

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA CHOMIN

## Landscapes inspire artist

Jim Nawara moves from painting to painting almost in a choreographed dance around the Community Arts Gallery at Wayne State University. The Beverly Hills artist seems only too eager to share the process and thought behind 22 landscapes that capture Michigan scenery in all its beauty, if not pristine state.

From Rouge Valley and Peche Island to Fleming Creek at Matthaus Botanical Gardens in Ann Arbor, Nawara looks for interesting aspects of places, frequently choosing to depict evidence of human activity. A mowed field, pruned trees, a drain in the middle of a luscious lake scene, remnants from a lumber mill left on a Lake Michigan shore - Nawara is "intrigued by the effects of people on the land and the resulting contrasts between natural and manmade forms." He often chooses places people occupy and then abandon. Hence, the title of the show *Depopulated Landscapes*.

### DEPOPULATED LANDSCAPES

What: Jim Nawara exhibits 22 landscape paintings  
When: Through Friday, March 1  
Where: In the gallery of Wayne State University's Community Arts Center Building on Cass at Kirby. Call (313) 577-2423

Many of the works were created during Nawara's sabbatical from Wayne State University's art department where he's been a professor of painting and drawing for 32 years.

### Don't miss

The mysterious *Night Garden* is a favorite because of its location and not to be missed. The snow scene, dramatic blues, grays and whites, makes viewers wonder about the story behind this place. Nawara knows exactly what he had in mind when he painted snow caught on the wire of a fence - throwing shadows across a blanket of white. It's his backyard.

"It's not a literal reproduction. It's a layering of time and ideas," said Nawara about the watercolor, a medium seldom seen in the show. Nawara paints primarily in oils. "They all have anecdotes to go with them. This bridge over Cherry Creek, it was done in February of 1999 in a friend's backyard in Deckerville and there was no snow, which in itself is unusual for February. Nearly all paintings are started on site even though 99 percent are completed in the studio. The first percent is important cause I like to experience the color. I like

Please see CHOMIN, B2



Monument: Jim Nawara's exhibit of recent works includes this oil which shows how man destroyed the beauty of nature along the Lake Michigan shoreline.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE JACOB AND Gwendolyn FOUNDATION

Daily life: Jacob Lawrence frequently painted people engaged in manual labor in Harlem. This gouache on paper work is titled "Ironers" (1943).

## Exhibit documents the art and life of Jacob Lawrence

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Jacob Lawrence loved to tell stories about African Americans - their triumphs and struggles - through his paintings. These were his people and he was immensely proud of their history from slavery days to the Civil Rights Movement.

**OVER THE LINE: THE ART AND LIFE OF JACOB LAWRENCE**  
What: A major retrospective featuring 160 of the African American artist's works  
When: Sunday, Feb. 24 to Sunday, May 19. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday, until 9 p.m. Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday  
Where: Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave.  
Tickets: \$8, \$5 age 17 and under. Call (313) 833-8499 for exhibition information. (313) 833-7900 for general information

Hughes and artist Romare Bearden. Lectures by Harlem Renaissance figures inspired Lawrence to later study at the Uptown Art Laboratory, now the Harlem Community Art Center, which still nurtures young people today. It was there he studied form and color and learned about modernism. During his lifetime critics would label his work as primitive and modern. He crossed over the lines between these two styles. No one knew exactly how to describe his style of creating art

Please see LAWRENCE, B3



Abolishing slavery: John Brown's victory at Black Jack (1941) is featured in this work from Jacob Lawrence's series on the abolitionist eventually hanged for treason and murder.



Vaudeville (1951): This work was executed after Jacob Lawrence's 11-month stay at Hillside Hospital in Queens for depression. Lawrence painted this egg tempera on hardboard from memories of performances at the Apollo Theater on 125th Street.

Lawrence became the first artist of African descent to be represented by a major commercial art gallery. He crossed the line between uptown and downtown and in so doing developed a philosophy about art's ability to address social issues. It was a theme he would pursue throughout his more than 60 years of painting vibrant, semi-abstract narratives.

Organized by The Phillips Collection, *Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence* opens Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Detroit Institute of Arts with 160 of these works.

"It's a major retrospective," said Valerie Mercer, curator of the General Motors Center for African American Art at the DIA. Mercer will talk about Lawrence and his work 2 p.m. Sunday in the Lecture Hall. She originally saw the exhibit in New York at the Whitney Museum of American Art, one of five stops on the tour that continues to 2003. "The viewer will learn a lot about his art but also his life. He was very prolific."

A catalogue raisonné documents and illustrates all of the known paintings and drawings executed by Lawrence between 1926 and 1999. Lawrence was 13 when he arrived in Harlem in 1930 during the Renaissance era when black writers, musicians and artists flourished. Classes at the Harlem Art Workshop in 1934 enabled Lawrence to learn from Charles Alston and meet writer Langston

DANCE

Firebird: Dance Theatre of Harlem perform their signature piece at the Detroit Opera House.



## Dance Theatre of Harlem steps to classically American beat

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Harlem's rich cultural legacy inspires choreographers like Robert Garland to create popular music ballets that draw on urban and social dances. Garland wasn't born uptown but never forgot watching the Dance Theatre of Harlem perform when he was a 10-year-old growing up in Philadelphia. It was the multicultural company's rhythm and energy that eventually led to studies at The Juilliard School in

New York City but something was lacking, said Garland - his African heritage.

In 1985, Garland finally realized his dream of becoming a member of Dance Theatre of Harlem, the only predominantly African American major ballet company in the world. After dancing as a principal for 13 years, he took a hiatus but is back as choreographer. From Thursday Feb. 28 to Sunday March 3, the company will showcase his popular music ballet *Return* at the Detroit Opera House. In addition to the

work created to celebrate the dance troupe's 30th anniversary, the company will perform two programs set to music ranging from Bach to Aretha Franklin.

"As a company we work varied styles from West African technique to putting on pointe shoes for a Balanchine ballet to pieces like *Return*," said Garland. "The most important thing for Dance Theatre of Harlem is eclecticism. We're much more than a ballet company

**DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM**  
When: 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday, March 1-2, and 2 p.m. Sunday, March 3  
Where: Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway  
Tickets: Call (313) 237-SING or online at www.MichiganOpera.org  
Opening Night Gala: 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, includes a reception, performance and supper at the Detroit Athletic Club. \$150. Call (313) 237-3425

Please see HARLEM, B3