

CREATIVE LIVING

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MARY KLEMIC

Artist shapes dreams out of colorful fiber

Calman Shemi's soft paintings are both landscapes and dreamscapes.

They are landscapes in that their texture is like a terrain. Laying your hand on the fiber, you feel ridges and textures, the different materials subtly coming to the top in an arrangement of gentle curves and various shapes.

They are dreamscapes in that they are surprisingly lighter than expected. At a glance they look like carpeting, but the abstract images on them that invite memories and imagination have an ethereal quality.

The paintings are on display through Nov. 28 at the Danielle Peleg Gallery, in the Crosswinds Mall at 4301 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

Shemi describes these works as collages. The wool and felt he uses present more sides to catch the light than a flat painting does.

"The texture of the fibers catches the light much better than when you paint a painting," he said.

Most of his work is based on nature and landscapes — with such subjects as flowers, grass and human figures.

"I never use buildings."

Different shapes appear as you examine the soft paintings, such as trees, a sailboat, fields, flowers and grass. Angled lines and images convey a sense of a breeze passing through. The colors are vivid and bold, from a vibrant prism to pinks and blends.

"Shemi uses explosions of color," said gallery owner Danielle Peleg. "I think he is one of the best abstract artists living today."

The artist first makes a color drawing to serve as a guide, then cuts pieces of fabric by hand and lays them down, layer by layer. Some pieces may be pulled apart so they are wispy. Others may be narrow curves.

The layers are pushed into the background fabric by large needles, and are permanently affixed — without thread — by special machine. It's a process Shemi developed after he saw scraps of fabric and decided to put them to use.

Shemi, who works from a studio in Israel, was born in Argentina in 1939 and began sculpting at age 13. He studied with German-Israeli sculptor Rudi Lehman and Italian-Argentinian sculptor Libero Badli.

The Peleg exhibit, the gallery's fifth showing of Shemi's work since 1985, features acrylics, lithographs and etchings, among other pieces. They include his painting captures sculptures that look as if they are assemblage of parts of paintings.

Non-traditional

Ed Rossbach and Katherine Westphal, the artists featured through Nov. 28 at the Sybaris Gallery, 301 W. Fourth in Royal Oak, put a non-traditional spin on traditional art forms.

The artists, who are husband and wife, are two of the most influential figures in contemporary fiber art. Rossbach graduated from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills with a master's degree in ceramics and weaving in 1947. Rossbach uses such techniques as silkscreening and photocopying to make baskets. He makes them from newspapers, cereal boxes or anything else that is contemporary. It's his way of declaring fascination with the "very simple, wonderful things that are a part of our lives."

His baskets may be lacquered in bright colors, bear such pop images as Mickey Mouse or resemble African cloth. Anything, anytime may inspire him: His work "The Gallery" was inspired by a Sybaris floor plan.

Westphal presents textiles that feature combinations of the ancient and contemporary. What looks like an old Indian ceremonial outfit bears feathers, speed limit signs and traffic signs. A "Warrior Shirt" shows newspaper photos of football players. A row of red feathers includes a pair of ruby slippers.

The cat's meow

The one-person show at the Rochester Hills City Hall, 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, this month and next has several "tails" to tell.

They're the tails attached to various felines that inspire the watercolors of Mary Hickey, a Dearborn resident who has studied at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, the Center for Creative Studies and Wayne State University. She is a member of several organizations, including the Farmington Artists Club, the Livonia Arts Club and the Michigan Watercolor Society.

The reason behind the exhibit's title, "Cats, Flowers and Other People," immediately becomes apparent. Hickey's cats are like people, showing a variety of expressions in such works as "Nude Sunbather," "Late Night TV" and "Bag Cat." And the artist is as fond of flowers as she is of cats.

A cross section of cats is displayed, from the rich and the famous show cats to "The Poor and the Homeless" in a shelter. Whiskers Marie, Hickey's live-in cat model, is a frequent inspiration.



Fired up: Priscilla Marino of Bloomfield Hills made this clay piece, which drew a purchase prize.

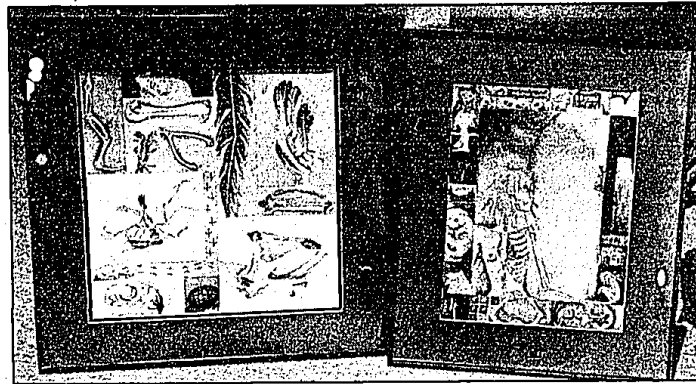


PHOTO BY GUY WARREN

Double recognition: "Of Birds and Bones" (left) by Carolynn Hilsinger of Berkley was named Best of Show in this year's Helen DeRoy Art Competition at the OCC Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills. Hilsinger's painting "Memory Haunts" (right) was named as one of the purchase prizes. The works will be exhibited Nov. 13 to Dec. 3 in the Smith Theatre Art Gallery on campus.

