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## Moraga Art Collective Celebrates in Orinda

By Lou Fancher



Moraga Art Gallery members Photo Grace Chung

wall artists," she said. "All 18 artists are participating in the anniversary exhibit. Since we've never done the Orinda Gallery space-and it's a large space-we have a lot of participation."

Swartz explained that members pay a one-time fee of \$80 to join the collective. There are 5 shows each year: all members contribute a \$60 fee for each show. They also work one five-hour gallery shift per month.

Facts and figures covered, Swartz moved on to the purpose of the Moraga Art Gallery: "It was started to try to be a community outreach organization. We had First Friday's where artists would set up and give talks about photography and other kinds of art. If we had more interest from the community, we'd start it up again, but that just hasn't happened."

Like many in the area, she mourns the changing tide, saying, "There's a private school in the Lamorinda area where the P.E. is every day, but the art is only two and a half days. And that's in a private school!"

At the same time, the gallery's location in the Rheem Center sends a reinforcing message almost daily. "Because people are depressed by the time they walk by the black, empty windows of the shopping center, when they get to us, they're so happy to see art," she said. "And we're in a good position, because Comcast rents the space and allows us to exist rent-free."

It's news worthy of special mention, in this day of dog-eat-dog commerce. Comcast uses the space for non-commercial storage and, instead of leaving the front portion vacant, makes it available to the gallery.

"But all of our publicity, insurance, phone bills, electricity and the rest, are paid for by the artist-members," Swartz says. "We'd like to revamp our display areas," she adds, "but that will take a while."

To reach that goal, and to build upon the gallery's past, Swartz looks to the community. "I think it would be interesting for Saint Mary's College art students to be a part of the gallery. As part of their education, they could be guest artists with the gallery." Co-hosted events with Campolindo High School and local arts organizations would be welcome, too, according to Swartz.

To show its commitment to the community, the gallery recently re-joined the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. The artists continue to display work at Moraga's Terzetto Cuisine and participate in the Pear Festival and library exhibits.

The anniversary exhibit gives the public a unique opportunity to see the full breadth of the gallery's offerings. Like a farmer's market, local artistic production will be on display. And on October 9th the creators, homegrown cultivators of imagery in glass, ceramics, photography, jewelry and paint, will be on hand to meet their visitors.

The opening reception will be held on October 9th, from 3-5 p.m. For more information about the Orinda Library Gallery event, please call the Moraga Gallery at (925) 376-5407, Leslie Swartz at (925) 376-9060 or email [leslieswartz@hotmail.com](mailto:leslieswartz@hotmail.com)

Website:

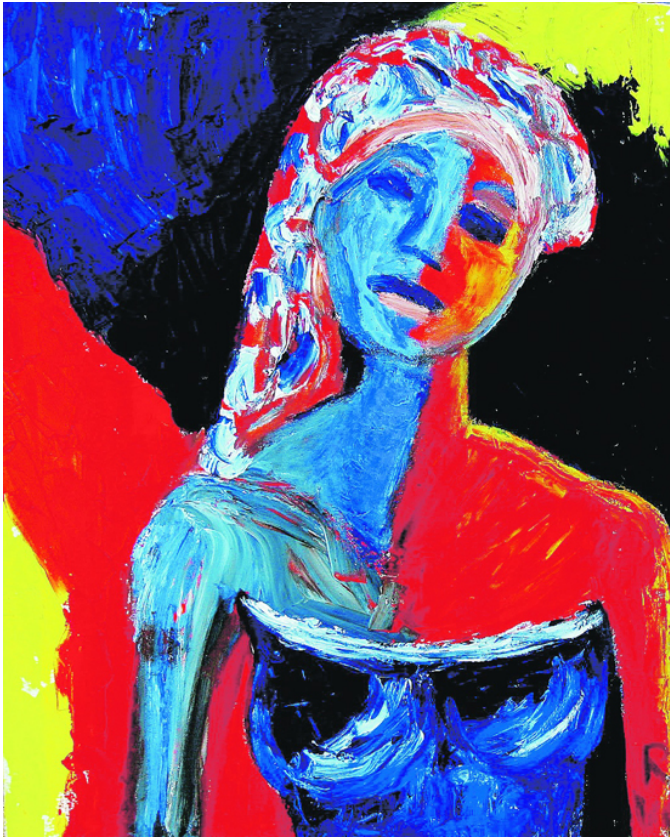
The Moraga Art Gallery's 10 Year Anniversary celebration is so large, they're moving the party-and the art-to Orinda's spacious Library Gallery.

Eighteen member artists in the collective will begin to mount the show on October 3rd, the official start date. A public reception on the 9th of October will allow the community to meet the artists and share in the gallery's rich history.

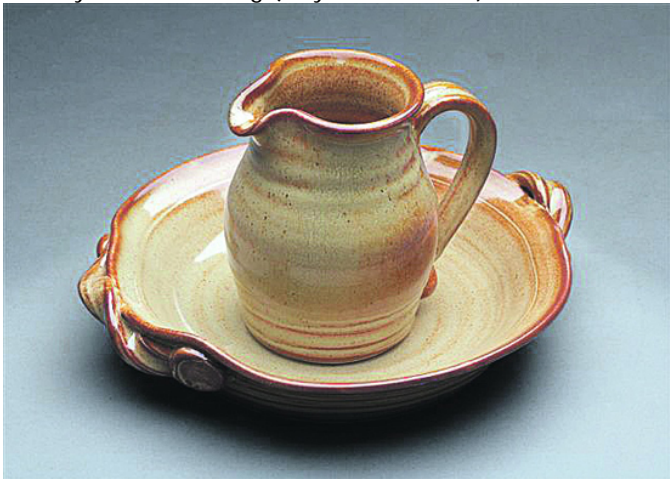
The Moraga Art Gallery opened on September 26, 2000. At that time, there were 45 artist members. Operating under the umbrella of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance, the gallery was a collective, where members participated in the daily operations, group and individual shows, and special events. In past years, the gallery held popular gatherings, featuring demonstrations and lectures on art.

With changes in the community, the economy, and the actual membership itself, the gallery's profile is evolving. Leslie Swartz, a member and current board Treasurer, provided recent history and her thoughts on art in the year 2010.

"There are 18 members: five are 3-D artists and the rest of us are



Jane by Bob Wahrhaftig (acrylics on canvas)



Pottery by Donna Arganbright



Sushi set by Nancy Slack

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