

Applied art

Center's show promotes recycling

By **AMANDA GERUT**
Herald News

Lisa Westheimer had parked her car in Hoboken to avoid parking tickets on her New York block and was on the train back when she realized she'd lost one of her favorite earrings.

Nearly a decade later, she melted the leftover brass and copper rhinestone bauble between two round sheets of glass and titled it, "The Lost Earring Method." It was on display along with two of her other pieces at the Clifton Arts Center's Re-Cycle Re-Use art exhibit, which runs through Aug. 16.

Westheimer, a 42-year-old artist and construction consulting company owner who had three plates on display, said she found most of the objects that were melted between glass while jogging near her West Orange home.

"You know how they say crows or raccoons find shiny objects and take them home? I guess I'm the same way," she said.

The exhibit features 31 original pieces of two- and three-dimen-

sional art from 15 artists in Passaic, Bergen and Essex counties and one collaborative collage from the Brookdale Reformed Church in Bloomfield. A reception on Saturday drew dozens of residents, artists and their well-wishers to the exhibit.

"They've got some really unique stuff here," said Gary Warcholik, a Clifton firefighter whose mother, Doris, had three pieces on display. Warcholik went to the exhibit with his wife, Donna, and sons Gary, 13, and Ryan Thomas, 11.

The Re-Cycle Re-Use show is one of 10 the Clifton Arts Center coordinates each year, and it is the third art show that was judged. Last year, the exhibit's theme was water, while the 2001 theme was "All Creatures Great and Small," said director Barbara Flexner.

The recycling theme was based on the location and history of the Clifton Arts Center, which opened in January 2000, Flexner said.

The center includes the quarantine barn building from the late 1880s when farmers sought to protect their cattle, sheep and

goats from infection and hoof-and-mouth disease. The barn was converted into an art education center with plumbing, lighting and heat. The gallery next to the converted barn was built in the same American Gothic style to create an open-air feel, said Jeff Labriola, president of the Clifton Arts Center board.

The arts center is located near the city's recycling drop-off point as well.

"I like that the theme lies with the building, and our neighbors are the recycling center. Plus, artists are always making social commentaries," Flexner said.

The artwork at the show was a diverse collection of watercolors, collage and sculpture.

Maria Lupo's piece, "Porca Miseria I," was a display of three little pigs made out of fiberglass and covered in topsoil standing on top of green- and gray-colored Spanish moss. Lupo, 44, who lives in Roseland, said her work often centers on ecological themes, thus, the topsoil.

Rayna Gillman, 61, had three pieces displayed in the exhibit, which were variations on a quilted base layered with cardboard



Lisa Westheimer's "Washer Plate," a fused glass and metal plate, is one of the 31 pieces in the Re-Cycle Re-Use exhibit through Aug. 16. Janice Briggs of Clifton, in the background, says she tries to visit the Clifton Arts Center at least once a month.

and dyed fabric textured with strings of staples and illegible text. She said she began making quilts in the 1970s when her three children were young, then progressed into less traditional fiber art, mixed media and collage.

