same purpose as a writer's notebook — it triggers images for her mind to expand upon.

"The visible world is my stimulus of form and colors," she said. "But, the world is transformed to such an extent that a completely new form is achieved in my paintings."

In writing down her thoughts, "Color has sensory primacy in my paintings — to me, color is life. Color has become not only the medium of my feeling, but a creative and formative element in itself."

She likes to compare her painting to writing poetry and she drew a parallel between herself and the poet who writes from inspiration mindless of time or what is happening around him.

She is reluctant to place an item on her style, preferring to say that it is significant of her world, her background and her philosophy. She lived part of her life in Germany and is familiar with the German Expressionists, has lived in a time when the Impressionists were revered and appreciated

and is familiar with contemporary American painters.

"SOME REALISM, naturalism and romanticism are combined in the unique and characteristic beauty of the European and American landscape in my paintings," she said. "You cannot put a label on my work. I never want to be tied to anyism or anything like that. The artist expresses what he has inside himself — not what he sees with his eyes."

The work of these two artists mixes well for several reasons. Both continue to grow and search for expression. This results in a particular vitality in both ceramics and paintings. Both delight in color and use it subtly and boldly.

"Paintings and Ceramics" will continue at the Troy Art Gallery through Oct. 20. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays. The gallery is in the Top of Troy concourse, 755 W. Big Beaver at I-75.



Company

Starring in Stagecrafters production of "Company" is Ron Deihl, of Dearborn, (at left) Barbara Bean of Farmington and Norman Colborne of Centerline. The award-winning adult musical comedy opens Friday, Oct. 5, in Stagecrafters Playhouse in Clawson, and continues the following two weekends. Tickets are \$4 each and all seats are reserved. Box office number for reservations is 585-8437.

Publishers honored

Lois and Ernie Scott, co-owners of Scott Advertising & Publishing Company, 30595 W. Eight Mile, Livonia, publishers of "Ceramic Arts & Crafts," are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their magazine with the September issue.

The Scotts established their magazine under the name "Local Arts & Crafts Monthly." The magazine quickly became national, then international, and finally established itself as the

leading magazine in the field.

The company also publishes a quarterly publication for ceramics teachers — "Ceramic Teaching Projects." The Scotts were given recognition for their publishing achievements by being given listings in Marquis' "Who's Who in America," a relatively uncommon honor for a husband and wife team.

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'More Than Stitchery' learned in 1-day seminar

Personalizing your wardrobe with Seminole patchwork and reverse applique will be the content of a one-day seminar, called "More Than Stitchery," on Wednesday, Oct. 10, in Northwest Branch YWCA. The Y is located at 25940 Grand River.

Seminole patchwork is an ancient Indian art form that lends itself to the decoration of clothing, and usually incorporates bright, solid color fabrics.

Candy DiMaggio, a nationally known expert in the art, who is instructor for the day, says, "It is not hard to learn or to do, but the effect is striking and the results look quite complicated."

The seminar is one of the Y's "Update" series, which will begin at 10

a.m. and continue until 3 p.m. Coffee will be served at 9:30 a.m. and participants may choose to bring their lunches, or help themselves from a salad bar for \$2.

There will be a slide presentation on quilting during the lunch hour. Reverse applique will be the topic for the afternoon session.

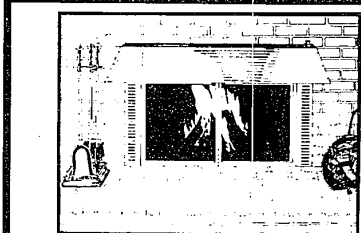
This process creates a three dimensional effect by the use of layers of cloth that are cut away, one at a time, to reverse the pattern desired.

REGISTRATION is now open for the seminar. Fee for the day is \$8 for non-members, or \$6 for Y members.

There will be an additional cost of approximately \$2 for materials, which will be supplied by the instructor.

Participants are asked to bring basic sewing supplies; needles, threads, scissors and pins.

The Update series runs on Wednesdays through the fall.



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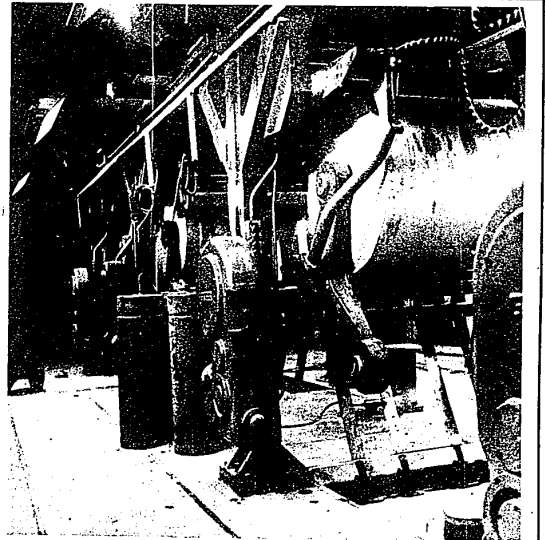
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They also include a visit to the newsroom, and a peek at the classified advertising phone room where want ads are typed on what looks very much like a small television screen.

To arrange for your group's free tour, call 591-2300. Tours last approximately one hour and are given on Mondays and Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for groups up to 25.

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