

# SoHo

from page C1

of gears, wheels and transmissions? SoHo is metro Detroit? Uh, not so-ho obvious.

Then again, to be self-evident would be missing the point.

In the city named for an Ottawa Indian chief and a division of General Motors, artists are finding a gritty street scene that mirrors their own wit, defiance and sense of possibility.

Along with Hamtramck and parts of Detroit, downtown Pontiac has become an artist's dream: low rent, sprawling work areas and plenty of camaraderie.

"We used to move from the fashion of one art movement to another," said sculptor Terry Lee Dill, who owns several buildings near the downtown area.

"But now, there's really no new movement in the art world. It's all about finding a new space (to create art)."

For local artists, that new place is hundreds of miles west of SoHo. Calling Pontiac an "art scene," however, is a bit of an exaggeration.

"We basically see artists in our own buildings," said Marilyn Schechter of West Bloomfield.

A publicized tour last summer of artists studios drew some media attention, but few visitors, according to Schechter.

Artists are concentrated in a few blocks from downtown Pontiac on Howard Street and the reconditioned Pontiac Business Insti-

## ■ In many ways, "SoHo In the Suburbs" is about the power of positive thinking. An attitude born from hope, not desperation.

tute a few blocks away.

Unlike SoHo, where many alternative galleries were created to show the work of local avant-garde artists, there's only a handful of Pontiac galleries, none of them known for showing exclusively the work of local artists.

And while several new restaurants have recently moved in, the specter of vacant buildings casts a shadow of doubt about how long it'll take before a thriving "art and entertainment" scene exists in the geographical center of the county.

"Cities don't realize what artists contribute," said Dill, who lived in SoHo for 16 years before moving to Pontiac several years ago.

"We move into areas where the rent is cheap, renovate the spaces and bring an energy to the community," he said. "This concept that artists are a credit risk is wrong."

In the eclectic, utility-based 1990s, "SoHo in the Suburbs" is as much a statement about a

state of mind as a striking piece of art.

In many ways, "SoHo in the Suburbs" is about the power of positive thinking. An attitude born from hope, not desperation.

### On the verge

"There's a notion that the art world doesn't exist outside of New York," said Jef Bourgeois, whose Museum of Contemporary Art in Pontiac is a Duchamp-inspired gallery of conceptual art.

"The art community needs to focus," said Bourgeois of Rochester. "The art world is ready to be punched through. We're here to create our own rules. We're not going to restrict ourselves."

Years before artists discovered Pontiac, artist Linda Golden persevered in a studio "with every code violation under the sun."

That was 15 years ago, a time of recession and pervasive apathy. Today, the Bloomfield Township resident rents an

updated space in the northern edge of an upstart downtown.

Some landlords have only modestly increased rents, said Golden. But rent in studios along N. Saginaw, she said, are increasing three-fold.

With increasing popularity, some of the Catch-22. Many businesses want to appeal to mainstream tastes while Pontiac artists revel in an avant-garde grittiness.

But there is common ground.

### Countywide Festival

A countywide festival, "Arts, Beats & Eats," is scheduled in downtown Pontiac over Labor Day Weekend.

The event will feature the works of 100 local artists, and 60 restaurants and local musicians.

Steve Weikert, director of Oakland County Arts & Humanities Council, believes that the festival could be the much-needed catalyst for a wider acceptance of the notion of SoHo in Pontiac.

"There's an attitude and flair in Pontiac," he said. "There's a feeling that this is a place on the verge, just waiting to happen."

The signs are already appearing.

"So far the billboards have accomplished what we wanted: to let people know that there's a jewel sitting here," said Chuck

Uzelac, a Bloomfield Hills resident and president of the Pontiac Business Association.

"We don't want to be an extension of Royal Oak or Birmingham," said Uzelac, a painter and sculptor who also owns the Uzelac Gallery in downtown Pontiac.

Creating a new perception will require plenty of creative energy. "The power that the artist has

is in the ideas," said artist Laurie Domaleski of Waterford, whose "Hands On Art" project sets out to build a sense of community through art.

"People might not know what's going on here. But what you say is what you create in your community."

SoHo, after all, is all about attitude.

# Ensemble

from page C1

premiers "Bella Danza," a work in seven sections based on the music of Schubert.

Rounding out the eclectic concert will be Eisenhower's three contributions, "Catharsis," "Ceilidh," and "Hey."

