

# Features

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## Ferndale galleries work together and get showy for summer exhibits

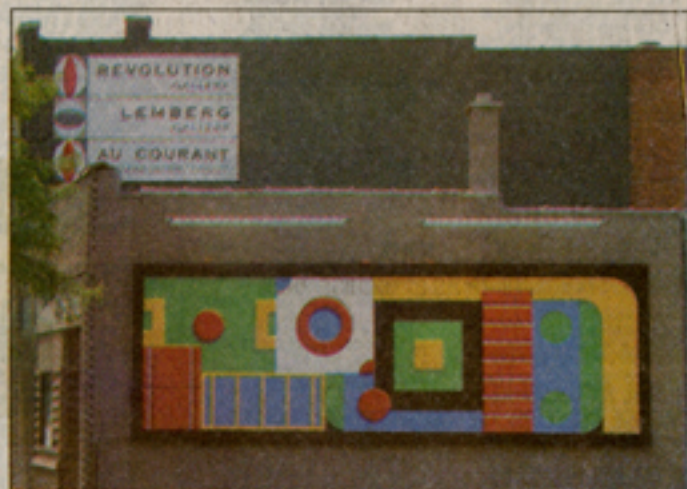


Photo courtesy Lemberg Gallery

Artist Hartmut Austen was commissioned to paint this billboard on the corner of Woodward and W. Maplehurst in Ferndale by the Lemberg Gallery. Three galleries in one block make an important art destination for Metro Detroit.

By Joy Hakanson Colby  
*Detroit News Art Critic*

### FERNDALE

Three galleries in one Ferndale block add up to an art destination. Especially when they offer outstanding shows, plan joint openings and now share prominent signage to let the public know where they are.

Ferndale got its start as an art center in 1993 when Meg LaRou and Paul Kotula leased a 1940's automobile accessories store on Woodward Avenue, gutted the downstairs and turned it into a handsome gallery called Revolution. It earned its solid reputation with edgy exhibits designed to get the art public thinking and talking.

Two years ago, Revolution was joined on the block by Corrine Lemberg's established gallery, which moved south from Birmingham. And interior designer Rick Carmody took over the upstairs of the Revolution building, gradually turning part of his Au Courant space into a small showroom for Michigan artists.

Recently, the three galleries put their names on the north wall of the Revolution building, on the corner of Woodward and West Maplehurst. Below the sign is the billboard, used as a vehicle for original art commissioned by Revolution first, and now the Lemberg Gallery.

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### REVIEW

#### 'Pas de Deux'

Revolution Gallery, 23257 Woodward Ave., Ferndale  
11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wed.-Fri., until 5 p.m. Sat. through July 26.  
(248) 541-3444

#### Steven Sorman

Lemberg Gallery, 23241 Woodward Ave., Ferndale  
11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wed.-Sat. through July 13  
(248) 591-6623

#### Valerie Parks: 'Ironworks'

Au Courant, 23255 Woodward Ave., Ferndale  
11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wed.-Fri., until 4 p.m. Sat. through July 26  
(248) 548-3770

## GALLERY

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Currently, the billboard shows a geometric abstraction by Berlin-born Hartmut Austen, now of Birmingham. Blocks of strong, pure color are laid out like a game field, producing an image that registers with south-bound drivers but doesn't tie up the eye with distracting details. It's one of the most effective art billboards yet.

July is a good time to visit the Ferndale galleries before they close for their August hiatus. Here's a brief look at featured exhibits:

**Revolution:** No, the gallery is not leaving town. The colorful hard-shell suitcases stacked on shelves in the front windows are Fabio Fernandez's visual interpretation of the Paul Simon song "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover." Lightweight but fun and available for the entire summer.

Inside, directors Kotula and

Sandra Schemske have given the summer group show a neat twist by pairing the works of their regular artists to make connections.

Some are right on target, such as the horizontal energies expressed by Tony Hepburn's spinning camera and Rebecca Quaytman's paintbrush; the color affinities in John Gill's stoneware platter and Steve DiBenedetto's painting; the blunt forms in Brenda Goodman's drawings and Robert Turner's clay pots.

While a few pairings are either too obvious or way off, the show as a whole succeeds in beaming fresh light on the work of familiar artists.

**Au Courant:** The long climb up a steep stairway is worth it when a solo by Valerie Parks is at the top. The Detroit artist's collection of 26 paintings from this year and last focuses on her "Ironworks" series.

Parks borrows images from catalogs and translates them into her own language of pattern.

Thus, an iron gate or a chandelier or an ordinary faucet become magical objects under her intense manipulation of paint.

The show contains small works, mostly 10- and 12-inchers. But Parks demonstrates that little can be mighty.

**Lemberg:** New York painter and printmaker Steven Sorman, who is collected internationally by major museums, is showing drawings collaged together to make elegant wall hangings. The supports are tapa cloth, layered

drapery sheers or paper.

With their saturated colors and spinning lines, the drawings flow together. Sometimes the pieces are touched with metallic gold, adding to their richness.

The Sorman show will end Saturday and be replaced by a summer group show until the gallery closes for August.

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You can reach Joy Colby at (313)222-2276 or jcolby@detnews.com.