

# Art — in 3-D! Coming to a home near you

BY CAROL SOUTH

Special to the Record-Eagle

To rev up a room or adorn an apartment, break the mold and think 3-D.

Instead of using flat art — paintings or photographs, prints or drawings — to jazz up a home, some area artists delve into three dimensions by offering sculpture, pottery or abstract pieces. They offer work that has depth, that can bring it's own personality to a setting.

The work of Larry Fox bursts with identity. The Omena artist has evolved over the years from set design, architectural design and furniture making into crafting his own unique modern abstract pieces. Building things since he was a child, Fox began making furniture full-time in 1990 when he moved to Omena from the Detroit area.

He blends the skills, training and talent garnered from his previous careers into sculptural pieces that can range from 16-inches by 16-inches to six feet in size.

"Basically it's wood and paper and canvas and paint," Fox said, owner of Larry Fox Studio, of his work. "It is the same process as the furniture but it has no function to it."

Fox attends about eight high-end art shows a year and also offers his one-of-a-kind pieces at galleries. The reaction to his pieces, whether in a gallery or at an art show, has been positive, and buyers come in two general categories.

"They are sometimes not looking for anything and go, 'Wow, I have to have that!'" he said. "Other times they are looking for something for a special place and we happen to cross paths."

Because Fox's creations are not decoration and not furniture, sometimes he finds a learning curve exists before prospects become buyers.

"There is education involved — everybody thinks of putting a painting on the wall," he noted. "But as far as a free-standing sculpture or a wall sculpture, it's not what everybody thinks about."

As a three-dimensional piece or art, pottery generally falls more in the realm of usual artistic expression for a home. In her decades of creating wheel-thrown pottery, however, Rachel Jones of Stoneware Pottery in Traverse City, has found the medium resonates with some while leaving others cold.

"Not everybody is in love with pottery," said Jones, who moved to the area from New Jersey two and a half years ago. "There are others who are completely drawn to it and those are your best customers."

Jones' muse lies firmly in the functional category, and she credits a Japanese influence for the simple elegance of her pieces.

Over the past 46 years, she has made a range of

kitchen pieces that can be either decorative or functional. These include ladles, colanders, bowls and bowls with spouts. One friend transformed a third of her kitchen in to incorporate Jones' *objects d'art*.

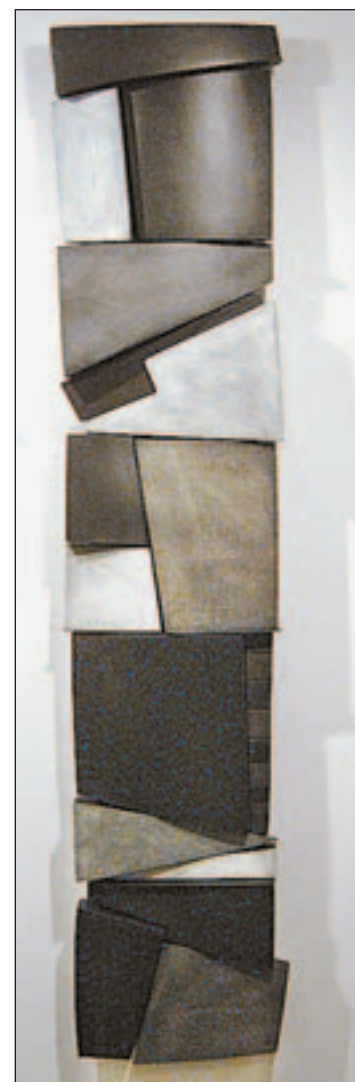
For Jones, this aspect of her three-dimensional art is very enriching — to her and the buyer alike.

"I love — and people love — the idea of instead of just observing a piece, a piece that is purely deco-

said.

White added that the daring route is an individual decision: "Art is very personal, you're going to have one person that will absolutely stick their neck out there and express themselves that way and another you can have who will not."

Purchasing an out-of-the-box piece of art usually requires a joint decision by homeowners, who mutually agree to add a dimen-



Above and right, Omena artist Larry Fox uses skills honed from set and architectural design and furniture-making into crafting his own modern abstract pieces. Left and below, Rachel Jones of Stoneware Pottery in Traverse City credits the Japanese influence for the simple elegance of her pieces.



See a list of area art galleries in the Record-Eagle's Summer Guide, on newstands June 24

Williams noted that the purchase decisions she sees roughly divide into 70 percent, 'That looks great, where can I put it,' and 30 percent, 'I have this space in my house, yard, courtyard...'

"More and more people are interested in abstract pieces and also the bigger pieces," she said.

Carol South is a local freelance writer.

rative, having something that you actually live with and handle," she said. "That's the way I feel, that's my thrill in making pottery: 'Give life to function.'"

"I've had people tell me, 'My husband will only eat his noodles out of your bowl,'" Jones added. "That just gets me, to have that involvement in the work and with people."

Delving into daring or unusual art — whether functional or not — is personal decision, said Kathleen White, an interior decorator at Lauren Hanna Interiors in Traverse City.

Noting that today's larger homes call for art pieces that can fit the grand scale of a wall, alcove or other open space, she said decorators sometimes have marching orders to build a room around a piece. Other times, the artistic accents finish a room or home.

"Certainly, art does complete the picture, takes it a step further and gives definition to the room, whether contemporary, traditional, transitional or exotic," White said.

Pieces by local artists are in great demand and homeowners will take their time to find just the right three-dimensional piece.

"Obviously you're going to have it for a while and you're going to want it to make you smile when you walk into the room," she

sion to their thinking about home decoration. Finding just the right piece to showcase in their home is a decision that takes a combination of instinct and deliberation.

"Both men and women seem pretty comfortable spending money these days, on the big pieces they always want to be in sync on," said Shannon Williams of the Twisted Fish Gallery in Elk Rapids. "Although men tend to be a little bit more conservative."

The fine art gallery opened in April 2004 and

offers a range of original works by both local and national artists. Three-dimensional pieces include vases, candle-

sticks, sculpture and abstract pieces. They also have large outdoor sculptures, highlighted in an on-site sculpture garden.

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