

Clay from page 1B

Southfield clearly influence designs. The collectible boxes resemble buildings, although in an abstract manner. Contemporary yet classic, they reflect the 29-year-old artist's affinity for detail. The latest pieces from Agee's Satellite collection resemble remnants of some primitive civilization, possibly African. These new designs come from his subconscious while practicing a metaphysical energy balance technique or form of meditative state called Reiki.

"My journey in becoming an artist has also been a spiritual journey. Reiki opens up your creativity. A lot of polymer work is light and happy and whimsical. And that's fine, but this is a high-tech space age material, and I feel my work should reflect that," Agee said.

"Sometimes I almost feel the work is a primitive artifact from an alien race that landed here

thousands of years ago, yet it's futuristic."

Art never interested Agee while a student at Stevenson High School in Livonia where he concentrated on preparing himself for a career in architecture. Instead, drafting classes inspired his exacting nature. His studies at LTU on a full scholarship failed to satisfy, he says, because of the curriculum. He switched subjects and schools. Half-way through a degree in computer science at the University of Michigan-Deerborn, Agee quit when he discovered polymer clay and "the artist that was deep inside burst forth, unstoppable." It probably had more to do with the fact he wasn't working with his hands all this time. From the age of 13 knitting ingrained in him the enjoyment gained from the tactile sense of fibers. He stumbled onto polymer clay while ordering custom but-

toms for a sweater at a knit shop in Birmingham. They were made of polymer. Excited by the relatively new medium, he joined the Metro Detroit Polymer Guild to further his knowledge of the material. Van Roche's book, "The New Clay: Techniques and Approaches to Jewelry Making" became his bible.

"I'd always done things artistically like macramé, wood burning and model rocketry but it never held my interest. Then I started experimenting with polymer making jewelry. I became encouraged when I began entering shows and was accepted."

Agee realized before long that marketing was the key to any artist's success. He placed an advertisement in "Niche," a magazine aimed at progressive retailers looking for hand made crafts. Last fall in an attempt to gain his share of the marketplace Agee ex-

hibited in a wholesale craft show. Although far from successful, it whet his appetite for the business end of art. Agee now has work in several galleries and art centers around the country including the Riki Schaffer Gallery in Pontiac and Gallery 222 in Dearborn. He plans to show his new line in February in Philadelphia at the Buyer's Market of American Craft, the largest wholesale craft show in the country. He sees the \$1,200 booth fee as an investment in the future.

"With corporate downsizing, you just don't get the stability in making a living anymore. My plan is to turn this into a full-time business. I'd eventually like to inspire other people the way I've been inspired. A lot of artists slip through the cracks even though they're extremely talented because they don't know how to market their work."

Oriental Art Society discusses bronze art

Artheat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Mary Klemic, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling (810) 644-1314.

ORIENTAL DISCUSSION

Members of the Friends of Asian Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts will be guests at the Michigan Oriental Art Society meeting Sunday, Dec. 3, at the Troy Public Library, Big Beaver Road at I-76.

Sara Irwin of the Royal Ontario Museum will give a slide lecture, "Shang and Zhou Bronzes in the Royal Ontario Museum." The museum is well known for its large and significant collection of ancient Chinese objects, covering

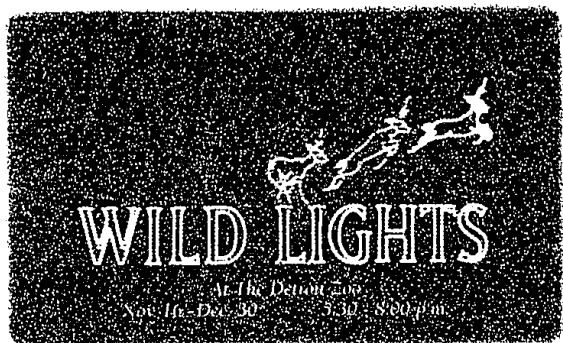
ARTBEAT

a time span of more than 1,000 years. Irwin's talk will focus on how the museum came to have such an impressive collection and its Early China galleries scheduled to open in February. Social hour begins 1:30 p.m., followed by the lecture at 2 p.m. The public may attend. Admission is free.

GOOD FORTUNE

Some clever cookies are helping promote the Holiday Sales Show at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, 1618 S. Cranbrook Road in Birmingham. The cookies are fortune cookies.

See ARTBEAT, 3D



The Detroit Zoological Society presents WILD LIGHTS. With a total of 250,000 lights, WILD LIGHTS features more than 40 animal sculptures.

Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1.50 for children ages 2 through 12. Detroit Zoological Society members receive a discount. For additional information call (810) 541-5835.

WILD LIGHTS is made possible in part by: The Detroit Edison Foundation, ANR Pipeline Company, and The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. *Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

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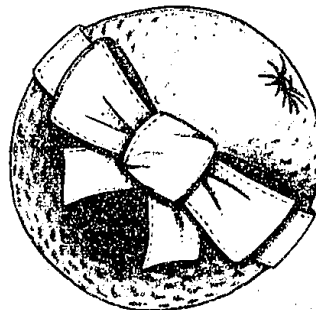
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