#### Superficial from page C1

Who could argue? Fashion is not only immediate, it's pervasive. There's no separating fashion, commerce, art and culture.

But fashion is not merely about appeal and aesthetics. It's shout creating a child their

about appeal and aesthetics. It's about creating a style that makes a statement about indi-viduality and personal identity. (We've all heard the explanation from body piercers about the "need to be me.") And ultimately, hat's the square aim of "Art on the Edge of Fashion."

The more serious pieces in the exhibit examine how fashion can

be shaped to bring meaning to an individual's personal history. And in understanding how clothing fashion, in particular, has perpetuated gender stereotypes. Much of that awareness, according to Hofmann, was inspired by feminism and the recognition of prejudices in language and social customs.

Over the years, how many women have been compared - or have compared themselves - to Marilya Monroe, Raquel Welsh, Farnh Fawcett, Christie Brinkley? Or more recently, to the

angelic, scantily clad women in a Victoria's Secret catalog or the anomic waifs on the covers of fashion magazines?

A man's archetypal woman is paradiad in Korrie Peterson's two sculptures, "Standing Woman I' and "Standing Woman I' and "Standing Woman I' and "Standing Woman I' and Tess hung on a steel pole inspired by Lachaise's original sculpture, while the latter, a narrow silk dress, could be draped over one of Giacometti's existentially stark sculptures.

Historically, stereotypes of

slips.
In "Maternity," a ten-stained skirt pattern held together with pins, LoFasco breaths life into an unformed garment. A case

"beauty" have been inseparable from what many males find to be sexually desirable. To its credit, "Art on the Edge of Fashion" ventures into a much more per-sonal and practical place. For instance, Christino LoRus-co has created a boudeir chair to compose the hard a will now

comfortably shaped suit any woman's bottom side, and a gold-leaf jacket made from credit-card

where the person makes the fashion, rather than vice versa.

where the person makes the fashion, rather than vice versa. And in "Hysteria" the most coherent mingling of politics and fashion in the exhibit, LoFasco has typed the words Hysteria and Herstory on a translucent skirt. Her point, however, is a bit over-the top: "History ... teaches that these who forget to think of themselves will be forgetten. So, what shouldn't be forgetten about the exhibit!"

In an age of retro-fashions, trendy hairstyles, liposuction and plastic surgery, "Art on the

Edge offers a dose of therapy for anyone coming to grips with their superficial side.

The lesson is clear. Change clothes, hair style or address, if you must. But you can't hide.

In "The Picture of Dorian Gray," Oscar Wilde observed: 'It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible."

Come clean. It's becoming fashionable to proclaim: Superficial and proud.

## Gina from page C1

day's unveiling.

Yet oven Ferrari hasn't seen the completed chandelier sculpture since it was too large to be constructed in her studio in an industrial park in Detroit.

The chandelier, which dangles from a cross beam along the ceiling in the main gallery space, includes about 700 plaster-cast impressions of Ferrari's feet in a rarray of positions. An appropriate reminder that her four-prists not only fill the gallery, but are being followed in the local art scene, where one museum director called her an artist with the potential to break onto the national art scene.

There's a tremendous curiosi-

ty about her work," said Paul Kotula, curator of the exhibit. "Gina's work is about desiro, unmet expectation. The feeling that you can look but cannot touch. It's like dipping your lips in batter, then told you can't wipe them."

Layered meaning

Inyered meaning
Intensely personal and highly
sensual, the chandolier of feet
reflects Ferrari's uncanny ability
to combine familiar forms with
her probative instincts. The 1986
Wayne State grad with an master of fine arts in sculpture from
Virginia University is a tireless
researcher who continually
revises her work.

"I'm a painstaking editor," she said. "I just keep working until the image matches the idea! I spend a lot of time in my studio." While Ferrari's work is the result of preliminary drawings and dogged reflection about aesthetics, her sculptures cannot be reduced to mere intellectualism. On the contrary, Ferrari's sculptures are both highly accessible and inspire a range of interpretations, from a simple playful innocence to metaphors of alienation and dehumanization.

tion.

