

Atelier REBORN



This watercolor painted by Robert Franson, titled 'Survivors, Glacier National Park,' is one of many pieces displayed at the newly reopened Atelier Gallery. Contributed photo

Downtown art gallery reopens for viewing with new look 11-17-00

Business - A
By WALLACE BAINE
SENTINEL ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

When the Atelier Gallery quietly closed its doors on the corner of Maple and Cedar streets in downtown Santa Cruz last June, it looked like another blow for the local arts scene.

But in the last few weeks, there's been activity inside the cozy corner art gallery next to the Bagelry — and now the word is out: The Atelier isn't a part of history just yet.

The gallery reopened last weekend, unveiling a new look and a new way of doing business.

Artists band together

Artist John Teply, along with partner Shae Uisna, opened Atelier in 1995. Last summer Teply decided to suspend the gallery's operation to work on his own art and oversee the Atelier's "For the Seventh Generation" oceanfront mural project.

Enter a group of six painters who, alarmed

at the potential loss of valuable downtown art space, pooled their resources to sublet the front part of the gallery from Teply (the back remains Teply's studio).

"The gallery was ..." Robert Franson searches for the right word, looking to Teply standing at his shoulder, "... listing, shall we say. John mentioned closing the gallery space, and we really wanted it to continue, so we came together quickly."

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Franson, who recently moved here from Vancouver, B.C., specializes in florals and landscapes. He said the Atelier will now operate as a collective, featuring the work of the six artists involved.

They will all have work displayed in the gallery, with one artist featured in a larger front space, rotating every six weeks. The front gallery for the first six weeks will feature work from each of the artists.

The other collective artists are: Christine Beck, a Boulder Creek oil and watercolor painter; Karen Johansson, who works in acrylics and likes to paint open spaces and landscapes; Marie Sarni, a Boston-born former art teacher; Polly

Hughes, who works in chalk pastels and acrylics; and Silke, a well-known Santa Cruz artist who specializes in still-lives, figures and landscapes.

Atelier has also been known for its spirited discussions of great art and literature, including "Homer's Potluck," a group that discussed Homer's epic poems.

That tradition will continue at the new Atelier with a Sunday Classics Reading Group and an open-mike evening for poets and writers the third Wednesday of the month (the next one is Wednesday).

And the gallery will also continue to host "Art in America," a weekly discussion of art issues, moderated by Teply. The next one takes place at 6 p.m. Friday and will focus on the art of William Blake.

The Atelier has also undergone an aesthetic face-lift, with a newly painted and redesigned interior. It

will have more stable hours than in recent years. Franson said that to remain vital, the gallery will have to be re-hung on a regular basis.

"That means we have to be more productive," he said of himself and his fellow painters.

The new Atelier's hours are: Wednesday through Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m., and until 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday.

For more information, call 429-9005.

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