

Pottery, painting make a compatible show

By CORINNE ABATT

There's always an element of risk in planning a two-person art exhibit. Will the works be compatible? Will one outshine or overpower the other?

In preparing for their combined show at the Troy Art Gallery Jo-Anne

Westerby of Troy and Phyllis Ihman of Southfield each asked themselves these questions. Mrs. Ihman is a studio potter who does small porcelain vessels in classical shapes with a single fire glaze. Many of her glazes have crystalline structure in them, some complex and readily apparent, others so subtle

that just the right light is needed to bring out the crystalline qualities. Her colors range from intense blues and greens to very subtle off whites.

MRS. WESTERBY is as at home on large canvases as she is with smaller paintings. She builds up layers

of resin acrylics and resin oils to create movement with swirling masses of colors and dramatic shading.

Yet, when both artists arrived to deliver some of their work for the gallery show which opened this week, all fears disappeared. Each artist's pieces retained their independence while light and color bounced back and forth between paintings and porcelains with added values.

Along with the paintings Mrs. Westerby is showing several moco prints which she said, "Are just now coming out of the classification of bastard."

She paints on glass, lays the paper on top and then pulls the paper from the plate without using any kind of a press.

"It's very spontaneous, very controlled, and a terrific challenge," she said. "You get effects you just can't get with a brush."

BECAUSE OF the process, a single moco print may be pulled, possibly one or two additional ones. However, each will be different in both color values and textural qualities.

"I like the change of doing something like that and then I will go back to painting with resins," she said.

Mrs. Ihman said that she works in the studio in her home at least eight hours a day as many days a week as she can manage.

"If I'm away from it for too long, I'm not me, I can't imagine doing anything else," she said.

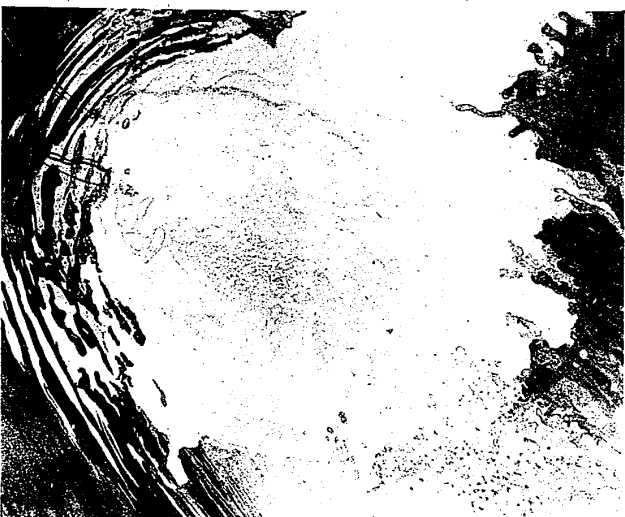
She credits one of her early teachers, John Foster, with developing the Oriental influence in her work. She also credits him for developing her compelling love of the media.

She picked up one of the classic porcelain vases which are in the show and said, "The formula I am using for these is very similar to that used during the Sung dynasty."

Many scholars believe that Chinese ceramics were at their zenith during that period.

'A lot of my glazes are right on the line. If you play it safe, they're ordinary. They have to be right on the edge.'

— Phyllis Ihman



One of Mrs. Westerby's paintings in the Troy Gallery show makes a statement as much concerned with life as swirling water. (Staff photos by Dick Kelley and Stephen Cantrell)

"I feel like those shapes (classical Oriental) don't belong to any one time or color," she said. She curved her hand around one of them and said, "It's like the pulse beat of your whole life. My pots are happy pots, I can only produce when I'm happy."

She and Mrs. Westerby agreed that while art and creative pursuits gener-

ally add to happiness, there are moments when the tension can build very high.

Their show, "Paintings and Porcelains," will continue at the Troy Art Gallery through April 7. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 755 Big Beaver in the Top of Troy concourse.

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