

HUB CAPS ROLL IN
The Fabulous Hubcaps return
for Rock-N-Wheels in Auburn.
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CLOSE-UP VIEW
Scientist turns microscopic
images into works of art.
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weekend **SCENE**

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2006 • THE BAY CITY TIMES
NEW EXHIBIT



Dan Staudacher/Times Photos

On display: Arnold 'Arnie' Kolb of Saginaw displays the photograph 'The Web,' which shows etchings on a cast iron GM engine block.

Scientist creates unique art from microscopic images

By **PATI LALONDE**
TIMES WRITER

Arnold Kolb is a scientist by trade. But he has taken his work with microscopes one step further, bringing what can be seen through a lens into the world of art.

"It's new art in a sense," he said. "Most people can't see it. They don't look through the microscope."

The Saginaw native likes to call it "the beauty of innerspace."

Kolb will share what he sees on Saturday, during a reception for his new exhibit at the Bay City Elks Club. The exhibit will be open from 2-10 p.m. Saturday at the club, located on the fourth floor of the Fifth Street Financial Building at Fifth Street and Washington Avenue.

This is the first art exhibit for the Elks. Kolb's interest in microscopic art dates back decades.

It was back in 1946 while working at Dow Chemical Co., studying manganese alloys, that Kolb first put camera to microscope in order to show others what he was seeing. Moving to Dow Corning Corp. in 1949, he began using the microscope to study the materials involved in making silicon.

He suggested using the microscope to better understand materials and how they work together.

"I could look and see things others weren't seeing," he said.

It was in 1953 that Kolb started turning his photographs into art and exhibiting his work in technical competitions, especially those involving microscopes.

It wasn't until 1983 that his artwork went mainstream. Retiring in 1982, Kolb finally had time to devote to his art. But he wasn't sure if he was up for the life of an artist.

"An artist puts his work out there for criticism," he said. "It takes a certain amount of willpower to say 'I will take the criticism.'"

Kolb decided to give it a try. His first show was

SCIENTIST exhibits art

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in 1983 at Northwood University Gallery.

"It's been a wonderful ride ever since," he said, "I enjoy the thrill of seeing things in a different way."

Since that time, he's been featured in more than 125 exhibits across the United States.

Kolb's work is best described as abstract. One piece hanging at the Elks is a General Motors engine block, an abstract piece in blues, reds, browns and yellows.

The idea for the engine block came about when an ad agency working for GM came to Kolb and asked him to take a photo of part of the engine block under the microscope. The rough surface reflected the light in an unusual way.

"That's the fundamental of abstract art," said Pete Howey, exalted ruler of the Elks. "Com-

position, light, only it's through a microscope."

Howey also is resource development director for the Saginaw Art Museum, where he first ran into Kolb.

Another photo appears to be snow-capped mountains, valleys and a river. It is actually progesterone, the female hormone, seen under Kolb's microscope. A photo that appears to be a ship wreck also is progesterone.

A reception for the artist begins at 7 p.m., and those attending are welcome to bring children. Children will be able to use a microscope and camera to take their own photos to take home.

Appetizers will be served. The suggested donation for the reception is \$5, which will go to the Elks Special Needs Fund for handicapped children.

Kolb will also talk about his work.

UNDER A MICROSCOPE

WHO: Artist Arnold Kolb's exhibit of 'photomicrographs'

WHEN: 2-10 p.m. Saturday, reception begins at 7 p.m.

WHERE: The Elks Club, fourth floor of the Fifth Street Financial Building at Fifth Street and Washington Avenue.

COST: \$5 suggested donation for the Elks Special Needs Fund for handicapped children for the reception.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST: Children will be able to use a microscope and camera to take their own photos that can be taken home.



It's art: 'Seafoam' shows detergent bubbles with a silicone droplet.