

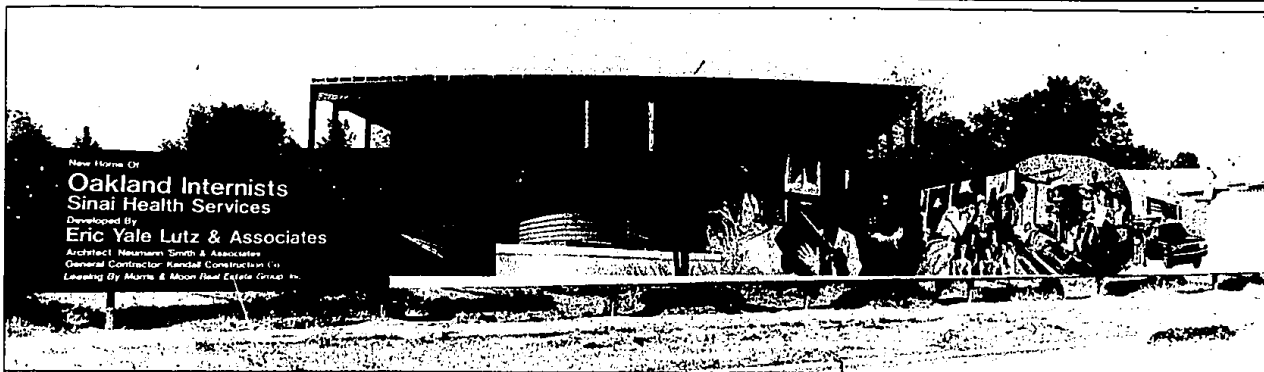
## Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



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The story told in pictures on the fence in front of the building under construction on Northwestern south of 12 Mile can be

easily seen by drivers going south beside it or those across the median, stopped for the light, heading north. It's almost like a

video in reverse. The pictures are still and the audience is moving.

## Fence art sends a positive message

By Corinne Abalt  
staff writer

Art to hide and explain a construction site may be one of the newer aspects of functional art. That's not counting the unplanned kind, such as graffiti, which just sort of shows up one day.

The kind that Eric Yale Lutz commissioned from area artist Beverly Neumann, for the front of the construction site of Sinai Hospital's Oakland Internists building in Southfield was carefully planned and executed. It even has a name, "The Art of Good Living."

Neumann, known for her large, realistic paintings, often concerned with public places and spaces, was a natural for the job. She likes to work with a loose scenario and is widely recognized for her realistic life-size figurative works.

LUTZ SAW Sinai's entry into the local community as a health care facility rather than a hospital as an opportunity to "put forth a positive image of health care," particularly when considering the vast amount of traffic that passes the site every hour, he said. The site is on the west side of Northwestern, south of 12 Mile in Southfield.

"I have always enjoyed poster and board art," Lutz said.

Lutz, an associate and the architect "thoughtfully considered



Eric Yale Lutz, developer, said he liked the idea of commissioning a work of art in order to send a positive message to the community about the building going up behind it.

what the cultural reaction to a hospital is" before deciding on the fence, he said.

"To do a billboard on a medical situation that is fun is hard," Neumann said.

BUT, OBVIOUSLY, not impossible.

The height of the 14-section work with the contour top was limited to eight feet by city restrictions, Neumann said. It was cut and painted according to her exact specifications.

It begins with a depiction of the new building at night, moves on to some of the people who will work within — a male doctor, a female doctor, a nurse — and continues with a positive scenario, a pregnant woman, a family, a boy with a broken leg on the examining table, the same boy with a cast on his leg and later jumping for joy to have the cast removed.

At the end is a couple driving away, happy with Sinai Hospital, which Neumann called "the reference to mother," in the background.

"We were flattered that Sinai has adopted these (positive approach) concepts," Lutz said.

Another positive concept that came out of this is a sculpture competition for a piece for the exterior of the new building in cooperation with Sinai, Eric Yale Lutz and Associates and the University of Michigan.

When this center is finished sometime before Thanksgiving, the panels will be taken down and kept to be used at another construction site, as Sinai creates ambulatory centers for patients in the northwestern suburbs.



Close-up of a portion of Beverly Neumann's fence/art shows her positive approach to the practice of medicine.

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

## Does democracy go too far in paper show?

By Marion Melgaard  
special writer

"In/On/Of Paper" featuring 10 artists is the third exhibition of the Ongoing Michigan Artists Program at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Like the first two, "Signs, Times, Writings from the Wall" and "Fields of Fire," it displays some really strong work along with that of a lesser caliber.

Proposed by paper artist Gretchen Deems of Grand Rapids, the exhibition provides an interesting insight into the ways paper has matured during the last decade. Paper can be sculpted to resemble metal or clay and it can be pleasingly combined with printmaking and other mixed media.

