

ART ON THE EDGE



BILL BRISLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Hot stuff: Maria Ruedinger creates an abstract wall sculpture with electrifying color and light.

Her artwork lights night

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
SPECIAL WRITER

Artist Maria Ruedinger manipulates neon and hotly-colored paint in electric wall sculpture. Subdued lighting created by the artwork sets the mood for anything but a quiet evening at home.

"I love the way neon looks, the colors, the way it looks at night," Ruedinger said. "Most of my pieces are for the bedroom because you can turn off all the lights. Neon sets a mood to it."

Ruedinger fabricates the metal canvas and bends the glass for the abstract works of light in her commercial sign shop, IDMN (Innovative Design Manufacturing and Neon) in Plymouth's Old Village.

"It's a fun medium to work in," she said. "Depending on the color of glass and colors surrounding it, the color of the neon changes according to the other colors you're using. It's not a flat medium. It jumps out at you."

A line of green, yellow and blue neon shoots like an arrow across an untitled abstract, playing off the blue spheres and flat planes of color on the metal canvas.

"Because neon is liquid light, your eye is going to focus on the neon. It's like the painting and neon to work together. They play off each other."

Ruedinger became interested in the medium after earning a liberal arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1985.

"My parents were going to give me a trip to Europe after graduation. With the job market so tight, I asked to learn a trade instead."

Six weeks of apprenticeship with Freddy Elliott of Neon Stuff in Kansas provided her with the basics of blowing glass. She spent the next three months honing the craft in Los Angeles at Hollywood Neon.

"It's a different medium — blowing glass with a hose instead of on the end of a blow pipe. The glass used in neon comes four feet long already blown in a tube. We take it from there and manipulate it."

In 1986 Ruedinger returned to Michigan, setting up her own shop, Accent Neon in Ann Arbor.

Working between the two flames of a ribbon burner and a crossfire torch with a blow hose clenched between her teeth, Ruedinger's enthusiasm for neon flowered naturally.

"I get entranced in neon... the whole idea of manipulating light to make it say something to you," Ruedinger said. "Every piece of neon has to be bent up by hand. The high lead content means it doesn't have to be annealed like furnace-worked glass because it doesn't shatter when it cools."

"The high-energy painting contrasting the melty glow of light of neon takes shape as a sketch."

"You just start drawing. You come up with 10 concepts before you hit on one that will say something to you."

Two years of welding courses at Washtenaw Community College prepared Ruedinger for the next step, fabricating the metal that serves as canvas.

"I make up the box and get that primed, then I start painting. I use sign painter's paint. The reason I work in metal is because neon's high voltage, so it's highly combustible. It needs a transformer to run... 110 volts isn't enough."

Ruedinger adds texture to the pieces by applying the enamel-based paints first. "I like to throw lacquer over it. You get a chemical reaction."

Her work remains in a state of flux. "For an artist you're always evolving. There's always changes even from the sketch, but the concept is there."

See ART, 10A

Goal setters:

Psycho Cafe — Dan Monroe (from left), Bruce Kudanian, Adam Reed, Scott Spencer and Joe Race — are focused on two things: being the best local rock band and signing the best record deal.



Psycho Cafe: Menu for success



BY KYLE GREEN
SPECIAL WRITER

Bands always establish career goals which usually dissolve faster than the band's unity.

Psycho Cafe is no different than other bands.

It is a five-member rock band which has established two distinct goals: to be the "biggest local band" and to "sign the best record deal."

What keeps *Psycho Cafe* on track and a step ahead of others is the fact that it has the backing that other bands can only dream about — Gary Spaniola.

The name may not sound familiar offhand, but Spaniola won the outstanding producer award at the second annual Motor City Music Awards, held at the State Theater in Detroit in April.

Spaniola has worked with other local and national acts, such as the

Psycho Cafe has but two career goals musically: to be the biggest local band and sign the best record deal. Big goals, but the band is accomplishing them with the help of producer Gary Spaniola.

Romantics, Ready for the World, Bitter Sweet Alley, and the "Beverly Hills Cop" soundtrack.

It was no easy task getting Spaniola on *Cafe's* side. Actually, it took persistence and patience.

"We had sent him three to four tapes over the last year and he hated

STREET BEATS

us," said drummer Joe Race.

The tapes were primarily live cuts. It wasn't until the group provided a cassette recorded on four-track equipment that Spaniola heard the band's potential. Spaniola decided to produce the band's three-track self-titled release on Baltic Records.

The group is now working with Spaniola for a larger record deal.

Besides a solid contract, the members also feel they are accom-

plishing their first goal now that Detroit's Z-Rock, WDZR, has picked up one of their songs. Detroit's Z-Rock, a national radio station broadcasting from Dallas to 22 affiliates, has picked up the song "Black Cat" on local rotation.

Other local radio stations have played the group's material in the past, but the commercial success has caught the group off guard.

