



*Native American Woman* by Linda Jean

### SURFACE TREATMENT

With COVID-19 rebounding and slowing gallery openings, we will keep your art experiences alive by looking back at some memorable shows. Today we remember Art Studio by Design, a casualty of McAllen's Art District.

#### **Art Studio by Design**

A gallery and art teaching space was a welcome addition to the Art District in 2015.

BY NANCY MOYER

SPECIAL TO THE MONITOR

A new art space, *Art Studio by Design*, had its Grand Opening on January 11, 2015, from 10am-9pm. Everyone was welcome. Adjacent to The Art Village and Nuevo Santander Gallery, it was conveniently located in McAllen's Art District. William and Karen Norberg were the co-owners of this family friendly art space, which offered studios for productive artists. Intended to be much more than just artists' studios, *Art Studio by Design* also offered art classes that were eagerly attended by those looking for private art classes.

"We are interested in teaching," said Karen. "We're starting art classes the first of January. We also have a very affordable art gallery, three classrooms, and private studios for our resident artists, and small meeting rooms for gatherings of 6-10 people. Our artists produce everything from greeting cards to formal oil paintings." Karen taught art classes at Cimarron Country Club, Hobby Lobby, and The Creative Incubator before launching this space.

The idea for *Art Studio by Design* originated with four artists who had studios at The Creative Incubator. Because of the variety of activities that go on there, including instrumental music lessons, dance lessons, and theater, and the limitation of only one classroom space for five art instructors, they felt it was time to seek a bigger and better space, and one that would be dedicated solely to the visual arts. *Art Studio by Design* was opened after an extensive local search for just the right facility.

There were nine resident artists who initially inhabited the studio spaces, with each artist's studio always being visually accessible to the visiting public. An excellent venue, there was usually room for a few more artists. In addition to the resident artists' art being hung on every wall in the building, an official gallery in the front area featured their work in turn, giving that artist a wonderful promotional opportunity during McAllen's Art Walks. Except for Celerino Castillo's Chicano Arte style, traditional subject matter and form were the norm. All of the artists espoused a special direction that set them apart from each other. Sue Sill's signature watercolor portraits of the indigenous peoples of Mexico were on view, as well as her botanicals. Beautiful alternative displays featured Pat Klein's bead-strung jewelry. Nature photography was represented by Janice McConaho-Kome, and Sharon Black perceived the natural world through a series of equine portraits. Other resident artists included: Darlene Hendrickson, Judy Burnam, Linda Jean, and Karen Norberg.

Six of the resident artists - Sill, Castillo, McConaho-Kome, Klein, Black, and Norberg - taught art classes there during the week. There were classes for adults, children, and special Sunday afternoon classes for families. Typically for instructional beginning classes, the art classes were medium defined; Watercolor, Oil, Acrylic, Jewelry, and Sculpture classes were the available options.

"We pride ourselves on our affordable art in the Gallery and classrooms," added Karen. Art Studio by Design was also one of the rare local options for artist's supplies. We miss it.

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