

# Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



Thursday, February 25, 1986 O&E

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## Consulting fills in her work of art

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

Marilyn Finkel, art consultant, is doing her bit to rid the world of passive art.

Finkel's description of that is "decorative, safe, things that fade away, that you forget."

Finkel herself, a slim, pretty, dark-haired woman with positive opinions about good and bad art, certainly isn't passive or easy to forget.

She has been professor of art history at Oakland Community College since 1968 and has done a lot of art consulting over the years. The two disciplines work well together for her.

IN SEPTEMBER 1986, she opened her firm, Marilyn Finkel & Associates of Farmington Hills, and put the picture together exactly as she wanted it. Her offices on Northwestern just south of Middlebelt are a short drive from her office on the OCC Orchard Ridge campus. She has a staff of three, but she's "it" when it comes to the art. "I just better not get a cold," she said with a smile.

What she tries to do as she works with architects and interior designers, she said, "is to make the art an extension of what they've already done," or, "if she comes in at the blueprint stage, of what they want to do.

For instance, when she chose the art for Crittendon Hospital, she had each area, its function and the condition of the people who would be there in mind.

SHE SAID she gets her clues on what will work from the clients, the designers and the design and function of the building. And it's not a case of her making a decision and the clients accepting it. She said she likes it best when it's a joint effort. Her attractive offices are designed to handle small conferences and presentations.

"I don't represent anybody or

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— Marilyn Finkel  
art consultant

any gallery. My whole allegiance is to the client," she said. She doesn't keep large inventory of art either, enough to suggest what she does and serve as provocative samples, but the larger inventory is slides of work from artists around the world.

So once she's come up with ideas for the art for her clients, she can present her ideas, show slides and samples, open the discussion and answer questions.

"ART SHOULD be challenging, it shouldn't be boring. Art should work with who's gonna use the building and it shouldn't be passive. I guess I love art so much that I want it to be a part of people's lives — part of the wonderful quality of art that makes it special is that it changes your perception. The most successful art demands participation — almost like a dialogue."

To keep the dialogue fresh, lively and affordable, she spends a lot of time in the marketplace, going to galleries, tracking down artists and visiting their studios. She makes three or four trips to Europe each year, was in Paris last December and Rome last summer.

"THE PARIS art scene has expanded like crazy. And I found a terrific sculptor in Sicily last summer. I go directly to the artist if possible.

She also makes use of local and national sources, "New York is

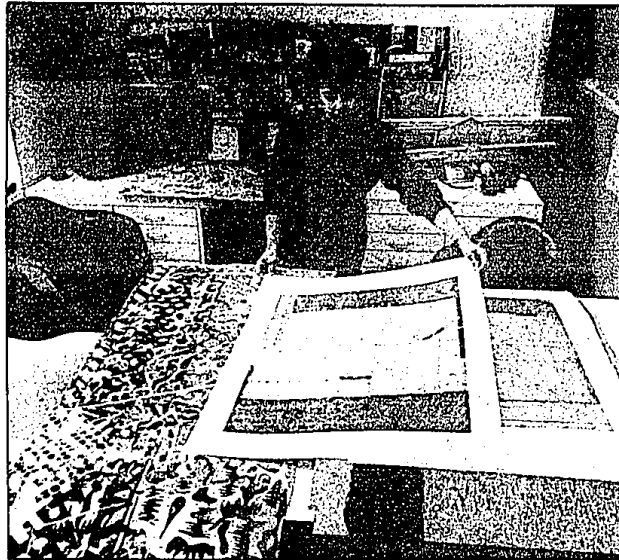
very expensive, Washington D.C. has some really good galleries. I'm attempting to find artists who are reasonably priced who have good credentials. . . young artists with good credentials with maybe museum affiliations."

She paused as if gathering her nerve then added, "I don't think there's enough places (here) where good, young art can be seen, something between the co-op galleries and the galleries in Birmingham. There are other cities where there is a huge commitment to younger artists. You've got a ripe art market here."

HER BACKGROUND in architecture has been a great help, particularly when she's called in at the very beginning of a project. Then if walls need to be strengthened to support a sculpture or skylights added, they can be drawn into the plans at the beginning when it's easy to make the changes.

She said one of the strongest selling points for her services is that she can simplify things for the architect, interior designer or builder. They may spend weeks trying to acquire the information and expertise which she has at her fingertips — that and the fact that she has an impressive track record. Right now, she is working as art consultant with Contract Interiors on all of the suites for the Palace of Auburn Hills.

AMONG HER clients are seven Hyatt Regency hotels, Liberty State Bank & Trust of Troy, Michi-



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Marilyn Finkel sorts through some of the works on the wall behind her isn't a window, it's art she had out to show a client. The scene a painting by Beverly Neumann.

gan Bell, Falne Webber, Computware Corp., Federal-Mogul, Haworth Inc., Lakeview Mall, the Lurie Co.-Chicago, Sinai, St. Joseph and Crittendon hospitals, Tam O'Shanter Country Club and Twinbrook Office Center among many others.

