

Art center members offer an exhibit worth attending

By HELEN ZUCKER
One of the area's overlooked local assets is the Pontiac Art Center at 47 William Street in Pontiac.

The center is in a large, handsome mansion, and the board of trustees have been wise to keep the gracious proportions of the building intact.

Classes are held in the basement. The high-ceilinged ground floor is used for exhibitions. The current exhibition — The Members Show — is well worth seeing.

Mary Beard, who served as exhibition chairman of the center in past years, and a woman who has hung many fine shows, came back to jury the Members Show this year. Twenty-nine members submitted 80 works, and Ms. Beard, who went through each entry without looking at the names of the artists, said she "found if difficult to choose among the many interesting pieces."

She chose 46 works, and her choices are an absorbing medley of acrylics, sculpture, photography, jewelry, and drawings.

FIRST PRIZE WENT to Jo Linsalata for her very finished acrylic/canvas/wood painting, "Turquoise Comes From Copper Mines." A lovely, burnished, rust-colored canvas framed by two vertical turquoise strips bolted firmly to the sides. The painting works from the inside out. Despite the abstraction into pure color, the viewer

comes away feeling he has been down inside a copper mine, gleaned the richness of the final, burning product that comes from these mines, and watched the transformation, the cooling process in the artist's mind. The burning copper cools toward the turquoise edges, the large silver bolts. It's a rich painting.

Second prize went to Sue Hegenbarth's "A Rose is..." The title, I take it, comes from Gertrude Stein's "A Rose is a rose is a rose," but it might just as well have come from Shakespeare's "A Rose By Any Other Name Is Still A Rose."

Ms. Hegenbarth captures the essence of a full blown rose in a very clever collage/watercolor. In the manner of Romare Bearden, Ms. Hegenbarth builds petals out of cutouts. Her petals work inward toward the center — a center filled with stippled buds, pollen, the stuff of spring's miracles.

It's a fresh, clean, open work.

Constance Flechig took third prize for "Rushing Waters," a multi-colored glass sculpture. Set on short aluminum poles, the blue-green-yellow cascade of glass reminded me of those small waterfalls that dot the mini-parks scattered throughout midtown New York. Ms. Flechig's work is glittery, playful, well-constructed. It seems to work as a pun, a comment on mammoth skyscrapers and gigantic sculptures that seem to glow over our cities. The idea of catching rushing water in so

neat a form, and on so diminutive a scale, is a neat one.

THE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT was impressive. I especially liked "Yellow Tree" by Robert Hawkes. It's a thoroughly professional treatment of a tree in full autumnal flower. The trunk is black, the leaves varying yellows, the small patterns of sky breaking through. It's an imaginative, carefully composed photograph.

Cheryl Ream has a lovely photo, "New England Covered Bridge," and a lively portrait, "Dwight and Dewayne." Jack Zucker catches the sheen of foil inside a dark warehouse in a photo called "Fiberglass," and in a photo titled simply "Lid."

He catches the raw feeling of streets in March, the feel of new seasons.

The "Lid" is a manhole cover someone has moved aside. The hole is filled with winter's leaves. Jane Jacobsen's feel for nature is evident in her photos of "Sun On Water No. 6," and "March at Stanley Lake." Robert Hawkes had photos hung among the paintings as well, and I liked a large Cibachrome of baling wire very much.

William Steizer, a gentleman who has been painting steadily at the center for three years, in a very short time to learn the craft, has a fanciful landscape filled with yellow, pink, and white balloons floating over mountains. It has a nice, folk-art quality.

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