Like all significant sculpture, Ferrari's work has a strong tactile impression while raising questions about form and space. Because she deals with identifi-Because she deals with identifi-able figurative forms - pigs, snakes, tongues, feet - the chal-lenge is to decode and grasp new meanings of familiar images set in a starkly novel settings. For instance, in her sculpture, the floor in a smaller room off

the floor in a smaller room off the main gallery.
On a symbolic level, "Garden" is a aubtle albeit expansive rep-resentation of evil crawling among the intimate confines of those who are vulnerable. Distilling that idea into a multi-part sculpture is a sign of Ferran's depth and promise.

#### Tongues wagging

Unlike some artists who move impulsively from subject to sub-ject, Ferrari has set a course whereby her work continues to evolve in a clearly defined direc-tion

evolve in a clearly defined direc-tion.

The origins of her recent work appeared in the fall of 1996 in her sculpture "Gugged," exhibi-ed at the now defunct Willis Gallery in Detroit. The exhibit

cattery in Detroit. The exhibit and tongues wagging.
Inspired by reading filmmaker Roberto Rossellini's screenplays, Ferrari began making casts of her body. At the time, she was also researching the culture of fasciat Italy during World War II.

The result was "Gagged," rows and rows of apparent Mickey Mouse shoes arranged like fas-cist boots in a military ware-

cist boots in a military warehouse.

Upon closer examination however, the "shoes" were actually casts of Ferrari's chin with a cork inserted in her mouth. The sculptural double-entendre was simultaneously comited and deeply moving statement of perverse uniformity.

Last January, Ferrari created a chandelier of tongues for the group show, "Labor Relations" at Revolution. Hundreds of casts of sheep and calf tongues hung from the suspended fixture.

Metaphorically, the orak in her mouth had been removed. The chandelier of tongues represent ed the liberation of speech. On a personal level, it signaled an artist growing comfortable with the power of her ideas and the mostery of her craft. While her work is gaining the attention of a critical audience, Ferrari offers a perspective too

often lacking among serious

often lacking among serious artists –a sense of humor.

"My mother sometimes really wonders about me," said Ferrar, who conceded that sometimes people think her work is more about fetishes and obsessions.

(For the chandelier of tongues) I needed a fully detached tongue for the cast," she said. It was easier to go to the (grocery) market to get an (edible) tongue since I was still using my own tongue."

On cursory view, Ferrar knows that people will look at her work and only see a plenitude of tongues, feet and baby pigs. But that seems OK.

Even on a superficial level, Ferrari has succeeded in making the mundane appear sensuous.

On the whole, her current work shows that Ferrari can speak in many tongues. And that she has walked on many roads along the way to becoming an artist.

She's got hundreds of feet to prove it.

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instance, in her sculpture, den," Ferrari has arranged hundreds of piglets lying on their sides amid a few prowling snakes. The sculpture is laid on

pastels.
Gibeau's sculptures of bone, leather and stone are a somber

Resource

from page C1

## Conversations from pageC1

ceived.
"I'm (foremost) accountable as a funeral director," he said. "Peo-ple have trusted me with a mem-ber of their family." paintings are several bold abstract acrylic paintings on board by Karen Izenberg of Ann Arbor.
At her best, Izenberg presents

A poet couldn't be any closer to

Trying to help people make sense of death isn't too much different from the task facing a little beauty out to cre-

terent from the task ment a interary artist, who sets out to create a fiction to reveal the truth.
"A death in the family brings a situation that can't be put into words," said Lynch. "People assign language that is large in existential terms."
"But the situation is a normal."

At her best, Izenberg presents stark colors in swirling nabaract forms with an occasional, well-placed paint drippings. When she pulls back from the cluttered ambiguity and concentrates on emotional coherence, rather than design, Izenberg's work resonates, especially "Rhapsody." The other two artists – Janine Gibeau and Nancy Schaff – round out the eclectic exhibit with folk art sculpture and floral pastels. "But the situation is a normal part of life, it happens to every-

part of the, it happens to everyfacing life's ultimate
inevitability brings perspective.
What's needed, as any poet
knows, are the right words.
"Really good literature puts
into words what most people find
difficult to say," said Lynch.
The challenge facing many
writers, however, is finding the
time to arrange a line of words
into a universe of feeling and
insight. Gibeau's sculptures of bone, leather and stone are a somber contrast to her playful sculpture, "Fifty Stones," made from leather and aluminum shaped into the form of large stones.

