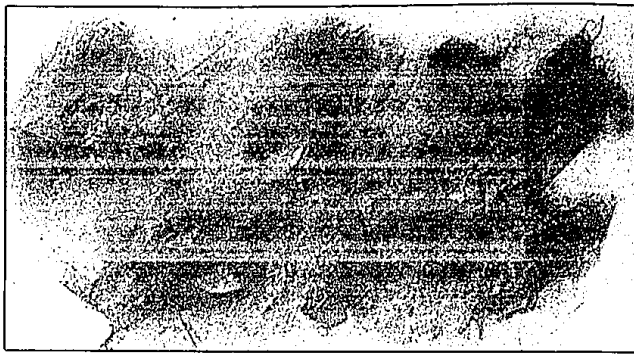


Barbara Coburn said she wants to build a new studio sometime this year because she's older, the studio space seems to have grown ready outgrown the one she's had for the past



One of Barbara Coburn's newest paintings (above), not quite finished, shows how faint images are beginning to evolve through the many layers of paint. This, like the slightly earlier one pictured below, is done in rich pastel shades in the blue and blue green to pink and lilac range of colors.

Staff photos by Jerry Zolynsky

Artistic goals within reach

By Corinne Abatt
staff writer

The gods continue to smile on Barbara Coburn. When she made up her mind 10 years ago to return to painting after working in fiber for several years, sales and acceptance came steadily. Her abstracts were sometimes reminiscent of the work of Paul Jenkins, an artist whose imitations are legend. But, even then Coburn's paintings had a delicate, often sensuous beauty about them.

Now, with a decade of steady painting behind her, she has strengthened her technique, deepened her approach, moved to a larger format and expanded her markets.

Her work is still abstract, but in her paintings of the past year, there are some influences of Chinese calligraphy, and from deep within the layers, an occasional fragment of an image emerges.

"I'm an intuitive painter," she said, "I paint my emotions. There's a certain mystery. I don't like to intellectualize too much. I don't have a preconceived idea of what I'm gonna paint — I just go with the flow."

But, the flow, when it's paint, is always under control. The decade of experience has given her the surety and the expertise to express the emotions which come welling forth.

COBURN ALWAYS MIXES her colors. She knows exactly how to get the one she wants and precisely how to use the tricky metallics she likes so well.

The decision on whether to reach for a soft, small sponge or one of the many fine bristle Japanese brushes on the counter of her studio is automatic.

She knows when a painting isn't complete and she knows immediately when it is. The difference may be several weeks to a month before it is resolved. She studies, carries it upstairs from the studio in the living room, looks at it in different lights and settings.

"When I'm done, I know that I'm done," she said matter of factly.

Music, she said, helps unlock the flow of emotions and, in turn, the flow of paint. Her fascination with large geodes and raw, beautiful crystalline and rock forms shows in her painting which often conveys the idea of wonderment at natural phenomena.

"One of my goals," she said, "is to get my paintings in a lot of big corporations in Michigan."

AT LEAST A PART of that has already taken place. Ford Motor Co. and General Motors have Coburn paintings in their collection. She recently did a large painting for the lobby of the Hayatt in Scottsdale, Ariz., three large ones for the lobby of hotel at Lake Tahoe. She is represented locally by Ruhner Gallery of West Bloomfield, Robert L. Kidd Associates of Birmingham, and in Scottsdale, Ariz., by Magadini Gallery. Her work is also in the Rozmullin and Baker Knapp and Tubbs showrooms at the Design Center of Troy. She sells well and she will have a one-artist show in Scottsdale next year.

She paints acrylic on canvas and the longest painting she has done so far is nine feet. She credits Jerome Kamrowski of Ann Arbor, her painting teacher when she was at University of Michigan, with having a strong influence on her art. Coburn is very much her own person these days, she knows what she wants and how to get it whether it's a painting or a long range goal.



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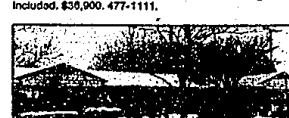
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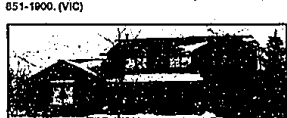
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