Subtle works share message

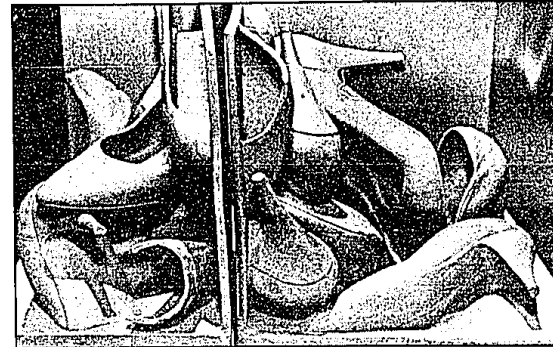
■ The annual Helen DeRoy Art Competition at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills encourages area artists and gives the public a chance to view the quality and variety of their work.

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER



Both artists and public art get a boost in the exhibit of the Helen DeRoy Art Competition, opening 7-9 p.m. Friday and continuing to Dec. 3 in the Smith Theatre Art Gallery, on the Oakland Community College Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

See ART, 5D



Shining shoes: "Foot Talk" by Meg O'Reilly of Bloomfield Hills was named outstanding sculpture in the competition. The work is in terra cotta ceramic.

Sculptor's spirit soars with birds

BY MARY KLEMIC
STAFF WRITER

Audubon had his paintbrush. Alfred Ponte has his carving tools.

Audubon's avian art glorified the canvas. Ponte carries his subjects into three dimensions, sculpting with such skill that the birds seem frozen in time and space.

"There's such beauty in birds," said Ponte, a Rochester resident. "You take a feather and it's so intricately designed. It is so beautiful. You see the hand of the Creator in a feather."

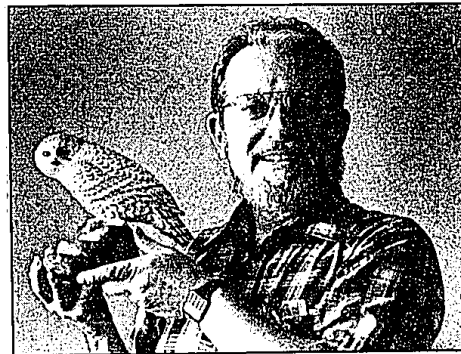
Ponte is one of more than 100 artists taking part in the Art One Fall Fair 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday in the Physical Education Building at Oakland Community College. The college is one mile east of the Pontiac Silverdome at 2900 Featherstone, west of Squirrel, between M-59 and Walton. A portion of each \$3 ticket to the

fair will be donated to the Detroit Institute of Arts, and all proceeds from a silent auction of art work will benefit the DIA.

Other area artists whose work will be featured in the fair are Robin Servo of Bloomfield Hills (jewelry), Carol Berhart and Stan Magdall of Birmingham (ceramics and glass, respectively), Judith Fitzpatrick of Farmington Hills (jewelry), Michael Crumb and Linda Selman of Rochester Hills (ceramics and fiber, respectively), Cheryl Noonan of Troy (fiber) and Ted Petok of West Bloomfield (painting).

Ponte's home, where he fashions his fine feathered friends, is a silent bird sanctuary, filled with a cross section of graceful creatures: waterfowl, birds of prey, songbirds; chickadees, wrens, owls, eagles. ("They're all my favorites.")

See BIRDS, 6D



JIM RIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Fine feathered: Alfred Ponte of Rochester shows a sample of his handiwork: a lifelike sculpture of a snowy owl. Ponte will be one of the artists featured in an art fair to benefit the Detroit Institute of Arts this weekend.

Artboat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

For information and reviews of musical performances, please turn to the Entertainment section.

■ FABRIC FACTS

The Fabric Gallery, a store that recently opened at 2656 S. Rochester Road, in the Hawthorne Plaza in Rochester Hills, is offering two classes: "How to Treat Problem Windows/Rooms" Wednesday, Nov. 18, and "How to Make Swags and Jabots" Wednesday, Dec. 2. Both classes begin at 7 p.m. Seating is limited. Call 299-0055 for reservations and more information.

Participants in the November class are encouraged to bring floor plans, window measure-

Art Beat

ments and samples of fabric, paint color and carpeting. Fee is \$10. The December class will cover everything from measuring the window to installation and several variations of swags. Fee is \$30.

■ TAKING THE WRAP

Monte Nagler, a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills who writes a column for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, noted married artist Jim Clary of St. Clair, and about a dozen other celebrities will take part in "The Great Holiday Wrap-up," a benefit for the Meadow Brook Theatre 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18, at the Great Oaks Mall, Livernois and Walton in

Rochester. The artists will wrap and autograph purchases from any stores at the mall, and be available to talk with the public.

Nagler will donate some of the proceeds from the sale of his new book, "Statements of Light," that evening to the theater. Clary will have his latest book, "Ladies of the Lakes II," on hand.

■ GETTING THE POINT

Bentrice Keober of Farmington Hills, Gail Sirna of Rochester and Linda Watkins of Troy are among the state's top needlework artists who have work in "A Celebration of Michigan Needle Artists: Bridging the Past with the Future," an exhibit continuing through Nov. 22 at the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame in Lansing. The display features more than 80 pieces by 16 artists, many of whom have national reputations. For information, call 517-484-1880 or 517-372-9772.