

Artsy family opens gallery

Story: CORINNE ABATT
Photos: SUSAN SHEINER

Any veteran gallery owner will tell you that it takes nerve to jump into the business for the first time.

Although Mary Jo Meso didn't know what to expect when she opened the doors of Meso Gallery, on the second floor at 114 S. Woodward, she had quite a surprise.

She took over the space formerly occupied by painter Rob Gwynn who moved his expanding painting and print business to his farm at Melmore.

"The reception to the gallery," said Mrs. Meso, "is beyond my expectations. I get a lot of walk-in (-up?) traffic that I didn't expect to have."

Not only is this her first venture into the art gallery business, it's her first full-blown business venture — period. But she has had help and support from her family and artist friends.

Her husband, Eugene, of the General Motors design staff, has been doing ce-

ramics as a hobby for years. He has his masters in fine arts from Wayne State University, so his in-depth background plus that of many friends who are artists have carried her nicely along. She had worked with her husband on art shows and handled the art for three years for the Holy Name Church art show.

The artists in the gallery now are all family friends, but Mrs. Meso said that's for starters, and she hopes to add more Michigan artists as she finds those whose work she feels should be in her gallery.

In addition to her husband's work (he is also a regular at the Detroit Artists Market), she has some pieces by William Pitney, highly respected former Michigan potter. Watercolorists in the gallery are Rick Burger, George Camp, Marilyn Derwenskus, John Gable and Charles Gatewood. There are acrylics by George Kozak, weaving and soft sculpture by Judy Arkell, windthings

by Bill Scott, mixed media by Linda Hanzel and intaglios by Mathias Muleme.

"We're going to be very unpretentious and down to earth," Mrs. Meso said.

She will be stressing local and Michigan artists because "there is so much good art here."

She hopes that her first major show next fall will be the Bloomfield Hills husband and wife artists, the Peter Maier.

Rather than a ma and pa gallery, this is more a mom and family gallery. Mrs. Meso runs the show, but all four children are doing their share to help the project along.

Pottery by Eugene Meso is an important part of the gallery inventory. It has been a longtime avocation which his wife, the new gallery owner, has always helped promote.



One reason Mary Jo Meso opened her new gallery was to provide a showcase for Michigan artists who create both abstract and representational work.

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