The floor of Pi Benio's intriguing and fragile, open cocoon or wigwam installation actually looks like deer skin. Benio finds her inspiration in nature — "the elements of death, nurturing, fertility and life," thus the installation might be seen as a totemic emblem. It might equally be a nest from which the birds have flown, leaving nothing behind but a scattering of white feathers.

Occupying the same gallery space and with an art noir nature theme are Jean Heilbrunn's riveting caged or strung-up animal forms. They are headless, with rodent tails and long necks that evoke the fantastical imagery of Hieronymus Bosch with the elongated lines of Marino Marini's horses.

IN THE HANDSOME illustrated catalogue, Heilbrunn writes, "I am deeply disturbed by human kind's irresponsible use of the earth's resources without respect for their nature." Her striking artform has an obvious message — the abuse of nature through mismanagement or scientific hubris.

Both Kathryn Maxwell and Paul

Stewart combine printmaking in their compelling wall pieces, although again, the themes are entirely different. Maxwell collages and layers her handmade printing in richly colored tapestries which she interprets as the relationship between the internal and the external.

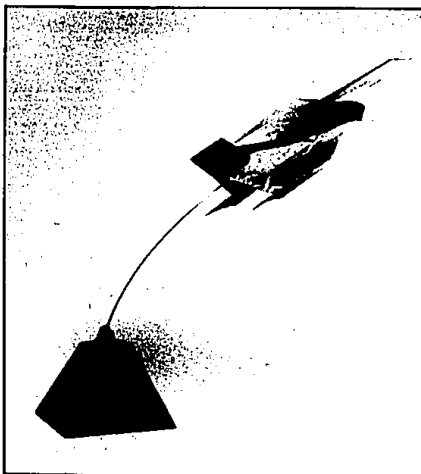
Stewart works his paper with high relief intaglio to create cerebral, geometric landscapes that suggest aerial views of cultivated or fallow fields rather than untamed terrain. He uses grooved printing-plate furrows on his paper to give the effect of ploughed or tilled fields — a mastery technique.

Marie Combe was born in Japan. Without even knowing this, the Japanese influence isn't difficult to discern in her vertical panels of delicate, but vibrant, Michigan landscapes. Cloudy and tranquil images move from panel to panel in her "Screen Porch Series," where the impressions are like waterfalls in changing lights and moods.

ANDE ROESER USES wire, metal and wood as armatures for three-dimensional freestanding sculptures. These are described in the catalogue as pieces "dealing with the deconstruction and reconstruction process." With their metal-like, corrugated mesh surfaces, this statement, like the work, might apply to industrial themes.

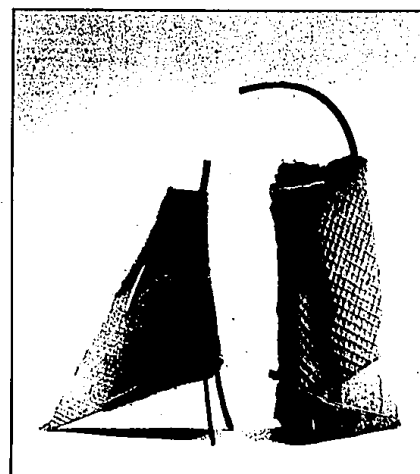
Appropos the other artists, Gretchen Deems has chosen several family motifs as themes for her free standing sculptures and large, exuberant wall pieces. While these display good craftsmanship, the pieces become bogged down with an excess of anecdotal autobiography. Likewise, Ted Renshaw's installation is lively and colorful, but he overdoes the symbolism.

Although Nancy Thayer is a



"Fear of Flight" in handmade paper is by Gretchen Deems of Grand Rapids who uses personal themes for her freestanding sculptures.

ed, sensitive artist, her three abstract pieces in this show don't carry through her "search for a transcending sense of substance." With a geometric design of floating and static elements, the compositions are fairly interesting (especially the others), but the theme of the "fear of flight" or "fear of the unknown" is not particularly compelling. Some OMAF's busy message to



"Last Tango" by Ande Roeser of Grand Rapids illustrates how the artist uses armatures to create three-dimensional, freestanding works of handmade paper.

ing their work to a panel of fellow artists to be judged.

Director Samuel Sachs brought the program to Detroit after discovering that a similar democratic program worked well during his tenure in Minneapolis. Though OMAF is a step in righting the neglect of Michigan artists by the Detroit Institute of Arts, the democratic approach to art

doesn't always work. It is encouraging news that Jan van der Marck, curator of 20th century art, intends in the future to personally curate an exhibition of artists living in and around Detroit.

"In/On/Of Paper" continues through Sept. 4 at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward. 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.