



Deborah Frazee Carlson's weaving, "Inside/Photos Fish # 1," is of silk, metallic thread on industrial felt. One of the major works in the exhibit, it is 42 by 72 inches.

Strong technique, vivid imagination in Nawara exhibit

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

Nawara Gallery of Walled Lake takes on an aura of enchantment with the works of Deborah Frazee Carlson and John Hubbard on its walls. His handmade paper constructions and her textiles and paintings are filled with layers of color, sometimes dreamlike symbols, hidden meanings and flights of fancy.

Both are masterful technicians and because of their extensive skills with materials, they are capable of incorporating many subtleties into their work.

Hubbard, professor of art at Northern Michigan University at Marquette, stacks and cuts richly dyed handmade papers and combines them, in dramatic design forms, with found objects from nature such as pieces of bee nest (dyed dark blue), bird feathers, dyed grape vine tendrils and deer hair, and occasionally, bits of skeleton from small animals or fish. Often in the center, holding the whole intricate design together visually are sections of wood on which Hubbard has painted geometric designs.

There is little randomness to Hubbard's arrangements. They are strong, intense and carefully orchestrated. The discipline of line and design along with the mysterious presence which they embody makes them appear as icons of some advanced, unknown tribal society.

Carlson, a Cranbrook Academy of Art trained weaver (MFA 1981), is showing paintings of gouache and bronze powder and wonderfully sophisticated weavings that are metaphorical both in content and the spirit in which they were executed.

The artist sees the tapestries as "celebrating, and growing out of, the textile art of America, especially American women." She sees one of the largest tapestries in the show, "American Fragment Coverlet Series No. 4" as a "fragment of a

review

great treasure — pieced quilts and coverlets."

Inspired by the thoughts of the women who "solved design problems literally in the fields" and saved bits and pieces of the cloth of their lives to make into beautiful designs, she brings bits of her own life to her work in the patterns and figures she creates.

It is through these symbols and designs she weaves on her loom or paints in her pictures, fish, birds, spirals, the make-up of the universe and the human figure that she reveals herself. The figures are her children, who play a key role in her life.

To understand what both these artists are about mentally is enlightening. To have a technical appreciation for their work calls for special, but not out of reach, knowledge. She uses a computer in her weaving, without which she couldn't do the sophisticated, many layered things she does. They are backed with heavy felt.

But, even without getting involved in either of these aspects, the works are exciting aesthetically — his for the craftsmanship and the beauty of the design here for the dazzling color and patterns.

Since Carlson can apparently duplicate on a loom whatever she puts on paper or canvas, her tapestries erase the line between weaving and fine art which is sometimes drawn.

Both have impressive credentials. She had National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Michigan Council for the Arts Creative Artists Grant last year.

The exhibition continues through Sunday, April 2. Hours are 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 1160 Welch Road, Walled Lake.

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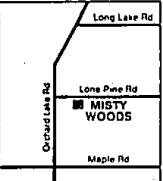
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