

# CPOP from page B1

trators," noted Carrie Hazel, assistant director at CPOP Gallery and a West Bloomfield native. "They will be on two different floors. They are two separate shows. It will bring in two different types of audiences."

Hazel described Hussey's work as "raw, etched and methodical," while Taxali's approach is "clean, straightforward and whimsical." Despite divergent styles, the artists happen to be friends.

"I'm really honored and excited to be showing together," said Taxali. "Tim is one of the nicest guys I know. He's coming from a very different place. He's more angst-ridden and serious, and I love that stuff. My stuff is real low-brow."

With shocks of animated, primary colors, single words that shout child-like delight, careful depictions of one lonely peanut or a perplexed toy monkey, Taxali shares a new world. His world exists somewhere between the "ZAP" "WHAM" "BAM" of a 1986 *Batman* episode and the simple joy of a quick solo game of paddle ball. It's a place where you never really need to grow up — as long as you remember to laugh.

"I'm really excited about this show," said Hazel. "It is the

mainstream of illustration, just completely different styles. I've found a lot of artists...who have a whole huge wealth of personal work they never get an opportunity to show. It's fantastic stuff."

### No rules

Taxali began taking classes at the Ontario College of Art at age 18 before he was really allowed to do so. While still in high school, he attended night classes at the college, eager to learn. Once he was able to enroll full time, his college friends were already graduating and he found he had valuable mentors to guide his way.

One year after graduation, Taxali moved to New York City. He lived as an illegal alien and worked there honing his craft. He didn't plan on returning to Toronto, but when his father died suddenly of a brain tumor, he felt a responsibility to his family and moved home in 1993.

Taxali took advantage of dramatic events and devoted himself wholly to art and illustration. He developed a signature style and learned an important lesson. "If you put out something you love, it will come back to you ten-fold."

From Coca Cola commercials

to Levi jean billboards, record covers to *Newswavek*, his work runs the gamut. Saturday he will be coming to Detroit straight from the Society of Illustrators awards gala in New York City where he will be presented with a silver medal in the Uncommissioned category. Taxali recently sold his artwork at a Los Angeles exhibition, *Uncommercial Art by Commercial Artists*, held at La Luz de Jesus Gallery. He's also working on a children's book to be called *This Is Also Silly*.

"I'm at a point in my career where I feel really comfortable," said Taxali.

### Monkeys and such

Dividing his time between illustration projects and his own fine art, he finds one type feeds the other. "I'm really inspired by humor and I think my work is kind of humorous," he said. He finds inspiration from the funny, the bizarre. Taxali could extract ideas from a comedian's performance as easily as he can find inspiration in the packaging on Japanese grocery store items.

For this show, Taxali combines an interest in Japanese groceries and the inexpensive toys sold in sweet shops in the 1950s. "It isn't really sophisticated," he

said of the toys. "It isn't fancy, but it has a real beauty to it."

Perhaps his biggest influence is derived from a 1960s Japanese television show called *Kure Kure Takora* (which translates to *Give Give Octopus*). "It's a very bizarre show with short, 3-to-4 minute segments, all in Japanese," said Taxali. The premise of the show falls upon two friends, a peanut and an octopus, who are both in love with a walrus.

But his favorite piece at Saturday's opening is called *Toy Monkey*. "The only reason is it was the very last piece I did for the show," said Taxali.

"You can't have a show without a monkey."

"*Sweet Shop Toys, Candies and Books*" and *"Shed"* open 6 p.m. Saturday, April 7 at CPOP Gallery, 4160 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. The show runs through April 29. Call (248) 833-9901.


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## Local actors make a date with 'The Boy Friend' at the Bonstelle

"The Boy Friend," a joyful musical comedy by Sandy Wilson opening Friday, April 20 at the Bonstelle Theatre, features the talents of four local actors.

Tiffany Bedwell and Jason Smith of Garden City, Darren DeWitt of Farmington Hills, and Mary Gormley of Livonia perform in the musical about a poor little rich girl's search for a boyfriend to love her for herself and not her fortune.

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**Garden City grads**  
Bedwell and Smith are both Garden City High School graduates and junior theater majors at Wayne State University.

Bedwell will play the role of Hortense, the French maid in "The Boy Friend." Her WSU credits include the role of Helen Keller in "The Miracle Worker," and roles in "The Cripple of Inishmaan," "A Fair Country," and "Little Women."

She is a member of Movin' Theatre, the WSU theater dance troupe that travels to area high schools.

Smith portrays feisty Lord Hubert Brockhurst. His role in "The Subject Was Roses" at the Studio Theatre won him the

1999 WSU Best Supporting Actor Award for a Studio Theatre production. He is also a member of Movin' Theatre. WSU theater credits include "Dancing at Lughnassa," "Godspell," and "Romeo and Juliet" at the Bonstelle Theatre.

DeWitt is a graduate of North Farmington High School and is featured in "The Boy Friend" as Bobby Van Husen, a rich American boy who attempts to woo girls by dancing the Charleston. He is also a member of Movin' Theatre, and has previously appeared in "Romeo and Juliet" at the Bonstelle Theatre, and "All the Timing at the Studio Theatre."

Gormley, a senior theater and dance major at Wayne State University, is dance captain for

the Movin' Theatre company. She is a graduate of Mercy High School and holds the Eva Woodbridge Scholarship given to a senior woman who excels in theater.

Her credits include "How I Learned to Drive," and "All in the Timing" at the Studio Theatre and "The Miracle Worker," "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Ahi Wilderness" and "Once Upon a Mattress" at the Bonstelle Theatre.

### Curtain times

See "The Boy Friend" are 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, through Sunday, April 29 at the Bonstelle Theater, 3424 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tickets \$10-\$18, call (313) 577-2960.

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