

# CREATIVE LIVING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1993



MARY KLEMIC

## Portraits show forms of haunting poetry

**F**igures and Motion" is a haunting, poetic exhibit by photographer Lisa Spindler at the O.K. Harris/David Klein Gallery in Birmingham (call 433-3700).

The display of nude portraits, at 430 N. Woodward through Aug. 26, presents the human form in sometimes graceful, sometimes vulnerable poses. The images can be cold and stark or lush, dark or light, twisted and angled or relaxing and flowing. Even the realistic photos have an abstract air.

Some photos feature backgrounds that look like paper or fabric. Other shots are closeups of parts of the body. Some tinted works look like old photos.

Faces are hidden or partly obscured, giving a universal tone to the works. Scars can be seen in some poses.

In one image, a bent leg fills the shot. The photo looks like an abstract painting of diagonal lines. Another photo scrutinizes a pair of hands, the fingers gnarled. A reclining man's hands are together as if he is in prayer.

Other images show movement, such as tumbling or dancing. The figures are blurred or given multiple images.

### Art of collecting

An uplifting summer exhibit is at the Janice Charach Epstein Museum/Gallery in the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple in West Bloomfield (call 661-1000, Ext. 470).

"The Art of Collecting III: The Jewish Collector's Experience" continues there through Sept. 9. It features a wide variety of 20th century art. Different styles and moods are illustrated within each media.

In glass, a vibrantly colorful blown cup by Robert Levin looks like a strange flower. A green box by Howard Ben Tre contains a mild glow, appealing to the imagination in a comparatively less fantastic way. A sabbath scene by Gianni Toso features little figures in a ceremony.

In painting, an oil work of a busy street scene by Robert Bernell makes you feel the push of the crowd. Beverly Neumann's "Twentieth Century Totem," oil on wood, arranges figures of animals like giant puzzle pieces in a vertical column.

In print, the viewer can be intrigued by the dapper fellow standing before a photo background in "Alex at Cheat Lake" by Alex Katz, or calmed by the misty woodblock work of "Cedar Hill" by Helen Frankenthaler, with its soft colors and vertical lines that suggest rain.

In sculpture, a smooth, flowing bronze figure touches its toes in "Exercise" by Nomi Feren. Reuben Karol's "Vacation" is a reclining figure made out of layers of wood, arranged in small stacks to form the shape of the body.

"Heaven and Music," a serigraph by Stan Solomon, is a joyous arrangement of musical instruments. A work by Arman encases paint brushes and streaks of color in a clear material.

Among the other pieces featured are dimensional acrylic and Plexiglas works by Larry Rivers (one with the Dutch Masters cigar logo), dramatic black and white photos by Alfred Stieglitz and Monte Nagler, and mysterious wood and lead works by Louise Nevelson.

### Glass exhibit

The Private Collection Gallery (call 737-4050) presents a special type of magic this month in the dichroic glass sculpture by Toland Sand.

The large works on pedestals are an arrangement of geometric shapes, a balance of thick and thin pieces. One looks like part of a machine. Others look like futuristic buildings. At first glance they are clear, plain glass.

But as you move around them, different parts of the spectrum make their appearance, one color at a time. The hues seem to dance around their crystal containers. A deep pink fills one side of a cube, then ducks away and a blue takes its place.

The gallery is at 6736A Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield.

### Write on

Art is expression. Local arts advocates and supporters have a special chance to express themselves.

A new feature started this month in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers: guest columns on the Opinion Page by people from the local community. If you have a concern about the arts, and would like to reach people who wouldn't ordinarily turn to Creative Living, this is a good opportunity. You never know — in expressing your opinion you could be introducing someone to a subject they hadn't paid much attention to before now.

Maybe you're someone who likes to visit museums and galleries. Maybe you belong to an arts group, or are an artist, a student or a teacher. Maybe you value libraries and theaters.

