

WINDSOR
STAR
1980
FALL

There is in Windsor a large body of skilled individuals (the Yellow Pages infer) who could be, if they aren't already, influential arbiters of taste and creativity in this area.

For no small fee, they will make over your home or office and suggest how you should furnish it, choose "theme" or "in" colors and help pick those objects for niche, wall, shelf or knick-knack corner that, ideally, will have friends or business colleagues oohing and ahing at your refinement and savvy.

Who are they, these cultural Svengalis, ever ready to lead, inveigle and mesmerize with their taste and chromatic sensibility?

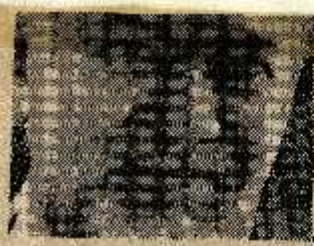
THEIRS may be an art derived from the theatre, where all the world's a stage and the prop-master is king, but at their best they can create spaces that sing, masterpieces of form and color in previously drab or unexciting surroundings. At worst ... well, why not leave the three clipped ceramic ducks flying up the wall over the chesterfield?

But seriously, folks, 'they' are interior designers and interior decorators, and they can, indeed, be mighty influential — so powerful a force for good that one might wonder if they are not a major factor in the dissemination of locally produced art for a locally reared audience.

Oddly, as in many other areas of human expression, there seem to be sins of omission rather than commission here, a kind of a communications gap.

AT DOUGLAS Buckner's store, Buckner Interiors, 4769 Wyandotte St. E., where national pride bristles at any suggestion that Windsor designers are not the match for those anywhere else, they say: "Well, we can't always be aware of the fine work that is being done in this region if artists don't make us aware of it. They rarely bring their work in."

At James D. O'Neil Ltd., 1574 Lincoln Rd., a spokesperson said: "We've had no local artists call in here at all.



**DAVID
QUINTNER**

Mr. O'Neil attends furniture shows all over the world and buys what appeals to him. But locally, nothing. We're not deliberately turning our back on the talents of local artists. We just haven't been approached by them, that's all."

The attitude at Peter K. Ryan Ltd., 256 Pelissier St., "We promote any good original art. And that means we will show good local art whenever possible."

BUT PETER Ryan himself admitted it had been some years since a Windsor or Essex County artist was shown in his showplace of a store.

A collector himself of Canadian artist Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald's work, Ryan said he buys art "on the basis of quality and availability. I suppose we can get caught up in the idea that the grass is always greener somewhere else. I must admit I don't get over to the University of Windsor too often to see what students are doing, and the Art Gallery doesn't put all its emphasis on local artists. But you can be sure I have no bias against local art."

Fair enough. But the proposition was: Are there interior designers who actually go out of their way to promote local art? The answer, apparently, several.

BILL LESSARD at Self Image Interiors, 1186 Quellerie Ave., for example, is keen to show more area sculptors and painters than he already does.

At present, at his still glistening-new location, he shows proudly the marine art of Joseph Butler, the work of Jane Barlow, Shirley Smith, Mary Ann Franks, Vera Newman and Greg Legault, area artists all.

Does it worry him, though,

as handling exclusivity worries city's professional art galleries, that more than one of these names sells at other interior design galleries? "Not at all," the bearded Lessard says cheerily. "The more the merrier ..."

Lessard says he frequently allows the artists to sell on consignment, and he is involved only to the extent of giving art wall space — and collecting a small commission on sales. "And we have a lot of wall space to use yet."

SOMEWHAT the same approach is used by the interior design firm of B. Hacker and V. Tamai Ltd., 103 Riverside Dr. W., a busy establishment that frames most of the art it displays.

There, along with such well-known local artists as Al Rutherford, Phil McLeod, Ed Roach and Bob Rudkin, one can also find the intricate embroidery work of Lylla Foster of Windsor, and Windsor-reared Bernard Poulin, who now lives in Sudbury and runs his own art gallery, Classic Perceptions, in the nickeltown.

So, obviously, there are local art outlets among the professional design houses in Windsor, and these results, as superficial as they may be, follow nothing more than a small random survey.

But last word to the Buckner Interiors' spokesperson: "Windsor's a funny town, let's face it. Those who only occasionally might be interested in spending money on original art may sometimes wonder where to go, but those who frequent the art gallery or who keep in touch with the arts generally don't need to be directed. But artists, they should approach us."