

# Even designers clean out their closets for summer

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY  
STAFF WRITER

What happens when six Oakland County clothing and jewelry designers clean house to make way for the next season?

If they've come together to form a loose-knit group called Design Series, they combine their talents and stock for an annual summer sale.

This time around the designers, Christine Jonson, Tamara Gagnon, M.E. Scott, Lisa Grix, Laurel Levine and Katherine Peterson sell their designs from noon to 8 p.m. today in the Community House, 350 S. Bates, Birmingham. They'll next be seen from June 23-24 at the Ann Arbor Art Fair.

"It's not chi-chi in-in" clothing, says Gagnon, of Birmingham. Her own designs are fleece shirts and skimp dresses with whimsical animal silk screened on them.

All of the clothes feature uncluttered, classic lines that can be dressed up or worn casually. It's a stylish marriage of Midwest practicality and big city sophistication.

The group met in 1989 while showing their designs at a charity Christmas show. "We all complement each other. It's kind of a support group," said Peterson.

It's the sort of support group that would be difficult to maintain in the much more competitive environment of a major design center like New York.

Although each designs independently, of the others, each designer's work compliments the others. Levin and Grix, the two jewelry designers, produce items that work with the clothing.

"We pay attention to what these ladies are doing," said Grix with a nod toward the others.

Grix's line of fish jewelry compliments Gagnon's casual T-shirts. Her porcelain jewelry incorporates such materials as semi-precious stones, old glass, African trade glass and Venetian glass. After working in beads for most of her adult life, Grix came upon her current jewelry style about three years ago. In addition to the Design Series shows, her work can be seen at art fairs throughout the state.

Gagnon used to hand paint all her clothing until she realized that the design was really selling the garment. Now she silk screens her designs and has sales representatives in Michigan, Atlanta and Los Angeles.

Her wearable menagerie includes

cats, fish, cows and ballerina pigs. The latter recognizes her 25-year career in dance. This time around she's showing her summer wear, white skimp dresses, tank dresses and shirts. Her fall collection will include embroidered oversized dresses, tops and shirts. She'll experiment with color in her fall line. Gagnon's "Tamara" line can be found in the Sporthaus in Birmingham and Patti Smith, Royal Oak.

Jonson started out doing custom sewing with her mother in the Groves Pointers. "With just two hands, you couldn't grow as a company," she said. Then she found that good quality lycra could be sewn to her standards by others. It could incorporate the dressmaker details that have become her trademark.

"I wanted nice classic clothes out of a fabric other people could work on," she said.

She designs basic strapless pants, blazers and dresses that incorporate such details as double-stitched finishes. Lately she's begun to include dressy clothing made of sheer, silk. Jonson's work can be seen in apparel centers in Chicago and Los Angeles.

Peterson and Scott show four collections a year together in addition to working on their own.

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## Cranbrook from page 1D

From the department of architecture, David Resnick made a door and door frame that is a "dialogue of inside/outside." The latch side suggests a welcome, the hinge side suggests solitude. The wood's design draws the person in.

In her "Family Portrait," painting, student Marta Angelina Fuchtelba features 12 different charcoal images arranged on flowery wallpaper. Each image is of one subject — a spoon, an iron, a cup, a gun, a cigarette butt. The artist's smudges on the works suggest her presence and absence.

Dominic M. Kline photographed flowers cut from wallpaper, taking a different look at floral arrangements. The printmaking work by Daniel Behrmann features double negative images that reflect in reverse on the wall behind them. Tzufen Liao's giant untitled sculpture combines fake fur and steel to make a behemoth or some other large creature. It hangs silently from the ceiling.

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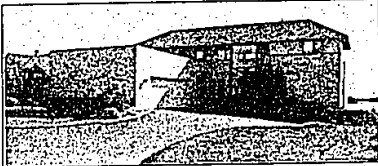
## Time for some Art in the Sun

Northville will come alive with color Saturday-Sunday, June 27-28, for its Art in the Sun celebration.

During this special weekend, the streets of downtown Northville will be closed to traffic but open to a brilliant display of arts and crafts. More than 100 exhibits from Michigan and surrounding states will be featured at this juried show.

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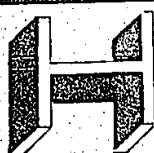
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