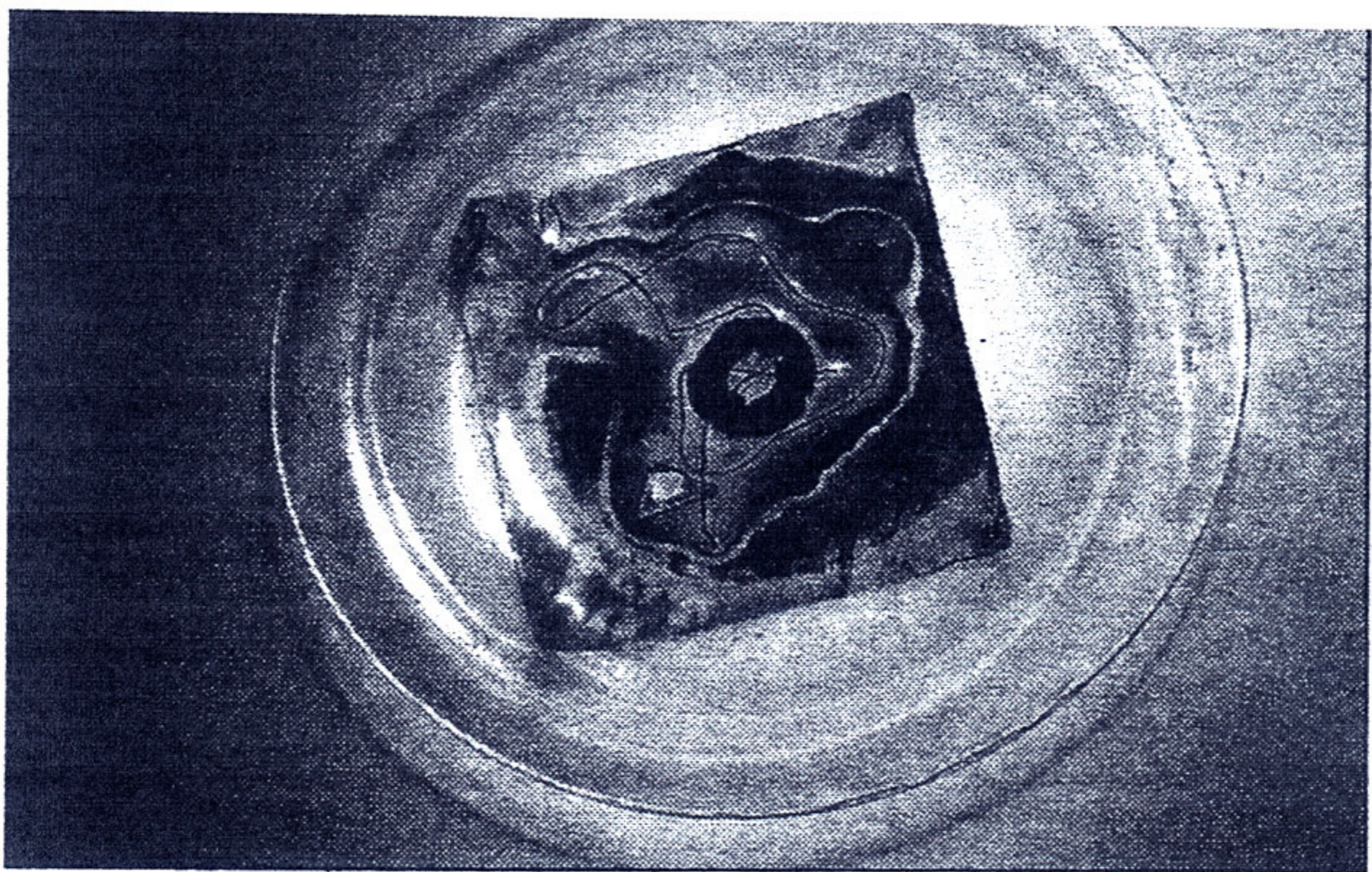
"It was therapy," Gillman said.

The center is funded by municipal taxes and direct-mail fund-raising, social events and donations, Flexner said. She is the only paid employee. A staff of about 50 volunteers and a part-time intern help her run the center. Volunteers logged 1,500 hours last year, Flexner said.

The arts education center next to the gallery is used as a workshop and is an open studio for members of the Clifton Art Association and for people who participate in the plain air-painting outdoors workshop. Most of the money raised goes toward programming at the art education center, Flexner said.

The gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m.

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Trash with dash

Artist Lisa Westheimer's "Washer Plate" (pictured) is an 11-inch fused glass and metal plate made by sandwiching a piece of copper leaf, bits of glass and a rusty washer with wire between a piece of glass. She found the bits and pieces while jogging. Her work is one of 30-plus assemblages, paintings and sculpture by various artists, all reflecting the theme of creatively crafting trash into treasures. The artworks are on display now through Aug. 16 in a free exhibit, "Re-Cycle, Re-Use," at the Clifton Arts Center, on the grounds of the Clifton Municipal Complex, 900 Clifton Ave. — up the hill from the Clifton Recycling Center. Hours: 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. Call (973) 472-5499.