Finkel said her business is going better than she anticipated, "It's

growing very quickly, and I adore it."

Just to be sure the people in the building think of the art as theirs, she takes them on a tour once everything is in place, talks about the art and the artists and sends clippings to them about "their artists" whenever she finds some. That's the teacher part of her coming to

the forefront, again, she said proudly.

"What I like and see developing is a relationship," she said. "We just installed a wonderful piece of outdoor sculpture at the Federal Mogul plant in Lancaster, Pa. I love the challenge of finding the right artist for the right space."

## Group show

### These artists love to experiment

By Corinne Abatt  
staff writer

The strong bond of friendship between Jeanne Poulet and Mary Ellen Croci was born in the struggle to make it as artists and nurtured by the recognition which both of them are now enjoying.

Even their works of art, on display in a small section of Norgraphics, 2955 Northwestern, Southfield, seem touched by the bond of empathy, appreciation and understanding.

Poulet said, "Mary Ellen helped me become a colorist. Before that I did only black and white."

SHE POINTED out a hand colored etching, "Three Women," as an example of her work with color. With a broad infectious smile, she said, "I do very macabre, serious stuff," adding that through Croci she has become more conscious of feminist issues.

She expanded on their scope to say that both do art which deals with the "human condition."

"We sort of have a dream that we can make things better. We try to symbolize what we see as a hurt," Poulet said.

As Croci plowed her way toward her goal to be an artist, what could have been setbacks (a fire, the constant scramble for income) were recycled as life experiences when she and Poulet talked about them.

AND THE sensitivity to the feelings and foibles of people, which Poulet and Croci share, is one of the great strengths of the art which they produce. Another is the openness to materials, processes and issues. In her largest work in the show, "Mad Hat," Croci used gouache, watercolor and iridescent inks. The flamboyance of this is a sharp contrast to a group of smaller works done with pen and ink, India ink, Japanese ink and iridescent inks. Some are collages, others give the illusion of a mix-



Jeanne Poulet's works are often figurative, hand-painted graphics. This one contains some self-portraits.

Croci said that when she was growing up, "Art was like a little private thing, a private place to go."

HER SMALLER works in the Norgraphic show (5-by-7 and 7-by-9 inches) focusing on man-woman relationships and a woman's dreams and longings are like a window into Croci's private world, yet they still have a strong appeal for the viewer. Her paintings are packed with detail, line and color.

While the store setting is far from ideal for these often-intimate works, or for any art as far as that's concerned, this is still worth the trip.

Poulet, who works as a consultant for Norgraphics, arranges about six shows a year. The other

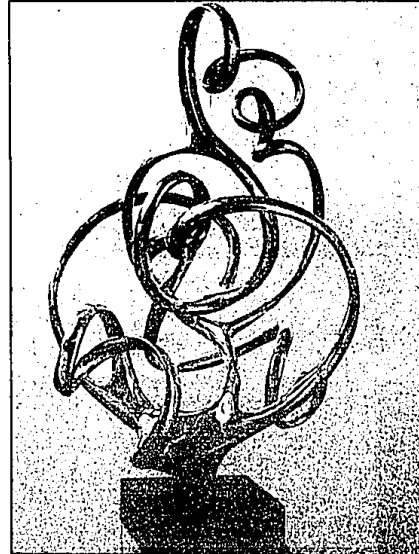


This painting, "Mad Hat," by Mary Ellen Croci is done in brilliant colors in gouache, watercolor and iridescent inks.

**'We sort of have a dream that we can make things better. We try to symbolize in art what we see as a hurt.'**

— Jeanne Poulet

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky



Polished bronze sculpture by Kieff, 38 inches high, will be in the art exposition at the Jewish Center. It is from an edition of six.

## Jewish Center hosts 1st Art Expo and sale

The First International Jewish Art Expo and Sale will be held at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, opens from Saturday and continues through March 9.

Seventeen artists will be coming from around the world to the Center prior to their showing at Arterzo at Israel, Mexico, Canada and the United States. They will be exhibiting and selling sculpture, ceramics, oils, litho's, watercolors and wood.

This is the first time that a collection of this calibre will be exhibited in this area. The artists participating

are: Israel — Yacov Agam, Itzik Ben-Shalom, Leon Bronstein, Amram Eghi, Victor Halvati, Isaac Kahn, Yosef Sassoon, Calman Shami, Gilly Stein, Meiror — Sara Meiler, Susana Schwever De Karchmer, Mily Sedy, Canada — Kief and Barbara Wertheimer; United States — Bertha Cohen, Ann Froman, Yankel Ginsburg, Michel, Roberts Shadrin, Jerry Sobie and Zamy Stelmowitz.

A reception for the artists will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, open to the public, free of charge.