Appropriately, "Fifty Stones" is placed in the window of Creative Resource. A visual incentive to come inside and toss around a few ideas.

A CELEBRATION OF **BLACK CULTURES** 

AT THE DIA

Sunday, Feb. 1, 2 p.m.
"THE ART OF COLLECTING AFRICAN ART"

Both the novice and long-term collector can learn about

collecting traditional African art in a roundtable discussion with Roslyn A. Walker, Ph.D., director of the National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C. and Roy Sieber, Ph.D., professor emeritus of African Studies, Indiana University. Moderated by

Michael Kan, DIA curator of African, Oceanic, and New World Cultures. Sponsored by the Friends of African and African-

American Art and the Education department.

Sherwood Anderson worked in advertising before writing his opus, "Winesburg, Ohio." Wallees Stevens was an insurance executive on his way to receiving a Pulitzer Prize for his "Collected Peems."

executive on his way to receiving a Pulitzer Prize for his "Collected Paems."
Lynch's job as a funeral director before he received a nomination for a National Book Award must rank as one of the more unusual "other" professions.
But unlike his literary brethren who hit the big time, Lynch doesn't plan on changing his "other" profession.
"Writing is portable," said Lynch. "You can take it with you wherever you go."
Almost anywhere.
The wisdom in the pages of "The Undertaking" resounds with a universal relevance of commonly recited poems.
"The meaning of our lives, and the memories of them, belong to the living, just as our funerals do," writes Lynch.
Honor the dead for what they

do," writes Lynch.
Honor the dead for what they
have taught you about life, he
reveals. "Whatever being the
dead have now, they have by the

living's faith alone."

For Lynch, writing and the responsibilities of a funeral director are not so different. Faith, he knows, is an opiate to the distractory.

the distressed.

And faith, he also knows, is
the solitary writer's closest com-

panion.

A poet couldn't be any closer to

A poet com-life.
Frank Provenzano is an arts reporter for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

## Village **Players** shine

The Village Players present \*Rehearsol for Murder, \*2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 25, at the playhouse, \*752 Chestnut, Birmingham. \$12 adults, \$10 students, \$1364-42075.
BY BOS WEIGH.
BY STREAK WAITER

Village Players opened their
76th anniversary season with a
suspenseful production of
Rehearsal For Murder.
Playwright (Alex Dennison)
returns to a theater exactly one
year after his actress/fiance
(Monica Wells) dies following the
opening night of his play. The
police call it suicide. The playwright says she was murdered
by someone associated with the
play.
Dennis Wessh is effective as

Ņ

by someone associated with the play.

Dennis Wrosch is effective as Alex, but he sometimes appears rushed and "rehearsed." A pause here and there would add to the suspense. Sally Savoie is alluming as Monica with a charming stage presence.

Barbara Underwood turns in perhaps the most on the money performance, as Bella Lamb, a savvy Broadway producer.

Susan Berin's big smile and calculated walk make her delightful as Aley's ditzy secretary. Marni Raitt is very good as a young aspiring actress, Karen Daniels, And what about Monica's leading man, David Matthews (played by George

Joung aspiring acrees, Airon Joung aspiring acrees, Airon Joung and what about Monica's leading man, David Matthews (played by George Valentine), And actor, Leo Gibbs (played by Christopher Crossen). Or the director, Lloyd Andrei Charles of the director of the directo



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Sunday, Feb. 8, 2 p.m. "GODS OF AFRICA IN THE ARTS OF BRAZIL"

Mame Jackson, chair of the Department of Art and Art History, Wayne State University, discusses the historic and spiritual influence of African traditions on the arts of Brazil from the early colonial period to the present

Programs are free with museum admission. For more information, call (313) 833-4249.

Museum admission: recommended \$4 adults, \$1 children, members free. Museum hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. weekends Programs made possible with support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural

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