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Going 'Vivid':

Spectrum Art Gallery is now an open book

By: *Lauren Hodges* - August 4th, 2008



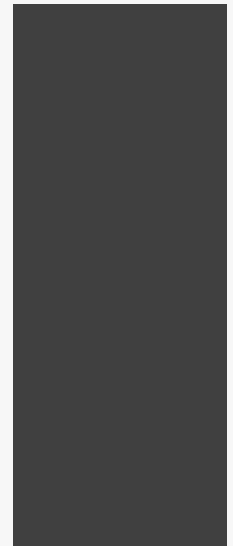
SPRING FLOWERS by Mandy Johnson (acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30) is showing at Spectrum Art Gallery.

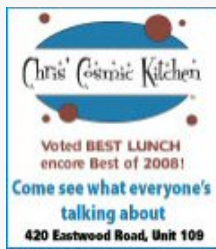


Readers looking for a full-color spread on the latest art events in Wilmington certainly have their pick of publications. It started out with encore, then Currents, but now the creative community is also being covered by Bootleg, The Starving Artist and a few other undergrounds. Most local magazines have a visual art column by now, with enough creative happenings for each mag to cover something different.

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Normally, this kind of thing would be viewed as “competition.” However, art, thrives on collaboration and the more our thriving community is covered, the more it seems to grow. As of late, the art world seems to be growing literary.

“There are a lot of ways to promote art,” Star Sosa, owner of Spectrum Art Gallery, says. “Some people do flyers, others do postcards, and I’ve seen plenty of newsletters. Magazines, though, seem to be the best way.” Sosa and her Spectrum crew are jumping on the booklet bandwagon with their new magazine, Vivid. Being called the “source for creative and colorful living,” the mag is mostly devoted to Spectrum’s artists and business partners. “Doing Vivid has given our collections more leg,” Sosa says. “I can showcase my artists in full color.”

Though the summer issue currently on shelves is the second to be published, Sosa considers this one the official launch. “The first one was kind of like a test pilot for us,” she says. “This time we added four pages, more writers and a lot of features.”

The first feature is “Vivid Artist,” showcasing Mandy Johnson, a North-Carolina native. Her work, featuring defined shapes popping off the canvas with heated colors, is called “figurative abstract” by her colleagues at the gallery. “I like to break the rules,” Johnson notes in her full-page spread. “Exaggeration and distortion and bold, simple color give my figures attitude.”

“Party Platters” repeats a dark figure with a fruitful food plate balanced on the head. Each figure has a slightly different meal to offer, but the identical stances and matching purple and yellow palettes present a stylish composition. The painting itself is balancing an established style with the artist’s need to rebel. Sosa has been waiting for a chance to show off Johnson’s work for a while.

“What I like is how quirky she is,” Sosa says. “She has a very unique point of view with all of her flat, layered color. Even something as basic as a landscape has such personality in her work.”

The features go on to include “Vivid Home,” written by Spectrum artist Nancy Noel May. May’s exhibits feature paintings from her extensive world travels, such as the Mediterranean Coast and Paris. Ironically, in this feature she is an expert at the places we come home. “We are actually featuring a home contest in this issue,” May informs. “We are inviting our art collectors to show off their houses, featuring the art, of course. The winner will receive a shopping spree in the gallery, and the runner-up gets art consultation for a year.”

“Vivid Style” is the answer to Cosmopolitan’s “What to Crave Right Now.” Spectrum features its latest jewels for the season, like an intensely-hued vase by Matt Seasholtz, shaped like a whale’s tail. The gallery’s famous jewelry collection is also recognized, giving collectors ideas for summer style. Not even the culinary arts are ignored in these pages, with “Bon Bon Queen” Charlene Dupray, owner of South n’ France, giving out hot-weather party recipes.

All of the business “synergy” is not a coincidence. Sosa sees the magazine as an opportunity to draw attention to all of her business partners. “They don’t pay for advertising or anything,” she promises. “They just distribute the magazine for me at their businesses.” Sosa calls it a “Strategic Alliance Project.” Her magazine will be read at Landfall-area hot spots like FastFrame Gallery, Bangz Hair Salon, Wine Styles and South n’ France. “That’s all I want, really: to get this art out into the open, to get it seen.”

Sosa and her art-friendly partners will be throwing The Vivid Launch Party on August 8th at Spectrum Art and Jewelry in the Forum on Military Cutoff Road. The party is scheduled from 6-9pm, with special guest Mandy Johnson on hand to discuss her work. Wine and refreshments will be served. Visit www.spectrumartandjewelry.com or call 910-256-2323 for more information.

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