

Creative Living

Mario McGee editor/591-2300



Thursday, December 22, 1988 O&E

(F10)

The fine art of holiday decorating

By Joan Borman
special writer

For many of us, the Christmas holiday season is an excuse to break away from the restrictions of the "quiet good taste" that governs our lives the rest of the year.

Perhaps it's our collective memory that guides us to the untrained disorder that characterized the pagan Saturnalia of ancient Rome.

For we deck our homes with strings of multicolored lights, winking and blinking in the solstitial darkness, the drabness of everyday garb gives way to richer fabrics, and even the most abstemious overindulge. Budgets, like diets, are put on hold. Our world shimmers under layers of gold and red and green and glitter.

There are, however, pockets of poetic simplicity. The Smith house, in Rochester, for example, is a paean to the season expressed in muted colors and elegant vignettes testifying to the taste and enthusiasm of the owners.

"It just grew over the years," says Smith. "My husband and I both come from families where Christmas was really special. This house, where we've lived for three years, is especially amenable to decorating because there are so many nooks and crannies and so much natural wood indoors that complements materials traditional to the season."

A replica of a Dutch Colonial house in upstate New York, the Smith house is appropriately surrounded by mature holly bushes laden with red berries. There is a red-bowed wreath in every win-

dow, each illuminated by a small spotlight.

THE TRADITIONAL BRASS ceiling fixture in the generous foyer is trimmed with small red velvet bows. Cedar roping and more red-bowed wreaths adorn the railing along the stairs leading to the second floor.

The first of four trees in the house, and the only floor-to-ceiling tree, is in the sunlit living room. An elaborate crown of ecru lace and red ribbon caps the tree, its streamers reaching to the floor.

Glass ornaments are red and gold ("They're 30 years old"), and Mrs. Smith has fashioned dozens of nosegays from ecru lace, ribbon, tiny red roses and baby's breath. Stuffed toys, mostly bears, sit in a circle, their arms outstretched, around the base of the tree.

The mantel is trimmed with natural greens and red ribbon, and there are cranberry candles in brass candleholders and white candles in Fostoria ruby candleholders from the Greenfield Village Collection. (Cranberry candles are used throughout the house, in keeping with the subdued richness of the decor.)

In the brick-floored family room, a table-top tree is decorated with a Victorian motif — tiny bows of ecru lace and white ribbon, white birthday cake-size candles and dried baby's breath, with a "skirt" of ecru lace. The tree sits in front of a window, the sun streaming in behind it.

Beneath this tree are small stuffed animals from Smith's childhood, and, nearby, a large brown teddy bear embraces other childhood treasures. The brick fireplace is wall-sized, and here again the



Lighted wreaths in each window give this Rochester Hills home a welcoming festive look.

mantle is trimmed with natural greens, adorned with red ribbon and ecru lace bows, and fat cranberry candles in hurricane lamps. Antique-looking wooden Christmas trees came from the Kensington Academy Christmas Boutique, where Smith shops annually. Bunches of dried herbs and flowers hang from the wooden beams year around.

THE HOUSE IS SURROUNDED by three wooded acres, complete with stream. A favorite weekend activity is to sit at the large kitchen window bird-watching and, sometimes, deer-watching. So it's important that the view from the window remain unobstructed.

With the sure eye of the miniaturist, Smith framed lace dollies in narrow embroidery hoops and hung them in the window by narrow red ribbon. When the sun streams through them, they look like ecru snowflakes — and the view is intact.

In the master bedroom, with its Williamsburg-blue pickled wainscoting, the small tree is trimmed with blue and white ribbons and tiny white swans. The greens on the mantelpiece are trimmed with lace and dried baby's breath and here, too, are hurricane lamps with off-white candles.

The remaining tree is made of grape-vines. "I bought it on sale last year at the end of the season. I can make grape-vine wreaths, but I have never been able to get the hang of making trees," she admits. This tree, which will feature tiny white lights and corn husk ornaments, is in the stenciled guest room.

Smith has taken classes and learned to make wreaths and ornaments. She reads magazines, and visits Meadow Brook and Greenfield Village for inspiration.

"We do it for ourselves," she says of the undertaking that she and her husband begin the day after Thanksgiving. "Besides, I'm a practicing psychologist, and work-



Decorations over the fireplace and a small tree bring the Christmas spirit to the bedroom. At left the stockings are hung over the living room fireplace, and the huge tree with lace trim is in place.



ing with my hands is wonderful therapy."

Throughout the house, there is a consistent, joyous theme, ex-

pressed in a devotion to detail, right down to the tiniest red bow on the dining room's brass wall sconces. There isn't a hint of the

spectacular, allowing the visitor to "discover" the delightful groupings on which the owners have lavished so much time and care.



Staff photos by Duane Burleson

The mantle of the open fireplace and wood paneling of the den are an ideal setting for mounds of fresh greens and pine cones.

Many dimensions
Side-stepping boredomBy Corinne Abelt
staff writer

Kegham Tazian moves adroitly from one art medium to another without ever losing his personal identity or lowering his standards of excellence. In fact going back and forth between a variety of disciplines — ceramic and bronze sculpture, oil painting, collage, drawing and multimedia works is both natural and necessary for him if he is to continue to explore, be creative and grow.

His first one-man show in four years at the Cade Gallery of Royal Oak through Jan. 11 illustrates his versatility as well as his growth.

"I can't set any boundaries as to what medium I work with — I can't stand working with the same medium too long," he said.

Please turn to Page 3



Large oil painting, right, has the textural quality so characteristic of Tazian's collages.



Kegham Tazian was at Cade Gallery while his exhibit was being arranged by owner Joe Fugate. Tazian's sculptures, particularly, have a

universal quality; he would like to see some done as large-scale works.

JERRY ZOLUNSKY/Staff photographer