

ARTWARD JOURNEY

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“New Studio Gallery Solution for Rising Artist”

VIRGINIA BEACH – The newest art tenant in downtown Virginia Beach is using an unconventional approach to facilitate her booming art business. Housed in office warehouse space off Witchduck and Cleveland Streets, Lois Gallo Fine Art boasts a build out combining studio, art gallery and custom framing area. The space even feels good when you walk in, with warm colors, track lighting and surprising use of the areas in this 1400 square foot space. Lois or a gallery associate greets you and gives you the tour, enthusiastically sharing the artist’s dream and how it became a reality.

In the close to five years she has been serious about oil painting, Gallo’s dream and passion for the art business has taken on a life of its own. As it expanded, her husband and partner Steve eventually took over most of their financial planning practice’s responsibilities, as he recognized her potential and encouraged her to go forward in the art world.

The current move was necessary, the artist excitedly shares, as “I was busting out of my home studio space. My paintings in between shows took over the living and dining rooms, it was difficult to park in the garage, and guests had cramped quarters. Nor was our home conducive for art lessons or for designers to bring their clients to view my work. So I found the perfect solution.”

When asked why she chose an office warehouse space to move into, Lois stated she had had the Cleveland Street area in her focal range for the last 18 months, but was waiting for the right timing, and getting several art income streams in place to sustain the overhead on a consistent basis. “I wanted to model an art career path for other artists who may be starting from ground zero financially. Therefore, I chose to treat it like a business and make it self-supportive. This helps me coach authentically and show the value of having business and financial plans. And that way my art also validates itself. It keeps me on the edge in searching for alliances and marketing strategies, as well as in painting quality paintings for clients to keep them spreading the word and coming back. That’s the balance, the dance, of one’s creative and business minds at work, wholly integrated on laser-focused goals!”

Property manager Kathy Katsias is “thrilled to see what Lois has done to the space. It makes me want to stop over to see the newest paintings she is working on. She has reminded me of that creative spark in me that needs nourishing, so I may soon be signing up for art lessons with her.”

Gallo sees the vibrant downtown core as ripe for artists. Not only are there now two other galleries nearby (Jones Art and Pembroke 4 Art Gallery), but, she reasons, this is a prime shopping area, particularly for designers and clients looking for furniture and home decor. There are also thousands of new potential homeowners who will be populating the apartments and condos who will want art for their walls. Numerous patrons have expressed delight in having a location to buy quality original art by a local artist, as there is a lack of venues to do so. Lois is

hoping other artists and entrepreneurs will see the area as great for art and locate nearby to enhance the growing art community, just like the furniture stores and car dealers have done in locating near each other. Gallo's mission is to "make this area an art destination for buyers of good local art."

If the Grand Opening Gala and first few weeks are any indication, Lois Gallo's reputation as a classically trained fine artist should spread quickly. The studio gallery is continuing the Grand Opening celebrations into mid-February. Hot apple cider and treats will greet guests throughout the day.

Business hours are by appointment, but feel free to drop in if you are in the area. Lois Gallo Fine Art is conveniently located off Interstate 264 at Witchduck Road, the first street left on the west side of Cleveland Street. A map and directions, as well as further information about the gallery, classes, and the artist's works, can be viewed at www.LoisGalloArt.com.

LOIS GALLO FINE ART

259 Expressway Court

Virginia Beach, Va. 23462

757-321-0221 (Gallery) or 672-6746 (Cell)

