FINE ARTS

Recent works sparkle, sizzle with color

PERSPECTIVES

MARY KLEMIC

Early July, which brings to mind fireworks, was an especially good time to visit Ludo Tcherniak's Rochester studio.

The artist, known for her impressionist paintings, was displaying a variety of large recent canvases (six to eight feet square), some of which seem to explode with vibrant color while others feature soft shades like those of gently lingering trails of smoke in the sky.

The intriguing images include that of a figure with arms outstretched toward circles of light as if wanting to embrace them, suggesting man and the universe, and another of a veiled face, suggesting personal shells in which to hide. A human figure takes on the form of a tree, with parts of "branches" resembling veins and a red splash over the heart. Yet another painting can be viewed from two directions — a landscape of trees and blue sky becomes the dress of a woman.

One colorful work features a woman and a variety of merchandise; it conveys the lively and open feeling of a bazaar. The figure in another work was inspired by "Carmen." Her hair is like a mosaic cascade that is part of her dress, and her expression is simultaneously flirtatious and sweet.

The couple in one piece share a quiet, intimate moment. The woman, in flowing white, is contemplating her pregnancy. In another work, Adam and Eve are encouraged to munch on apples by a pair of snakes while a bird sings overhead.

Tcherniak has painted area landscapes, including scenes around Rochester. She has been featured on public television and participated in the Our Town statewide exhibit in Birmingham.

Tcherniak was born in Moscow and studied art from age 6. She attended the Moscow Art School and the Moscow Institute of Theatrical Arts. Working in scenic and costume design, Tcherniak put her artistic talent to use in productions of drama, opera and ballet before she came to the United States in 1991. She became a U.S. citizen in April.

The artist shows her work by appointment. Call (810) 652-7052.

Sister act

The Dancing Eye Gallery, 150 N. Center, Northville, is exhibiting paintings by Cynthia Sarris and Stephanie Sarris to July 18 (call (810) 449-7086).

The two artists are sisters and instructors — Cynthia at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Stephanie at Center for Creative Studies in Detroit. They display different styles in the show.

Stephanie Sarris presents interior studies. Bright colors and energetic lines convey liveliness; a piano room seems to be filled with music. Gray and blue tones offer quieter scenes. Items in the room in a work materialize the longer it is viewed.

Cynthia Sarris works with geometric shapes, circles and trapezoids in frozen dance and visual poetry. Another arrangement of circles suggests a traffic light. The pieces hint of captured energy.

Mary Klemic writes about Oakland County arts. Her phone number is (810) 901-2569; her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

BOOK BREAK

'The Nature of Smoke' entertaining read

BY VICTORIA DIAZ
SPECIAL WRITER

The Nature of Smoke," by Anne Harris (Tor., $29.95, 264 pp.)

How many science fiction novels have you read lately that open up with the lead character preparing to rip off a repair shop in Ferndale?

Its a rather odd beginning is not the only thing about "The Nature of Smoke" that makes it stand out. This debut novel by Detroiter Anne Harris works on several different levels. First, it's a zippy, entertaining read, played out by engaging characters against vivid backdrops. It's carefully-structured, and its author has a real knowledge of how to turn a phrase. Maybe best of all, it's thought-provoking without being ponderous.

"The Nature of Smoke" is set in the not-too-distant future in a dog-eat-dog techno-world of holograms, Sears jetliners, genetic experimentation and synthetic life forms. At its center is a tough, young Detroiter named Magnolia, who can't read or write, but knows more than a thing or two about defending herself against the threats of this shadowy world.

After having run away from her desperately poor home in a devastated, "partitioned" Detroit, she is almost murdered as she unknowingly participates in a "slasher" film in New York. Using her quick wits and street-savvy, she knifes her "co-star," and manages to flee the scene.

But her troubles have just begun. The whole event has been photographer live, and sent out via satellite to TV channel subscribers. Soon, highly important owners of this futuristic porn station will be after Magnolia for what she has done to their "star." And another sinister figure will be tracking her down too. His name is Remus Rahul, and he is "the world's only supplier of sophisticated human simulacra." He has some dastardly plans to distill Magnolin's spirited "essence," and make a bundle.

Though this story is played out against a high-tech background, new age hardware is definitely not the star here. What propels this story ever-forward are its vibrant, imaginatively drawn characters _ those who are human and those who are, shall we say, something else.

Finding a sanctuary of sorts in "Polish Siberia" ("Part of the 1998 Cultural Reparations Act"), Magnolia meets Cid, a brilliant biologist who spends most of her time with quantum particles and highly sophisticated holograms until Magnolia comes along. There, at the mysterious Wotroya House, Magnolia also comes across the exotic Tumcari, who spends most of his lonely days floating about a greenhouse pond, since he is genetically related to water lilies. (Though he's one of Rahul's experiments gone awry, he's got a charming, wry sense of humor.)

There's also Ms. Wujcik, who can do all kinds of thing, except make decisions on her own; the gorgeous Kelira, who's desperately searching for his sister in this chaotic world; and the bloodthirsty Spider and Dex, two ex-NHL stars. (Harris' take on the aquatic nature of the game is delightful.)

The cast of character goes on, but you get the idea. Reading about them is a little like getting to know the clientele of a "Star Wars" bar.

Which is not to say that this story is less-than-serious It's a carefully-considered visit into a dark future, exploring such matters as chaos and universal pattern, and the nature of smoke.