"We didn't know we were on the air," said guitarist Bruce Kudanian about mate Duffy Monroe. "We were driving in my car and I heard it... It was great they played one of our songs."

"It was just sort of cool to hear it on a normal format," Monroe added. Normal format is not exactly what the members have in mind with their energetic and at times abstract rock.

"I don't think we sound like any other band in Detroit," Race said. "It's ear-catching, but I'd say it's moody."

The mix spawns from the members' backgrounds and their writing abilities, bassist Scott Spencer said.

'We had sent him (producer Gary Spaniola) three to four tapes over the last year and he hated us.'

Joe Race
drummer

The band collaborates as a unit, each member presenting ideas and others either feeding off them or throwing them out, which has left bruised feelings behind.

"I don't think any one of us can write a total *Psycho Cafe* song," said Spencer. "You have to come to practice with an open mind."

"We can write for any band," Race said. "We can write for *Jane's Addiction*... or *White Snake*, but we have to keep focused."

Psycho Cafe will perform June 3 and 6 at the Ritz, 10 1/2 Mile and Grant in Roseville (call 778-8160) and on June 10 at the Studio Lounge, 6921 N. Wayne Road, Westland (Call 729-2540).



WILLIAM HANSEN

Art smart: Amy Griffiths (left) and Glynn Scanlan are the talent behind Bam Boom Graphics and Productions.

Bam Boom puts art in reach of bands

BY CHRISTINA FUOCO
STAFF WRITER

Climbing the ladder of the local music industry, Glynn Scanlan learned that presentation weighs just as much as talent with record company reps and fans.

So Scanlan, now the drummer and vocalist for the band the Junk Monkeys, started working on that theory early.

"The first tape I ever did in high school, I Xeroxed them (the tape cover) off," said the graduate of Livonia Franklin High School.

Realizing how hard it is for bands to have affordable artwork done,

Scanlan hooked up with graphic artist Amy Griffiths a year ago to create the Dearborn-based Bam Boom Graphics and Productions.

"There was nobody doing it at the time," Scanlan said about his and Griffiths' decision to start the company. "I just said, 'I like to do this and with my brains and you know how to work with the computer... Let's do it.'"

Some of their past music clients include the Junk Monkeys, Scanlan's former band Orange Roughies, Happy Accidents, Bent Lucy, Earth Circus,

See COVERS, 9A

Tuesday, May 11

ROBYN HITCHCOCK AND THE EGYPTIANS
With Murray Attorney at St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. (alternative rock)
961-MELT

WIDEWORLD PARK
The Majestic, 4120 Woodward, Detroit. (alternative rock)
956-8555

MYK RISE AND MARY MCQUIRE
Mr. B's Farm, Nov. (acoustic rock)
349-2922

KINGDOM OF NOT
With Leroy Zillion's Novelty Shop at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
956-8555

BENT LUCY
With Tension Splash at Rockaway Cafe, 34275 Ford Road, Westland. (alternative rock)
729-8040

LOWELOSKE PO'BOY AND THE TRUE INTENTIONS
Attic Bar, 11667 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. (blues)
365-4194

Wednesday, May 12

GENE LOVES HEZEL
With Low Pop Suicide at The Ritz, 17580 Trask, Roseville. (alternative rock)
778-8150

RAD TOYZ
Orma Gull, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac. (rock)
334-2922

SOMETHING WILD
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor.
956-8555

BENT LUCY
With Tension Splash at Rockaway Cafe, 34275 Ford Road, Westland. (alternative rock)
729-8040

SHONK! JOE ACCOFF AND HIS ELIAS BAND
Attic Bar, 11667 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. (blues)
365-4194

IN CONCERT

Thursday, May 13

DIRX
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit.
(blues)
961-MELT

JOHNNY ALLEN
With The Chugars at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw. (alternative rock)
334-2922

NEOPHYTE NATION
Ann's, 5758 Cass, Detroit. (alternative rock)
832-2355

MYK RISE AND MARY MCQUIRE
Hoop's, Auburn Hills. (acoustic rock)
973-4744

BLUES FOR HUMANITY '83
With George Bedard, Howling Diablos and Robert Jones at Sully's, 4736 Greenfield Road, Dearborn. Benetta Habitat for Humanity — Metro Detroit. (blues)
846-1920

VERVE PIPE
With The Opaque at the Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. (alternative rock)
956-8555

TRANSPARENT RED
With Triangle Vision and Acme Soul at 3-D, 1815 N. Main, Royal Oak. (alternative rock)
569-3344

MIND BOMB
Industry, 15 S. Saginaw, Pontiac. (alternative rock)
334-1959

THICK BLUE
Attic Bar, 11667 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck. (blues)
365-4194

BLUES JAM SESSION
With Artie Woff and Bobby East at Moby Dick's, 5452 Schaefer Road, Dearborn. (blues)
581-3650

See IN CONCERT, 10A