The entire cast will perform "Catharsis," one of Eisenhower's most engaging works performed to Phillip Glass' hypnotic music.

A new work, "Ceilidh," is inspired by contemporary Scottish music with a distinctive Celtic flavor, said Eisenhower.

And, "Hey," a comedic dance performed a capella, has been rearranged from its original version, first choreographed 10 years ago.

## ■ 'Our work is fairly accessible. Each piece really stands on its own.'

Laurie Eisenhower  
Eisenhower Dance Ensemble  
Founder

"Our work is fairly accessible," said Eisenhower. "Each piece really stands on its own."

Perhaps a more specific explanation of "Power and Passion" can be found in Eisenhower's description of the comedic touch in "Hey": "It's all in the timing."

# Paintings

from page C1

ed a second career."

### Walking United Nations

At 71, with an easy smile and a soft voice, he maintains the "aw shucks" attitude of a young man learning about the boundless horizon beyond his small Ohio hometown with a population of 1600, "counting cats and dogs."

Whether he's been working in New York or Detroit, Grey invariably returns to that central Ohio town of Plain City, where his father moved from the West Indies.

"He always told us, 'If you're going to dig ditches for a living, then be the best ditch digger,'" he said.

Grey's father, Joseph Grey Sr., did much more than dig ditches. He was the first black to graduate from Ohio State University of Veterinary Medicine in 1919.

Although Grey didn't know about his mother's Cherokee heritage while growing up, Grey's recent Native American paintings indicate a longing to understand his lineage.

"I'm a walking United Nations," he said, referring to his ethnic influences of Native American, African American, West Indian and Irish.

And in ways that aren't readily apparent, Grey is a symbol of the profound changes in Ameri-

## ■ 'Yeah, definitely, I was among the generation of people who opened the advertising world to African Americans.'

Joseph Grey  
Artist

can business since he graduated from Columbus College of Art and Design and headed to Madison Avenue.

In 40 years, Grey went from designing letterhead for a sock company to directing a Noxema campaign that broke through racial barriers to helping to create the national advertising image for the world's largest automaker.

When Grey began his career in the mid 1960s, there were virtually no blacks in advertising. "I was either too dumb to realize it, or too stubborn," he said.

"Yeah, definitely, I was among the generation of people who opened the advertising world to African Americans."

In some ways, Grey's swirling, lyrical painting style offers an apt metaphor for upward mobility.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
STAFF WRITER

Janet Friedman's students toured the Detroit Institute of Arts on Feb. 10 without leaving Cass Elementary School in Livonia. The sixth graders electric response to the Art to the Schools program, presented by docent Sharon Herman, could be felt even at the back of the room.

Friedman began inviting the museum into her classroom more than 15 years ago. The presentation enriches student understanding of the place of art and humanities in society. The docents usually precede an annual visit by students to "see the real thing."

"They need to see history in other ways than a book," said Friedman, a 30-year veteran of teaching. "They have to see it through the eyes of other people and hear it from someone else as well."

A heartening moment early in the presentation occurred when Herman, a West Bloomfield resident, asked how many students had visited the DIA. All 19 hands went up. Although students receive only 50 minutes of a week at Cass, Friedman supplements the class with DIA presentations by local volunteers in the Livonia Public Schools' Masterworks program.

"Art to the Schools starts in

fourth grade because they're developing listening and sitting still skills, and stops at sixth grade, because we want teachers to bring them to the museum to see the real art work," said Herman, who once a week takes the free program to schools in Garden City, Bloomfield Hills, Rochester, Birmingham and Clarkston.

Depending on the length of class time, docents speak from 45 minutes to one hour using the "Visual Thinking" approach which encourages students to observe and develop critical thinking skills. After writing terms such as narrative, mosaic, portrait, sculpture, Herman illustrated each with slides of art works in the DIA's permanent collection. The terms landscape and sculpture came easy to the sixth graders.

"I want you to do the work," said Herman. "I want to encourage you to start thinking about works of art in different ways, not just paintings and sculpture."

Using a bronze sculpture of a freed slave, a mosaic created at the DIA by Romare Bearden in 1986 for the 100th anniversary of the museum, and a silver ten pot crafted by Paul Revere, Herman created a slice of "American Life" which relayed this country's history from the 1700s to 1986. Greg Goddard admired

### Art to the Schools

What: Organized by the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1961, this program sends docents into tri-county area schools. The free 45-minute to one hour session enriches student understanding of the place of art and humanities in society. For those who would like more information, the DIA Volunteer Committee will hold their semi-annual Volunteer Orientation. The committee offers a number of ways to volunteer. To find out where you might fit in, call (313) 833-0247.  
When: 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Mar. 29.  
Where: In the Lecture Hall of the museum, 5200 Woodward, Detroit.