The length of the column is two typed pages, double spaced. What topic? That's up to you. Ex-

See GALLERIES, 4D

## Artist celebrates freedom



Luda Tcherniak is finding freedom of expression with life in America. The Moscow-born artist, who immigrated to the United States in 1981, opened her own gallery in Rochester. She paints impressionistic scenic visions, including Oakland County sites, with an energy and enthusiasm exceeded only by her talent.

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
Special Writer

Intensely schooled in impressionistic techniques of 19th century France, Moscow-born artist Luda Tcherniak, who immigrated to this country in 1981, paints with an energy and enthusiasm exceeded only by her talent.

Last January, in celebration of her new-found freedom and life in America, Tcherniak opened the Luda Art Gallery at 105 E. East Fourth in downtown Rochester.

"The most important thing in anybody's life is to be free," Tcherniak said at an interview in the gallery.

When she left the Soviet Union, artistic freedom was nil. Any who deviated from set government standards

were ostracized because "it shows they use their imagination." The government banned art works, books and music by artists ranging from Salvador Dali to George Gershwin and Louis Armstrong. Tcherniak had to hide an art book on Dali at the back of the shelf.

"It was illegal to have because he painted his dreams."

As you gaze at the dozens of large-scale canvases touched by the light of impressionism on the gallery walls, Tcherniak's love for creating the highly textured works seems evident. The prolific artist with a passion for painting scenery and architecture produced this entire body of work since arriving two years ago.

"In this life to live you have to be in love with your business. I love to play with oils. All I do is paint, paint and paint. It's not only about technique but about feeling."

### Pursuing dream

Tcherniak left Russia where she worked as a commercial artist in order to pursue her love without restrictions after anonymous people vandalized her studio. She was forbidden by the government to take any of her work out of the country, but smuggled a few of her paintings on silk in luggage.

"I brought silks folded up like blouse, stole my own property."

"Took me year to leave country. I had summer house, car, apartment and you never know when they come and destroy. Officials claimed, hooligans throw paint and destroyed, but they don't steal things just destroyed."

Tcherniak attended the Moscow Art School, a selective, competitive

boarding school for the most talented art students for 10 years. She then studied scenic and costume design at the Institute of Theatrical Artists for a total 16 years.

"Age 6, we went to museum to study. We copy van Gogh, Matisse until 16 when we can't copy."

For 20 years she worked in Moscow as a project designer for theaters, parks, playgrounds, offices, stores and restaurants at the Central Artistic Design Bureau, and the state Historical Museum producing architectural renderings for restoration of historic Moscow churches. She also designed scenery and costumes for state theaters of drama, opera and ballet. All the while she pursued her principal love, painting.

"In Russia you could have exposition. You could exhibit your art but average citizens aren't interested in art. Most people don't have bread."

See ARTIST, 4D

## Personal planter rocks with art

By MARY KLEMIC  
Staff Writer

Patricia Shaw of West Bloomfield has a special sort of rock garden in the front of her house.

Nothing would grow in a brick planter attached to the house. So Shaw filled the planter with rocks, rocks and more rocks — all bearing faces, some with hands and arms as well, that she painted.

More than 1,000 handpainted stone people fill the planter, which measures about 4 by 10 feet. This is the second year the rocky residents have been there.

"It's the kind of thing, when people come to the door it makes them smile," Shaw said. "It's nice."

The rocks are of many different sizes and shapes, and have different personalities as well. Some have big smiles, others grit their teeth. Some look worried, others calmly pensive. A few have wide open mouths, revealing another smaller person within. The natural shape of the rock determined placement of nose and eyes.

"None of these are people I know."

When she started painting the rocks, Shaw was reminded of the Paul Simon song, "I Am a Rock." She got

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Patricia Shaw

to thinking: If people think they're rocks, do rocks think they're people?

"I was painting them because it was fun. We've planted everything."

Before the rocks, Shaw had made craft creatures out of dried vegetables — including apples and eggshells, gourds and oranges — and seashells.

Shaw got some of the rocks from rock farms. People brought her rocks as well, some from collections. After cleaning the stones (once breaking a sink in the process), she painted them with acrylic and then coated them with water sealant.

The project had her looking in corners and under tables for stones when visiting fairs and markets.

