

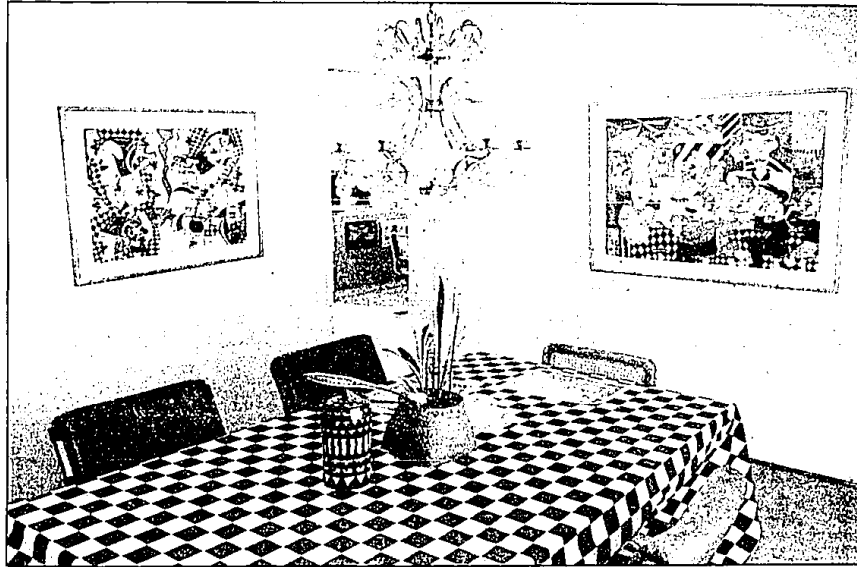
Creative Living

Marie McGee editor/591-2300



Thursday, March 2, 1989 O&E

(F)1E



Jo Rosen continues the mood in the paintings from the restaurant series hanging on the walls of her dining room right into the room itself. At left, the artist pauses in front her targa ab-

stract that hangs in her studio/living room. A comfortable grouping of leather chairs are trimmed in the colors of the painting — marigold, black, jade green and hot pink.

Color, color everywhere

While she was busy painting, she became an artist

By Corinne Abalt
staff writer

Jo Rosen, West Bloomfield artist, is as good as her word.

When she says, "I love color," she means it. She LOVES color. A visit to her home, where the living room is her studio, is an up experience.

Her brilliant watercolors, abstracts and people scenes are on the walls, along with drawings and paintings by her two young children and her friend, Andrea Smith, a well-known artist.

THE LIFE-SIZE torso in the front hall that started life as a men's store mannequin sets the stage for Rosen's approach to her art.

"I painted this during my splash period," she said, resting her hand on the armless shoulder of the mottled gray/purple figure.

Another splash period painting faces it on the opposite wall.

Post-splash period paintings, however, are concerned with people. These often crowded scenes come

complete with a biting wit and satire.

Whether Rosen is showing the faces of people in the nudist colony with their eyes closed, the restaurant crowd or the Southwest from a West Bloomfield point of view, she injects humor, color and subtle surprise in her work. Even her very latest abstracts have people in them — the trick is to find them in the brilliant maze of color and design.

ROSEN, WHO has a degree in childhood education from Eastern Michigan University, taught school before she discovered the excitement and joy of painting. Since then any surface is fair game — fabric, walls, floors, furniture, paper and canvas.

"I have done people's bathrooms. I do it all. I get calls for walls . . . She has a flourishing business in hand-painted clothing and particularly likes to do whimsical family portraits on sweat shirts.

"I've sort of become the artist I wanted to be when I was young and never thought I would be — and I love to share my work," she said.

It's constantly changing, she said. The bold black and white print cover on her dining room table is a trademark. It's somewhere in each

painting. As the central element in the room, it appears to turn the entire area around it, with Rosen's dramatic watercolors on the wall, into a giant painting.

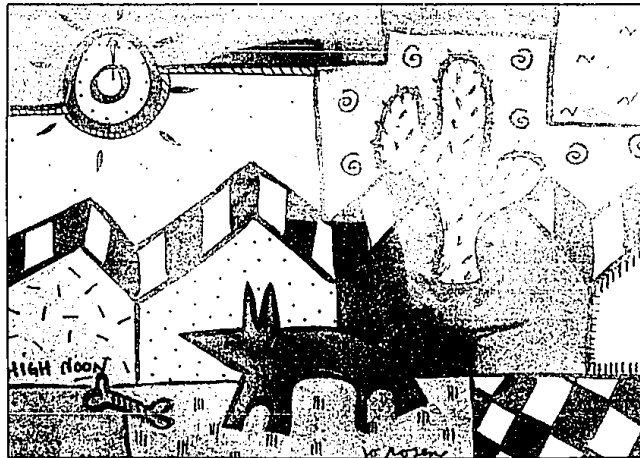
It's a mystery why this outrageous barrage of color and design coming from all directions in her home and her paintings works. Suffice to say, it does.

