

Skin from page B1

Ferrari start abstract, head for more rarefied air and become an exercise in obscuritism.

Thankfully, there is no easily referred to "ism" that neatly describes the breadth of their elegant expressions. Rather there's a more earthy feeling that ties together the three dissimilar exhibits.

In a word: skin-like. Layers and layers.

**Beneath the surface**

Beneath Berriolo's silk damasks and brocades are shapely wooden structures. The effect is a highly animated, richly textured sculpture that reflects an acrobatic sensibility that is both playful and formal.

Using distinctively ornate Italian fabrics together with her strongly implied gestures,

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currents. Kotula claims that Lee's choice of imagery and form reveals the painful path of cultural assimilation.

In her subtlest sculptures, the integration of traditional Korean patterns merge with fundamental rectangular shapes. The result is a serene reconciliation of utility and identity.

**An obsession**

In contrast to Lee's restrained mannerism, the drawings on paper by Ferrari reveal an artist relentlessly pursuing an idea. Or

Expressions from page XX

Bloomfield Hills, Thom was killed in an auto accident more than 10 years ago.

"The Scottish Settlement School near Dearborn where Henry Ford once attended, Thom went in and visited the class and took photographs of the class and teacher," said McConnell.

"We're now giving his painting a second life."

**A history of its own**

R. L. Polk, named after its founder Ralph Lane Polk, has been based in Detroit since 1870 when it produced a directory listing the residents, professionals and tradespeople living and working in towns along the Detroit and Milwaukee Railway. Today, about to enter its third century under the leadership of the Polk family, the international company still publishes city directories, but also compiles and interprets motor vehicle statistics, provides direct marketing, database marketing and other information services.

"Polk prints 40 million calen-

repeating an idea.

"There are things Gina is doing that no one else is hitting on," said Kotula.

Few would argue. Over the last two years, Ferrari's installations have been provocative, awe-inspiring, and always, challenging.

Last January, she created a chandelier sculpture of 700 plaster-cast impressions of her feet. And in the fall of 1996, Ferrari's exhibit, "Gagged," included rows of plaster casts of her chin with a cork inserted in her mouth.

In her current exhibit, Ferrari displays the same obsessive curiosity with her small markings on paper. The collection of markings compose a large-scale drawing that is highly fluid, and abstractly compared to long strands of hair blown by the wind.

"I've always been curious what her work would look like if she hired someone to do all the replication," said Kotula.

"Every mark is a distinct mark, not just mass produced. Yet there's this amazing repeti-

tive quality."

Like her compelling large-scale sculptures, Ferrari succeeds at demonstrating the transition whereby an obsession becomes a beautiful form worth contemplating and talking about.

But the meaning of Berriolo, Lee and Ferrari's work, of course, is strictly open to interpretation.

And that's probably the way it should be.

dars a year," said McConnell. "I was on the Sesquicentennial committee when I learned about the paintings by Robert Thom. They belonged to Ameritech and slides still existed for the paintings used 30 years ago. Thom originally created the 'History of Michigan' series for Michigan Bell in the 1960s."

**Cover artist**

Parish began illustrating for art studios in the Detroit area in 1945. He originally studied commercial art at Cass Technical High School. At age 75, he's retired from commercial art but continues to paint portraits. Resources are important to Parish no matter what the medium. He researched subject matter for the oil painting for Polk at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village in Dearborn.

"The man holding the book is the founder of R. L. Polk and taken from a photo of him at the turn-of-the-century," said Parish. "Those businesses really did exist there on Woodward at

that time."

When McConnell and the Society began the calendar project they had no idea that the artists they'd chosen were mentors. Overwhelmed by commissions for historical art, Thom asked Parish to help him paint two series on Illinois and printing. They remained friends through life.

"I used to work for Bob who used to have an art studio in Detroit," said Parish. "He was doing a series for Parke-Davis on the history of Michigan and the history of pharmacy. He became so busy he asked me to paint some of them."

That taste of historical art instilled a love in Parish so that when R. L. Polk approached him about painting the Detroit street scene, he jumped at the chance.

This is the first Detroit Historical Society calendar and one of several to come as Detroit builds toward the celebration of its 300th birthday in 2001. Look for artist William Moss' paintings of Detroit in the year 2000. For

2001, McConnell, an educator at heart, is "working on an idea to use college students to create paintings for the calendar." He is also seeking information about historical events to fill the days. Local historical societies, corporations, labor unions, civic groups, and other organizations are encouraged to share their stories with the "Days of Detroit" committee. McConnell can be reached at (313) 833-7937.

P.S. Thanks Alicia for your voice mail to wish me a Merry Christmas. It was really nice to hear that you enjoy reading the Arts & Leisure section, and are a fellow wolfhound lover who doesn't mind hearing about the antics of Shamrock, my 3-year old Irish Wolfhound. I hope you eventually find a wolfhound as sweet as the late Molly.

If you have an interesting idea for a story involving the visual or performing arts or simply want to share your thoughts, call arts reporter Linda Ann Chomin, (734) 953-2145 or send e-mail to lchomin@oc.homedcomm.net

**ART BEAT**

**THAT'S A VIEW**

The Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center will host a tour of Florence, Siena and Rome, from April 22 to May 2.

Joining the tour will be renowned photographer Balzhazar Korab, who is currently working on a photography book of Roman rooftops.

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The tour of Italy will be led by art historian Deborah Kowsky and BBAC's Executive Director Janet Torno.

Participants will visit the Uffizi, Sistine Chapel, Davanzati Palace in Florence and the Villa Farnesina in Rome.

Estimate tour price of \$3,079 is based on double occupancy. It includes airfare, hotels, admissions, transfers, and most meals. A \$500 deposit is required to

reserve space. Deadline for final payment is Jan. 22.

Winter classes on Italian art and architecture will be offered at the BBAC.

For more information, call (248) 644-0866.

**MEADOW BROOK NAMES NEW DIRECTOR OF MARKETING**

Douglas W. Coon has been named Meadow Brook Theatre's first-ever director of marketing

and sales.

Coon, a native of Gaylord, comes to Meadow Brook from Duke University, where he served as a marketing/publicity associate.

Coon holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in arts administration from Virginia Tech where he studied under nationally renowned arts consultant George Thorn.

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CZECHLAW ZUREK, THE BEAST 1987.

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