



A Home

OUT OF THE CLOSET, INTO THE GALLERY

By *Christa Gala*

SOMETIMES BUGGING THE HECK OUT OF SOMEONE WORKS.

A few months ago, local artist Adrien Montoya spotted something she really wanted – space for rent in the Warehouse District in downtown Raleigh, perfect for The Local Color Gallery, a co-op of 12 female artists of which she's a member. The rent was affordable, and she liked the location.

Montoya put in her application, but then she didn't go away.

"I started bugging them after an article in *USA Today* came out, about the Warehouse District being one of the top 10 art districts in the United States. And I just kept bugging them; every month I would say, 'Don't forget about us.'"

It worked. The Local Color Gallery held its grand opening at 311 Martin Street in early February; rent is half what the group paid at its former location.

Montoya, who's retired, formed the group more than a decade ago after wondering what to do with her completed acrylic paintings and collages.

"About 12 years ago I was taking art classes, and I'm talking to the people in the class saying, 'What do you do with all these paintings when you finish?' And everybody

said, 'Put them in a closet.'"

That didn't make sense to Montoya, so she set out to find a group of like-minded artists. Originally, it was a co-ed co-op.

"We started out with a couple of men, but they wanted to take over everything, so I got rid of them," she says. "All these women, we all get along. We have a meeting once a month, and we talk about all the things we need to do, what's coming up."

The gallery showcases a wide variety of artwork; its website features pictures of each artist's work as well as a personal statement.

Lizzie Bailey specializes in stained glass. Margo White paints in her garage – with the door up – entertaining the occasional passerby. Potter Mary Beth Owen has a degree in biology; her work is influenced by the shape of human cells. Linda Kimball works in mixed media, putting fabric, wax and magic marker to canvas.

Others make jewelry, sculpt animals from mud or wield a camera.

Different mediums with one common goal: keeping their art out of the closet. ♦

IF YOU GO...

What: The Local Color Gallery

Where: 311 West Martin Street, Raleigh 27601

When: Open Wednesday-Saturday 11am-4pm; First Fridays, 6-9pm

More info: localcoloraleigh.com