HER WORKS are in Homestead Gallery of Wall Lake, Tona and Gallery of Farmington Hills and Posner Gallery of Southfield.

Also, this is the fifth year she will be part of the Sholen Alechem Institute art exhibition, Friday-Sunday, March 10-12, at Shenandoah Country Club, 5800 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Hours are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

This is the 26th year the institute has sponsored this show, one of the leaders in showcasing new Michigan talent as well as many of its respected, established artists.

Jo Rosen says her Southwest series, example of one in the series is pictured at right, is done from the perspective of someone living in West Bloomfield.



Staff photos by John Stormzand

Updated traditional moves into spotlight

By Joan Boram
special writer

If you're reading this newspaper while lying on a bed of nails, you can get up now — comfort is in. If you're reading this newspaper while sitting on Mom's recycled sofa, you can be proud of yourself — tradition is in.

If you're reading this newspaper in the dark because you're eating meatloaf, you can turn the lights on — Midwest is in.

That's the gospel as presented by Linda Stephenson, retail events editor of Metropolitan Home magazine and featured speaker at the grand reopening of Gorman's Troy store.

The store was celebrating a \$100,000 renovation with all new merchandise and colors for more than 100 room settings.

Calling tradition the "new avant garde," Stephenson made it clear that tradition, like nostalgia, isn't what it used to be. It certainly doesn't mean a return to plastic runners on the carpet.

"Tradition is a stepping-off point," she said. "Classic shapes in sofas and chairs are being made more luxurious through the use of opulent fabrics."

STEPHENSON USED a chair in Norma Kamali's New York showroom as an example of the use of upholstery to lend style and panache to a "fusty old men's club chair."

Kamali, better known as a fashion designer, covered the over-stuffed piece of furniture with a high-style black-and-white plaid.

"The fabric would make a wonderful blazer," Stephenson said, "Kamali was inspired by the 'little black dress' idea. A lot of her upholstery fabrics would make marvelous blazers or suits."

Disregarding the sensibilities of some of the audience, Stephenson, made the point that that tradition has no bounds. "The 1950s are history, the 1940s are pre-history, at least to the 'baby boomers.' Platform seating, along with Victorian and art nouveau, is the new traditional. Andy Warhol posters and Marilyn Monroe memorabilia are the new collectibles."

Comparing a sofa to the suits in a wardrobe, because of its price and basic function, Stephenson demonstrated that the sofa's character could be changed by the use of different upholstery — ticking, damask tapestry, canvas, pastel silk.

Each fabric will produce a different spirit in the classic sofa shape.

Continuing the wardrobe metaphor, Stephenson described easy chairs as shirts and ties used to liven up the basic sofa. As accent pieces, chairs are the place for flowered fabrics, dramatic prints, metallics and cut velvet. A lot of black and white is used to achieve a sophisticated look with little effort.

"There used to be about a two-year time-lag between clothing colors and upholstery colors, but today colors appear simultaneously in each. Top interior designers often scrutinize a client's clothes closet to see what colors and styles the client is comfortable with and decorate a home accordingly."

"Bill Blass and Norma Kamali attract a clientele with different lifestyles and tastes. The home is no longer a showplace, the emphasis is on comfort."

"Five years ago, the furniture industry introduced jewel tones, but they didn't go over because they were too intense, too hard to live with. They have been reintroduced this year in dustier tones, still rich, but easier on the eye, and are very popular."

"Side chairs and tables are like earrings — an impulse buy. When you feel like adding something new but inexpensive to your wardrobe, you go out and buy a pair of earrings. There is wonderful whimsy and design in occasional chairs, and they can buoy up the spirit of a room."

"TABLES ARE NOT just a place to put lamps anymore. They are true accessories. They have both character and great legs. There are bronze tabletops and lots of inlay woods. The emphasis is on workmanship, with a lot of attention to details. Table legs, too, are important."

Demonstrating her thesis, Stephenson showed a table inspired by an ancient Egyptian design. The base was a sheaf of golden metal "wheat," topped by an elegantly simple glass oval.

Gorman's president Bernard Moray said that creating the 100 plus room settings in the store was similar to designing individual rooms in 100 plus homes. "We used the same process you would in designing a room in a home, define the space and furnishing parameters, create a theme and integrate texture, color and pattern."



Linda Stephenson, retail events editor for Metropolitan Home magazine, compared buying home furnishings to buying a personal wardrobe.