"Michigan is full of rocks. They're everywhere."

Some of the rock folk were brought inside, where they fill a few shelves. Some were given away as gifts.

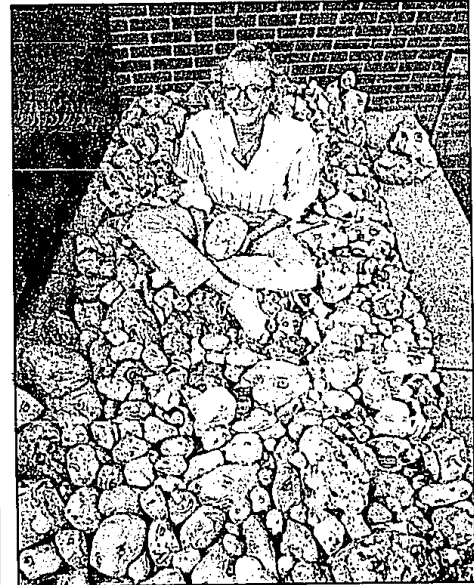
"I've learned to draw from doing them."

"I think they're phenomenal," said J. Michael Feeney, an art collector and longtime friend of Shaw's who has one of the rocks on his desk at work. "The artists who have seen (the collection) have been knocked out by it. I think it's absolutely spectacular."

Shaw has cast her last planter rock. She's going back to the dried vegetables.

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J. Michael Feeney  
art collector



STAFF PHOTOS BY GUY WARREN

Rocking cheer: Patricia Shaw of West Bloomfield (above) isn't one to cast stones, but when she painted faces on more than 1,000 rocks to fill a planter.



Artbeat features various happenings in the suburban arts world. Send news leads to: Creative Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009, or fax them by calling 644-1314.

For information and reviews of musical performances, turn to the Entertainment section.

### ART AT MEADOW BROOK

A juried fine arts fair, the 17th annual Art at Meadow Brook, will exhibit outstanding work in a variety of media by more than 100 artists at the historic Meadow Brook mansion in a lovely garden setting in Rochester 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 21-22. Refreshments and tours of the mansion will be featured. The event is presented by members of the Creative Arts Council, a professional artist organization founded at Oakland University 21 years ago. Admission and parking are free. To reach Meadow Brook, take I-75 to the OU exit, drive to the university entrance and follow the signs to Meadow Brook Hall. Call 970-3140.

## Art Beat

### SONGS OF MY PEOPLE

In support of "Songs of My People," a book and traveling exhibit telling the story of black contemporary life as seen by 46 African-American photographers, Jacobson's will sell the book in all of its metro Detroit stores with 100 percent of the proceeds going to the Detroit Institute of Arts Friends of African and African-American Art. The group will use the money for art acquisitions and educational programs at the museum.

The book costs \$24.95 and is available at Jacobson's stores in Birmingham, Rochester, Livonia and others. The exhibit is on display at the DIA through August.

### ON THE AIR

Mary Falvey Fuller, former president of Falvey Motors of Troy, is the guest host 9-10 p.m. today on "Guess Who's Playing the Classics?" on WQRS-FM 105.

### SHIRTING THE ISSUE

Debra Clary of Clinton Township has won the \$200 first prize in the Art 'n' Apples Festival T-shirt Contest sponsored by Rochester's Point Creek Center for the Arts.

A panel of eight judges selected Clary's design from 196 entries submitted by individuals representing 27 Michigan communities.

Kevin Sanders of Rochester Hills was awarded honorable mention and a scholarship to a PCCA summer art class.

Runners-up in the contest include Chiruko Donovan, Kristina Schmidt and Erin Shannon of Rochester Hills; Peter Hackett, Laura Johnston, Marianna May, William Mikesch, Tiffany Page, Jennifer Trescone and Stewart Wickman of Rochester; Inge-Lise Bay MacFarlane and Elizabeth Mack of Southfield; and Sandra Shelly of Farmington.

The festival is the major fund-raiser for the non-profit PCCA, which provides art classes, contemporary exhibitions and community programs year-round.