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When Art and Business Grow Hand in Hand Allison McCrady Fine Arts Expands

By Sophie Braccini



Allison McCrady in front of her new space in Orinda's Theatre Square. Photo Sophie Braccini

Allison McCrady, owner of Allison McCrady Fine Arts, is expanding her gallery at Theatre Square in Orinda, attributing her success to the combination of her business savvy and her artistic talent. "Good art at a good price" is her recipe for success, she says. She will celebrate the expansion into the new space with a reception featuring a collection of paintings by Sandy Ostrau, paired with a tasting of Rombauer wines from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, November 8.

McCrady's new space is directly across from her old one, between Living Lean and Barbacoa. The new space is not much bigger, but it has a better configuration. The first space was slightly offset with a modest front, while this new location has a prominent all-glass storefront. McCrady refreshed the painting, using a very lively bright hue of aqua. "I picked up the color of the Theatre's tiles," she says. "I wanted something lively and fitting with the rest of the Square."

The gallery will make use of the expansive glass surface front - perfect for an art gallery. "I also plan to update the inside lighting," says McCrady. "It will be a beacon inside the Square."

McCrady is keeping her original space for now. She plans to paint and teach there, and invite her colleagues to come by as well. "I will change the exhibition in the new space every 60 days," says McCrady. "The paintings of the other artists I work with will also be on display across the way in the old space."

McCrady has been able to grow her art business during the recession by working with and representing other artists. A former investment banker and Orinda resident for more than 20 years, McCrady decided that affordability was the key to her success. "Affordability is of course a relative notion," she says. "We try to keep our average price around \$900."

She works only with professional artists, such as Ostrau. "She has a wonderful mastery of colors," says McCrady. "Her creations are on the abstract side, but she is part of the family of artists I work with, people who are inspired by the California landscape and express it in pieces that are joyous in nature."

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[back](#)

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