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Seeing beauty in everyday object fuels Evans' art

By **Jaclyn Pelletier**/ Staff Writer
Thursday, August 18, 2005

MAYNARD - Like many artists from surrounding towns, Maynard resident Catherine Evans rents a studio in ArtSpace Maynard on Summer Street, formerly the Fowler School and current home to a variety of local talent.

What sets this contemporary artist apart from others is not only her gallery opening at Dunia-Ecostore displayed through Saturday, Oct. 1 on the walls of this earth-friendly Nason Street business, but her use of mixed media and everyday objects in all of her work.

Dunia co-owners and spouses Didi Chadran and Paige O'Brien hosted an opening reception for Evans Monday, Aug. 15 at their store.

"It's a way to celebrate the artist and her work and have a good time," said Chadran. He and his wife were first introduced to Evans' artwork during a studio opening at ArtSpace.

"We were wowed by her work then," he said.

Although it was clear the artist was playing with abstracts in her work, Chadran said Evans' use of household materials in her work stunned him.

"I thought it (the exhibit) was absolutely beautiful," said Chadran.

In a press release, O'Brien said, "I can enjoy (Evans') piece of 'Emergence,' for example, as a study of rhythm and beauty, but I can also delve deeper into it, and reflect on the consequences of empty consumerisms."

Because Evans' use of recycled objects and everyday materials such as nails, thumbtacks and beer bottle caps complements the focus of Dunia-Ecostore, the owners decided to invite the artist to display her work.

"She understands what the store is about," said Chadran.

Although she has no formal art education, Evans said she has had an interest in art throughout her entire life.

Raised on a farm in Smithfield, R.I., Evans said she often passed the time amusing herself with nature.

She also learned to sew when she was 4, a talent she has used in the past sewing costumes and clothing designs for others.

It wasn't until 2000 when Evans began to closely focus on her artwork and, in particular, objects more closely.

She first heard about the available ArtSpace studios from another local artist. Evans jumped at the chance to rent before it was too late.

"I feel like my studio is my reward in life," said Evans, who added it is time to take care of her own needs.

"I did my art for myself," said Evans. The Gallery at Dunia is Evans' first solo exhibit.

Evans believes the inspiration for her contemporary art evolved from her grandfather, who worked as a carpenter and her grandmother, who worked in the textile industry - what she described as a common bond of grandparenthood.

Evans said in life she also continuously notices distinct details as she does in her art.

As an example, Evans said if she and her husband were looking at the ocean, he would absorb the entire landscape. She, on the other hand, would only notice the way water hit a rock.

"I like the detail of things," she said.

Evans added she notices the integrity of single objects and likes to repeat the use of them, as she does with many of the pieces she has created using nails.



Catherine Evans in her studio at ArtSpace Maynard. (Staff photo by Ellen Bullock)

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"I think I see the potential of things," said Evans.

Her concentration is mostly on circles, the highs and lows of objects and transforming them into art.

"I like circles, movement and depth," said Evans.

She said her next project will also involve circles, as she walked over to one of her many bags of leftover objects and took out the cover from a Coffee Mate can. She said she will find a way to make the red lids into a piece of art she enjoys.

"Everything inspires something else," said Evans. "I really like to make people stop and think."

Evans also has a collection of white rubber bathmats which she uses as a canvas for creating distinctive designs with black paint.

The mother of two and grandmother of five does homework over the phone every night with two of her grandchildren. They even visited last weekend for a summer reading session with their grandmother. Evans said she reviews each chapter of the books with her grandchildren.

Evans said her grandchildren enjoy her art and come to the studio with her sometimes, too.

She said she wants her grandchildren to know they are "loved, safe and that it's OK to paint on a bathmat."

Evans said she hopes her next series of projects will include flat surfaces because she has not produced any flat art before.

"I feel like something great is going to come out the other side of it," said Evans of her work.

She added from her artwork she has learned "not to worry too much about tomorrow and pay attention to the object in (her) hand."

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