



## Very special objects

The show by seven contemporary African-American artists, "The Appropriate Object," continues at Detroit Institute of Arts through Sunday, July 16. Shown at right is Untitled No. 2 by Oliver Jackson. Above is "Keep for Old Memoirs" by Betye Saar. Other artists represented are Alvin Loving, Maren Hassinger, Richard Hunt, Raymond Saunders and John Scott. Loving, born and raised in Detroit, now lives in New York City. Hours at Detroit Institute of Arts are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.



# Composer talks about his opera for children

By Mary Jane Doerr  
Special writer

Robert Xavier Rodriguez sat at the Baldwin piano at David and Karen DiChiera's home, playing Puccini's lush melody of "O mio babbino caro." He was accompanying University of Michigan voice major Judith Ellis for the piece now famous as a television wine advertisement.

Rodriguez is not only an accompanist, but he knows the opera arias by memory. He is a world-renowned composer, now a special consultant to the music director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and faculty member of the University of Texas.

Via a grant from the Texel Land Company, he was here to conduct a workshop with children about his latest children's opera, "Monkey See, Monkey Do."

The half-hour opera is being presented in schools in West Bloomfield, Bloomfield, Birmingham and Rochester by the Community Programs Department of Michigan Opera Theatre.

"I BELIEVE that children's works should be of the same standard as those for adults," said Rodriguez, who has composed 17 orchestra works and six operas now in publication. "I think it is very important



Mary Jane Doerr

never to write down to children. Children can be a very demanding audience."

He said the qualities that make this work a children's piece are the funny story, the bigger-than-life characters, the quick pace and the challenging music.

"Monkey See, Monkey Do" is a story of the Italian tale "Caps for Sale." The monkeys steal the hats of a hat salesman, who tries various tricks to get his hats back.

Rodriguez composed this opera as a commission from the Dallas Opera with what he calls a mariachi folk music ensemble (violin, cello, clarinet, trumpet, guitar, piano, percussion and two accordions). It is published by Galaxy Publishers in New York.

"This project is part of a larger plan of MOT and Opera Pacific to bring together composers, producers, publishers and audiences to view new works," said Karen DiChiera, director of community programs for both Opera Pacific and MOT, the largest producer of children's works nationally.

RODRIGUEZ RECEIVED the Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco, Prix Lili Boulanger, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Guggenheim Award and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts for his compositions.

He has received commissions from conductors such as Eduardo Mata, Neville Martinne and Antal Dorati. Before joining the Dallas Symphony, he was composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

"Monkey See, Monkey Do" was first composed for puppets, but is being produced for live singer actors here in Michigan. There are roles for six singers and a chorus.

"I prefer to compose for the live stage — ballet and opera," Rodriguez said. "I find happiness in working with people in music to fulfill their needs. I find people more interesting than ideas."

# Gallery director makes things happen

By Corinne Aball  
Staff writer

If your gallery is out of the mainstream, then bring the mainstream to your gallery.

Terri Shapiro, founder/owner of Homestead Gallery of Walled Lake with partner Dore Schwartz, has an enthusiastic attitude toward art and a fine-tuned sense of merchandising. That may be enough to overcome the old "location, location, location" thing the smart guys talk about.

Shapiro, in fact, has taken advantage of her location. Not only does she gather good-size crowds for her openings by giving a percentage of opening sales to causes such as Common Ground and cancer research, she's in the midst of planning an outdoor art fair on the lake front in September.

"I love it," said this young-looking, thirty-something artist turned art entrepreneur. "It's my dream come true. . . . We've sort of found our niche with emerging artists."

The gallery handles contemporary art. That includes sculpture, fabrics, wearables, jewelry, paintings and prints, all done with a fresh, kooky approach that is generally colorful, sometimes a bit raw or rough around the edges, and often invigorating.

THERE ARE lots of artists represented — from Jo Rosen of West Bloomfield, who hand-paints sweat shirts and T-shirts as well as canvases with a combination of humor and disarming sophistication, to Judy Coe of Franklin, Debby Friedman, who taught at Oakland Community College, and George Gravelandinger, retired, whose paintings are kind of early Van Gogh (doesn't he wish?). While most of her artists are from Michigan, Shapiro was unpacking ceramic wall masks from a West Coast artist last Friday.

The Sculptors Guild of Michigan opened a show there last Saturday, which will continue through June 25. So sculpture by Reba Pinchak, Joyce Gottlieb, Earle Davis, Ed Rusting

and others is displayed with the pleasantly outrageous painted furniture by Jonathan and Laura Rood Kinny of Bingham Farms, photographs and paintings of cars by Rusty Fisher, framed cast paper works by owner Schwartz and many others.

Only one of Shapiro's paintings is in the gallery. She simply hasn't had time to get many done since the gallery opened last September.

Shapiro has become quite knowledgeable about the old, picturesque Tuttle home that the gallery occupies. She has taken an interest in the development and growth of the Walled Lake community. She has organized at least a half a dozen shows and openings, as well as workshops and classes.

PAPERMARBLING TECHNIQUES is conducted by Rose Marie Clarke from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays; hand-painted silk with Joanne Bellet is given from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursdays; and Schwartz gives a handmade

paper workshop from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sundays.

Meanwhile the owners are planning a show of paintings by Rosen July 8-23, the first photo contest and show, juried by Monte Nagler, Aug. 26 to Sept. 17 and the first outdoor art fair Sept. 17.

All of this brings lots of people to the Walled Lake community and the gallery. Good for everybody and those who come seem to like it.

Shapiro and Schwartz share the hours. Shapiro has a husband and two youngsters, so she likes weekends for the family. They live in Farmington Hills. Schwartz, a Franklin resident, needs some weekdays for other responsibilities, so she likes to work weekends at the gallery.

The view of the lake from the gallery's front porch is beautiful, likewise the gallery's view of the future. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, until 9 p.m. Thursday, 135 S. Pontiac Trail, Walled Lake.

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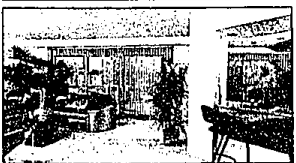
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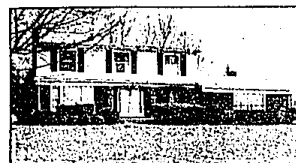
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