Be warned: This novel is replete with violence. In fact, Harris has a tendency to sometimes dwell at tiresome length on each bruising altercation, listing every blow and punch as if they were stops in a long, complicated dance we must all learn. But none of the violence itself is gratuitous. And, if you take this literary trip into a world of Mylar money, Indo-pop music, falafel stands, and fractal souls, you may find yourself not just taken away by it all, but perhaps a bit enlightened as well.

• Don't miss "About Books," aired Saturday and Sunday evenings at 9 on C-SPAN 2. Be there when various authors visit bookstores across the country. Stand behind the editors' shoulders as they make important decisions about upcoming publications. Watch as writers address a graduating class at a university, or talk with a book group.

Art fair *from page B1*

But the bottom line is it forces you to come up with new ideas. It stimulates your creativity," said Voorheis.

This is the first year Sarah Hicks, a University of Michigan School of Art graduate, was juried into the State Street Fair. The Birmingham resident is anxious to hear visitors' comments about her floor cloths painted with traditional fruits and flowers. Some of her tromp l'oiel style cloths mimic a fish pond or an oriental rug with a spilled glass of wine. Although most of her commissions comes from word-of-mouth, she anticipates a dramatic increase in sales after appearing in this highly rated national show.

"Ann Arbor is the biggest fair. All the artists want to get in. It's a huge four-day event," said Hicks.

This is also Walt Cole's first year in the State Street Fair although the Redford wood worker has exhibited his lathe-turned vases made from exotic woods in Birmingham's Art in the Park and Franklin's Art on the Green for three years.

"It's an accomplishment for me to be in it. The recognition is important," said Cole.

Carolyn Dulin of Rochester agrees with Cole on the value of recognition but in her viewpoint even more important is the exposure; it's priceless. Her 24-inch colored porcelain figures have been seen by 1 1/2 million people in the Ann Arbor Street Fair during the past three years.

"That kind of recognition helps your career. Rated as one of the nation's finest shows, it gets terrific crowds. A lot of artists do very well," Dulin said.

Benefit *from page B1*

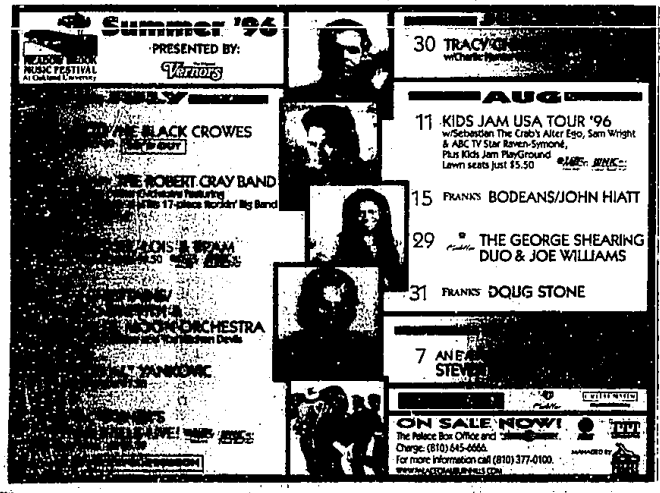
other styles of bird houses. Malek's whimsical creations raise crafting to a higher level of art. Much of the furniture is hand made by husband Ken Malek.

Something new and interesting at this year's show is Hand Art. Have your hand cast and molded. Make your own hand, your child's hand, or a parent and child holding hands. Like a portrait or bronzed baby shoes, Hands Unlimited creates a memory that will last forever. Hands are $15 each, stands $10.

A Plymouth Community Arts Council board member, Quinn is excited to be hosting a raffle Sunday, July 14 at Art in the Park to benefit phase two of renovations to the PCAC building. Win a Kawasaki Jet Ski donated by Roger Ratliff of Pilgrim Motor Sports in Plymouth. Valued at $5,750, the two person water craft includes a Shoreland trailer. Tickets are $1 each and available in Plymouth at Frances Jewelry Gallery, The Trading Post, and the PCAC office or by calling (313) 416-4ART.

"We really need to come up with matching funds of $80,000 by September 30 in order to take advantage of a Michigan Arts and Cultural Affairs grant," said Quinn.

Local artists participating in Art in the Park include Marianne Akers and her soft sculpture Boo kids, Santas and angels, and Barb and Alan Gibson, clay from Livonia; Kathy Sandberg, pottery, Tom LeGault, painting and the Village Potters Guild from Plymouth; and Rick Denomme, wildlife photography, Northville.



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1995-1996

Birmingham-Bloomfield

Cultural Arts Award

Nomination Form

I (we) nominate the following as the person or organization who has done the most to further the arts in the Birmingham-Bloomfield area during 1995-1996.

Name of Nominee: _____

Address: _____

City & Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Occupation or Major Interest: _____

Reasons for your nomination (You may submit additional typed material not to exceed 500 words): _____

Signed: _____

Your Address: _____

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Your Phone Number: _____

This award is sponsored by The Birmingham-Bloomfield Cultural Council, The Community House, Birmingham Principal Shopping District, Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, and The Eccentric Newspapers.

Nominations are due by July 31, 1996. Please send to:

The Birmingham-Bloomfield Cultural Arts Award
c/o **The Birmingham Eccentric**
805 E. Maple
Birmingham, MI 48009

Or, you may fax your nomination to (810) 644-1314.
Please call Sue Wills at (810) 901-2560 prior to faxing.