

ARTISTS CORNER & GALLERY

LOCALLY SOURCED CREATIVITY

When Margaret Burdine opened Artists Corner & Gallery in January 2016, she knew what the gallery's mission would be. She wanted to build a community of artists, artisans and patrons. She wanted her gallery to be a source for local art, and a place for creative interactions offering classes, workshops, juried shows and special events. A year in, things are coming together nicely.

Combining her aesthetic vision with a sound business decision, Burdine located the gallery on the edge of a

historic district in the center of West Acton village, an up-and-coming area in the western suburbs of Boston. As with any successful real estate undertaking – from purchasing a house to situating a warehouse for Amazon – the mantra that rings true for establishing a gallery is location, location, location! “The building, located on a corner, is perfectly suited to a gallery,” Burdine said. “People drive and walk by all day, and the gallery has wonderful visibility.”

By choosing to represent many artist members who live locally – some within walking distance of the gallery – Burdine has demonstrated her commitment to the community. Integrating the gallery with numerous activities in the village's retail district and immediate residential neighborhood is a priority. At openings, she takes great pleasure in welcoming visitors who want to see art made by their friends and neighbors.

When asked what made her decide

to open Artists Corner & Gallery, owner-director Burdine responded, “My career has been as a graphic designer, and I've always gravitated towards art and design. As a fiber artist and photographer, I had been participating in local shows and events. I had become part of a vibrant community of talented local artists, and was ready to take the next step and open a gallery.”

She began her gallery with 16 artists a year ago. Today, she showcases 44 artists and artisans using a wide variety of mediums. Paintings, prints, sculpture, pottery, textiles, jewelry and fine woodworking are all represented.

In choosing works for Artists Corner & Gallery, Burdine stated that she seeks out quality and uniqueness, whether in fine art or fine crafts. An inspiring mix of abstract and representational work in all mediums is a principal criterion for the art selected, and

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566 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
WEST ACTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Julia Berkley, *River Clouds*, hand painted, over-painted, and commercial fabric on canvas board, 15" x 30".



Ed Franzek, *Occasional Table*, cherry wood.

a combination of traditional and contemporary subject matter is essential also. And, of course, accessible pricing for all her clients is a key to the gallery's success.

Burdine gives thoughtful consideration to displaying artwork, stating: "The gallery itself has two large window walls and is a bright and welcoming space. It has a large feature wall that was a key selling point in choosing the space, with one of the first member artists, Richard Kattman, in mind. His abstract paintings are typically on a very large scale, nearly 6 by 6 feet. This created a striking display for the gallery's grand opening."

The work of numerous artists is notable. Jane Davies' collection of six small abstracts is terrific. Only 9" x 12", these acrylic and drawing works are well-designed, show sophisticated use of color and are immediately appealing. They are successful in a small format, but conceivably could work rendered on a larger scale.

Textile artist Lyn Slade's needle felting works display careful handling of her medium and a wonderful color palette in creating organic forms. It's a struggle to fight the temptation to touch them. Two whimsical pieces, "Against the Tide" and "River Clouds," by another textile artist,



Julia Berkley, are captivating, initially because the designs and colors used are so fanciful. A closer look reveals hundreds of tiny snippets of fabric assembled to create rich, dense, imaginative compositions.

A pastel, "Blue Ridge Mountains," by Alyssa Wise Taylor, sensitively captures the atmosphere of the

Virginia mountain range. Anyone who has traveled on Skyline Drive will appreciate the artist's rendering of the low-lying fog blanketing the valleys. At 6" x 6", Bobbi Heath's tiny oil on canvas, "The Meadows," is a little gem. The artist has effectively simplified the shapes and color areas, producing a very pleasing landscape.

Ed Franzek's woodworking mastery is evident in his several furniture pieces on display. Using cherry or walnut, he has created corner tables, end tables and small occasional tables that are elegant. Two large-format photographs by Tom Briere are standouts: "Anghiari, Italy" and "Opuntia Cactus at Spring Mountain" are well-composed, thoughtful compositions.

The next major event at Artists Corner & Gallery is a juried show opening on April 7, with a reception in the evening. Detailed information about the exhibit will be on the gallery's website (artistscorner.gallery) starting March 1.

Top Right: Richard Kattman, *Lilac*, acrylic on canvas, 68" x 68".
Bottom left: Tom Briere, *Anghiari, Italy*, photography, 17" x 11".



| Flavia Cigliano