

## Doing what he likes brings success

By Corinne Abelt  
staff writer

For a young man (25), painter Mark Rutkowski is speeding along the road to success.

His one-artist exhibition at Gallery 22 of Bloomfield Hills Friday attracted buyers even before the official opening.

Rutkowski, a Center for Creative Studies graduate with a studio in Boston, has many ties to the Detroit metropolitan area.

He graduated from Avondale High School and had a studio in Rochester for several years.

Reversing the usual order, Rutkowski said he went from illustration to fine art. "Because this turned out to be more lucrative — and more fun."

From the time he was a child, he wanted to be an artist, he said. He just wasn't sure which direction he would go. But, once he began to paint the structures of American life that attracted him — Florida's Art Deco buildings, street scenes in Boston, old gasoline stations along side roads, diners and favorite landmarks — he found both satisfaction and a ready audience.

AS HE TRAVELS both main and back roads, he takes color photographs of scenes that interest him, and with these as documentation, he goes to work in his studio.

On a recent trip, he drove the inter-coastal highway from Boston to Miami Beach. Along Route 17 in Georgia, which has been superseded by a super highway, he found many scenes that attracted him. One, in particular, became the subject of a painting titled "Boiled Peanuts," a reference to the sign on the front of the building.

"I don't want to look traditional. Traditional puts you into a category —

Bray's, a familiar sight in Pleasant Ridge, is the sort of establishment that Rutkowski thinks is, in a sense, linked to the history of this era. He predicted that someday these will be looked upon as old-fashioned and quaint, relating to how people lived in the 1970s.

Staff photos by Mindy Saunders



Mark Rutkowski had a snap brim straw hat he wanted to put on for his picture, making him look almost the same vintage as the Florida 1930s Art Deco buildings he likes to paint.

"I collect a lot of post cards; they've been an influence, or a thing I use ... I'm really interested in architecture, mundane as well as modern."

The most successful paintings have been of things he really likes, as opposed to subjects he paints because they might sell well, he said. Consequently, he depends heavily on his intuition and isn't afraid to hold an "art burn" once in a while to get rid of the ones he doesn't like.

THE SCENES that catch his eye and his interest range from "The Tower," (hamburgers) in Detroit and the "Fleetwood Diner" in Ann Arbor to a variety of aging gasoline pumps along rural roads and Florida Art Deco architecture.

"I'm kind of fascinated by how time passes."

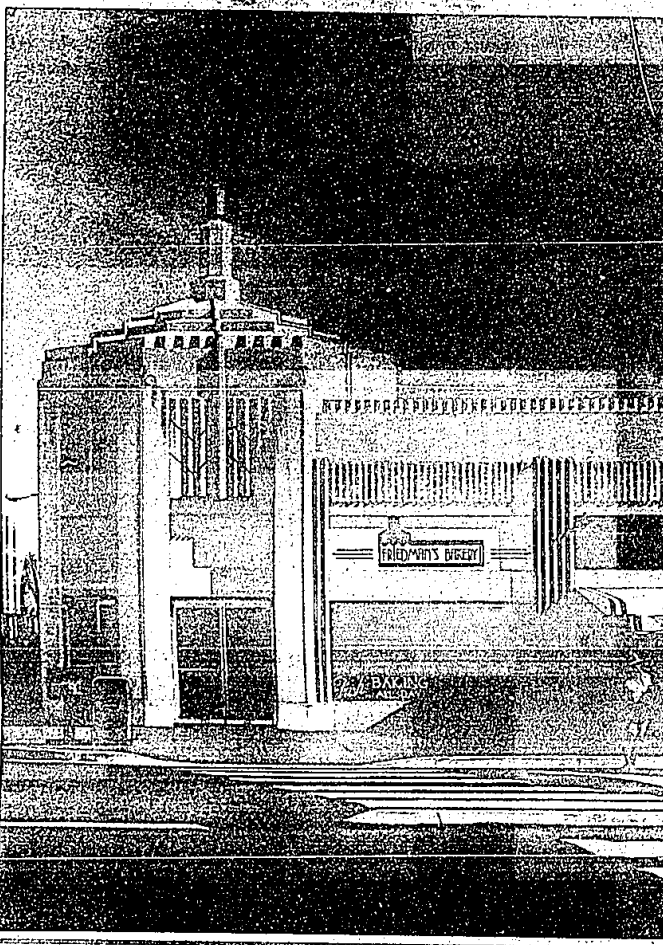
His work, available at Gallery 22 for several years, is now handled by Posner Gallery of Milwaukee and Lounsbury Gallery of Boston.

