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Of particular interest are the adaptations of traditional sand paintings, a fundamental element in almost all Navajo ceremonies. Because the original symbols were regarded as sacred, they are slightly altered in modern renditions so that spirits will not be angered by being unnecessarily summoned. The larger pictures are priced up to \$695; the smallest, five inches by eight inches, sells for under \$6.

Another way of appreciating the Native American legacy is through the eyes of the European or American sculptor trained in the classical tradition.

For a look at gift considerations at the higher end of the price spectrum, visit Connoisseur Galleries in Troy. Two experienced appraisers and executives of Connoisseur, Matthew Virzi and Gary Gumushian, make sure everything you see is authentic and competitively priced.

Here you'll find representations of the vitality of the Cheyenne on horseback by Frederick Remington and the steady gaze of Geronimo by C.E. Dallin.

But it is present-day sculptor Dave McGary's dramatic rendition of a war-weary Native American warrior that conveys an even larger sense of historic destiny. This bronze has a presence that could make it a future Remington. The 18-inch-high bronze called "Long Soldier" is from an edition of 50 and is

priced at \$16,000.

Following the success of a previous season, Carol Hooberman's Gallery in Birmingham will again combine artistry with environmental conscience by featuring birdhouses handmade by Appalachian craftspeople and decorated by artists who often display their works in her gallery.

As might be expected, the birdhouses vary in design and color, but all agree they make a unique gift that can be used outdoors or inside the home as an art piece. The prices range from \$30 to \$185, and proceeds are donated to the National Wildlife Federation.

If you're intrigued by the style that blends naturalism with sophistication, then look for handmade baskets by Winnie and Sam Yao at the Point Creek Center for the Arts in downtown Rochester. The couple travel to Florida for the materials that make up their baskets, which are subsequently dyed deep jewel-tone colors. The baskets are from \$35 to \$65 and are part of an exciting selection of affordable items gathered in time for holiday giving.

Should style trends interest you even more, then stop by the Chameleon Galleries in Plymouth for stunning examples of raku, an ancient ceramic firing technique that yields deep, iridescent colors. This technique has become popular lately, and you can understand why when you see Steven Olizewski's

work. His pieces are \$325. Denni Englehart, owner of Chameleon, has other smaller pieces for less.

When humor and irony are your main avenues of expression, the Mark Pierson painted wood sculptures at the Russell Klatt Gallery in Birmingham provide the right outlet. A visit to the Southwest also awakened the artist's inspiration — but in quite a different way from those who seek out time-honored legacies.

Instead, Pierson, who is gaining an international reputation, captures the mystique of the present-day Southwest in anecdotal coyote figures as well as in limited-edition lithographs. Although his coyotes are humorous, they are nevertheless a serious art form for their ability to comment on human foibles and frailties. The sculptures, measuring from 21 inches to 31 inches in height, are approximately \$1,100 in typical editions of 350 pieces.

More whimsical sophistication can also be found at the Posner Gallery in Farmington Hills. Madeline Posner carries a number of Frederick Prescott sculptures that actually involve movement and neon. They range in price from \$1,500 to \$7,500 and promise to generate comments from everyone on their originality.

Ruth Letzer, owner of the Private Collection in West Bloomfield, highlights another aspect of the post-modern mind set with a collection of

glass sculptures and vases by the Levi and Michaelis design team. One piece in particular is clearly intended for people who want to make an elegant statement in their home. The piece contrasts gray and aqua doves against the stark black and white geometric shapes of the vase itself. Letzer has many other glass pieces such as colorful paperweights beginning at \$50.

Colorful glass candlesticks by designer Cece LaPage are featured by Catherine Glazer in her Artloft Gallery in Birmingham. They're priced from \$48 to \$155 depending upon their size.

Ann Kuffler of Ariana Gallery just down the block gathers one-of-a-kind glass ornaments from 25 artists for special sale in her shop in time for the holidays. These ornaments are from \$5 to \$50.

Though less inclined to make headlines or shape trends, M.I. Hummel and Enesco Precious Moments figurines appease another popular viewpoint. If you're inclined toward this Lilliputian world, then make your way to one of the two Genna's Gift Galleries. One is in downtown Rochester, the other in Warren. There you'll find an amazing assortment that includes fine Swarovski crystal up to \$3,000 and multi-colored glass vessels from Pilgrim Cameo Glass for \$395. Genna's also carries miniature Victorian houses starting at \$37, which are popular with miniature train collectors who use the houses for their train set landscape.

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