

Michaels

from page 1D

Changes are subtle. They move across tiny components of the sculpture as well as over the entire work in a gentle wave. For example, an element from Pewabic Pottery is shaded and painted so that its color and texture are altered.

A viewer may discover musical, architectural and historical clues. A curved piece on top of one work suggests a musical staff; the curve of another sculpture seen from the side suggests the shape of an instrument. In a corner of yet another sculpture, a segment resembles part of a building.

In a red, white and blue assemblage, red and white stripes dance with white stars that are slightly raised from the surface or flat mosaics. Red pieces encased in bronze look like crown jewels, a reminder of America's past as a royal colony.

Michaels' paintings are also meant to be explored. They reveal layers of color, soft shadings, that are like veils. And clues are there as well.

"I love including something from the past. Even in a simple still life, the tablecloth (is an old style)."

One painting presents a Victorian centerpiece with green, red, purple and white grapes. The background and other elements have similar ornate designs. In another painting, hyacinths stand in antique vases.

Another painting features an-

tique Schoenhut toys; slightly sinister clowns and stately horses. "The clowns offer a wonderful contrast."

Like the sculptures, the paintings are balanced. A painting of sunflowers and ropes carries a repetitive rhythm, from the flowers in the upper left corner to those in the lower right. A painting of the Mutt and Jeff comic characters moves in a circle, with what looks like rough sketches flowing into a newspaper panel, which flows into dolls, seated or bowing.

Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Call 626-3111.

Boos Gallery sets auction

The Frank H. Boos Gallery, 420 Enterprise Court in Bloomfield Hills, has scheduled an auction 6 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday, Dec. 16-17.

A three-day preview will take place 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 11, and noon to 8 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Dec. 13-14. For more information, call 332-1600.

The holiday sale will feature paintings, furniture, jewelry and decorative arts belonging to numerous estates and private collections.

Another painting features an-

Shop specializes in retired figurines

BY BARBARA MICHAELS

SPECIAL WRITER

Enter the Retired Figurine Exchange at 7922 Cooley Lake Road, just east of Union Lake Road in Union Lake, and hundreds of pairs of eyes stare down from the large, colorful Royal Doulton character jugs lined up on high shelves.

Other painted eyes look out from showcases filled with smaller character jugs, Doulton figurines of elegantly dressed ladies and cherubic Hummel children.

While the recently opened store specializes in "retired" (for example, discontinued) Doulton and Hummel, it also stocks Lladro, Royal Copenhagen, Beal, Goebl, Royal Worcester and other fine collectibles as well as Precious Moments and antique bric-a-brac and jewelry.

The Retired Figurine Exchange is unusual because other Doulton specialty stores in the state handle mainly new merchandise, and other specialty exchanges nationwide tend to deal with only one type of collectible.

For owners Stewart Richardson and Arlene Murray, White Lake Township residents, the store is a labor of love. Both have extensive experience selling their collections at antique shows. Richardson drives to 30-40 shows a year in eight states but hopes having the store will eventually reduce his traveling.

"We can concentrate more on answering customers' needs with

a home base and display room," Richardson said. "We can seek, search and find particular types of figurines that people want."

"We will eventually find it," Murray said, "and we use our computer to keep track of customers' requests."

Richardson started his own collection of Doulton character jugs 12 years ago. Though he retains a few pieces in his home, what he collects is now for sale in the shop. He admits it is sometimes hard for him to part with a piece, "especially some pieces I know I most likely will never see again."

On the other hand, he shares a collector's joy when one finds a long-sought piece.

"I enjoy knowing that the piece will be going to a home where it will be loved and appreciated," he said.

While collectors come from all walks of life, Richardson characterized the Doulton jug collector as typically male, well-read, and often an attorney (though not his self was formerly a manufacturer's rep). Most collectors began with one or more family pieces that were handed down to them.

Richardson said that Doulton pieces can be bought as excellent investments as well as for their beauty and history, although figurines aren't a liquid asset and take time to sell properly.

Whether buying or selling, there are advantages in dealing with a specialist, he said.

"He will give good advice, tell you what to look for, and price

fairly according to market availability."

The oldest pieces aren't necessarily the most valuable, Richardson said. Prices rise most on those pieces that had a limited production span, one to seven years as opposed to pieces that were made for 35 years. There are published price lists for Doulton, and in England prestigious auction houses conduct all-Doulton auctions several times a year.

The store's logo is a Doulton toby mug of Charlie Chaplin, first produced in 1918 and now market-priced at \$3,000. It isn't in the store's inventory, but they do stock pieces ranging from under \$50 to several thousand. Most of the merchandise comes from estate liquidations or collectors who have tired of their hobby.

The Retired Figurine Exchange is open daily except Thursdays and Sundays.

Figley from page 1D

Perhaps a miniature rose by Jackson & Perkins — the Small Miracle Rose — will be perfect for someone. J&P will contribute \$5 to KIDSTART, the Better Homes Foundation's program for homeless children, for every rose bought from its catalog. Cost is \$24.95, which includes a card to explain the significance of your gift. Call 800-292-4769 to order or to receive a catalog.

Another two-way gift is the book "For the Birds: Creating a Sanctuary" (produced by volunteers from the magazine and book groups of Meredith Corp., \$19.95). Birdhouses made of cork, yarn and wood of all descriptions, fanciful and plain, are featured. Each is accompanied by a meaningful quote from a famous person such as Churchill, Robert Burton or Shakespeare. Included is information about birdwatching, feeding, creating gardens for the birds and more.

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Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1839. Her fax number is 644-1314.

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