William Merritt Chase's still life of eel, stingray and octopus from the late 19th century.

Students were impressed by the art works. When asked at the end of the presentation for their thoughts, Goddard replied, "I learned the different ways you can make paintings and sculpture and that you can put whatever you feel like into them."

Laura Skrobot, who had painted a portrait of her mother in art class said, "I thought it was great. I learned you can tell a story without words."

In the 1996-97 school year, Art to the Schools docents gave 905 talks at 302 schools bringing art to 25,385 fourth, fifth and sixth graders in 71 communities. Docents receive 10 months of intensive art history studies at the museum before stepping into their first classroom. Herman, an interior designer, always


loved art even before taking the training six years ago.

"It's not only a chance for me to go into my daughter's school but a way to expand my knowledge of art history."

While Herman spoke in Friedman's class, Barbara Wojcik led a discussion next door in Marilyn Pohnan's sixth grade classroom. The chairman of the Art to the Schools program is an old hand at bringing art to life. Like all of the docents, she give a minimum of 20 talks a year.

"The training is different for younger children than it is for the older ones," said Wojcik, a Farmington Hills resident. "I love talking to the kids. I love it when they say, I never knew I liked art. We try to teach children how to look at art without a docent. You don't have to figure it out, just enjoy it or just hate it."

### Become an Official Member of the Woodward Dream Cruise™!



**Saturday August 15, 1998**

- A "Members Only" exclusive, collectible numbered membership ship/phone card good for 10 minutes of calls. This card is rechargeable with a portion of the proceeds supporting the Woodward Dream Cruise™, Inc.
- An exclusive "Member" t-shirt (not sold separately)
- An Official Lapel Pin
- An Official Cashmere
- An Official Keychain
- The official Woodward Dream Cruise™ newsletter with the latest news on this year's cruise
- An exclusive "Member" t-shirt (not sold separately)
- An Official Refrigerator Magnet

Send your \$30.00 check made out to Woodward Dream Cruise, Inc. and mail it along with the completed form below to: 1998 WDC MEMBERSHIP, P.O. Box 7000, Farmington Hills, MI 48334. Post office will not deliver to a P.O. Box. Deadline to apply is July 1, 1998. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

**1998 WDC MEMBERSHIP FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
DAYTIME TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
T-SHIRT SIZE: M L XL XXL XXXL \_\_\_\_\_  
CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY  
Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_

WDC™ Hotline: 1-888-4WDC-1963 Visit our Website: www.dreamcruise.org

## SUGARLOAF

4TH ANNUAL  
SPRING NOVI

# ArtFair

**APRIL 17, 18, 19, 1998**

NOVI  
NOVI MICHIGAN  
LOCATED IN THE NW SUBURBS OF DETROIT, MI

**300 ARTISANS**  
from 34 states & Canada

For exhibitor listings & more detailed directions visit  
[www.sugarloaforarts.com](http://www.sugarloaforarts.com)

DAILY ADMISSION \$4.00 • FRIDAY - SUNDAY 10-4  
Under 12 FREE • Demonstrations • Entertainment  
PARKING FREE COMPLIMENTARY OF SUGARLOAF  
No pets please • Strollers not recommended

MICHIGAN: Located on I-96 northwest of Detroit at Exit 163. Go south on Novi Road. Turn right onto Expo Center Drive.

Booking Inquiries call (248) 280-7900



JAMMER JACK

## Target TRAVEL SERVICES, INC.

# Spring Break Special

**Detroit to Fort Myers, Florida**  
SERVING SEVERAL RESORT AREAS  
marco island, sanibel island, boca grande, naples, just to name a few...

**NON STOP DEPARTURE ON 4/11 RETURN 4/18**  
BEST PRICE IN TOWN... **\$360** per person

OPTIONAL HOTEL PACKAGES STILL AVAILABLE  
\*\*commissionable to travel agents

Call **Target Travel Services**  
**Birmingham**  
at **248-647-8855**

Target...to be sure you're headed in the right direction

**759 forest st. • birmingham**  
email: [targettriv@earthlink.net](mailto:targettriv@earthlink.net) • website: [targettravel.com](http://targettravel.com)