His current show continues through July 15. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Friday, until 9 p.m. Thursday and 5 p.m. Saturdays, 22 E. Long Lake, Bloomfield Hills.

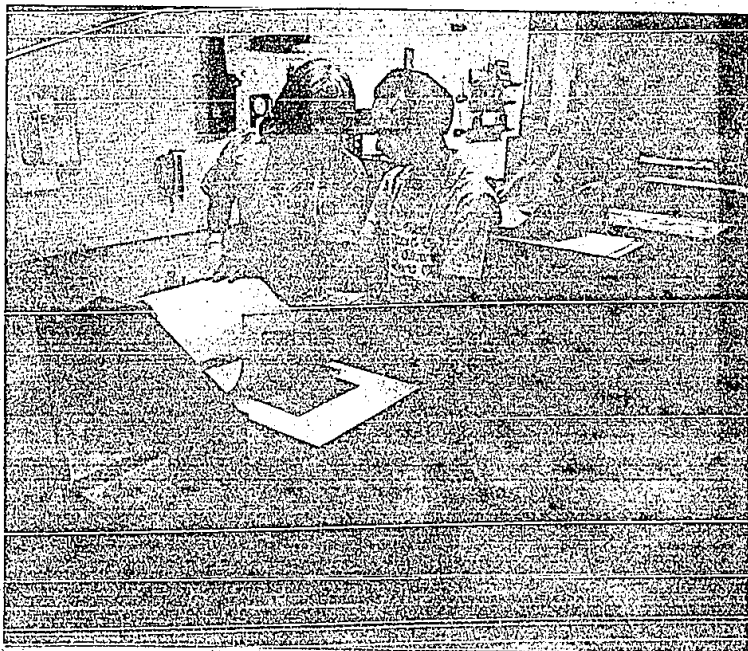
The Art Deco style of architecture in and around Miami, Fla., attracts artist Mark Rutkowski, who is well acquainted with its historical and architectural significance. Even the sidewalks in front of buildings, like the one to the right, are painted pink by city ordinance.

It lessens your work ... These are more photo realism, but I do a lot of things that are add-on, not in the photograph.

In the large vertical painting of the entrance to Detroit's Graystone Ballroom, he made the sky "postcard blue" to give strong contrast to the architecture. In another of a Florida Art Deco building, he added a diagonal string of clouds to improve the composition.



## Artists offer their first print workshop



An intensive four-day printmaking workshop will be given Monday-Thursday, July 16-19, at Phoenix Impressions, a fine art workshop/gallery, 11 N. Perry, Pontiac.

When they decided to pool their printing equipment, the sum exceeded the parts. In their combined studio, they have far greater printmaking capabilities than they would have had separately.

Plus, in the three-story building, they have provided loft space for other artists. While they have been producing prints and having regular gallery shows since they cleaned and renovated their art space, "Summer Print Workshop 84" is the first of what they intend to be continuing programs for the community.

IN THE four days, the workshop will cover the basic printmaking techniques of intaglio, relief and lithography. Photocopying techniques will be discussed.

Mark Armistead (left) watches Ted Collins pull one of his (Armistead's) prints. In the background is the Phoenix Impressions workshop. Ted Collins gets out to do some printing on another press.

The culmination will be a juried "Workshop Artists Exhibit" in the ample gallery space.

The four-day workshop, \$40 not including plates and paper, is limited to 20 persons. A three-hour print demonstration Monday only, \$10, is limited to 30.

"This is an effort to tie in with community interests," James said. "This workshop is being done for them, so let's show the community what's taking place here."

JAMES AND Collins both graduated from the Center for Creative Studies. Armistead studied there also and later continued his studies with Collins at Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, where Collins really developed the printmaking program and continues to teach.

"We're trying to say this is the art district of Pontiac," Collins said. "We're going to have a lot of artists and three in each of the buildings on either side and more space is available. Pontiac's really losing the whole growth thing on artists, restaurants and entertainment."

This is incorporated in a long-range development plan for downtown Pontiac being carried out now in conjunction with the city, he said. "They must have artists and studios."

THE GALLERY, Armistead said, is open to all artists. A regular gallery schedule of installations, open-house hours, and one-artist exhibitions is being set up. Shows are now in public Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and demonstrations for artists only.

Registration deadline for the printmaking workshop is Friday, July 20. For information, call 234-8787.

"Summer Print Workshop 84" is made possible through a 20% Arts Grant, a grant awarded to the Pontiac Art Council, the city of Pontiac and the Pontiac Foundation.