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NICK BERRY/DN

Gomez Art Supply owner Peggy Gomez was a UNL art professor for seven years before she decided to open her own business. She said the idea for the art store was to provide students with an alternative to the University Bookstore and chain art stores in the area.

Art Supply is the result of years of planning for Peggy Gomez.

A former art professor and printmaking technician at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Gomez opened her shop's doors to customers on Aug. 22.

Gomez, who is the sole proprietor of Gomez Art Supply, said the first month of business had been great.

"I have a good niche downtown," she said. "The first week especially was amazing."

While spending seven years as a part-time instructor at UNL, Gomez said she witnessed the frustrations of many art students with the lack of nearby places to buy art supplies.

"That's what makes (Gomez Art Supply) ideal," said Karen Kunc, a UNL art professor who has known Gomez for more than 15 years. "It is close to so many students.

"Students can walk downtown, buy some art supplies and get back in time for class," Kunc said.

Especially as freshmen, art students sometimes aren't sure what supplies to buy, Gomez said.

"Some wonder what a bamboo brush is or what sumi ink is," Gomez said.

"(Gomez) has the experience and knowledge to be very helpful," said Amy Hutchinson, a UNL fine arts graduate.

New art store offers options to students

By ERIN HILSABECK / DN Staff Writer
September 25, 2003

Outside downtown's newest art supply store, a colorful, chalkboard-style sign shouts the message "Say no to weenies, yes to art."

Occupying the space at 1028 O St., previously home to Windy Cities Chicago Hot Dogs, Gomez



NICK BERRY/DN

Gomez Art Supply, 1028 O St., is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and noon to 5 p.m. on weekends.



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"I really cater to the university student," Gomez said. "I want to help them as much as I can."

Gomez added that she knew art classes could overwhelm students, and she said she wanted to ease some of their confusion.

"I'll give (students) as much personal attention as they want," she said.

Though college students aren't the sole customers of her shop, Gomez said they were by far the majority.

"They're my bread and butter," she said.

Since Gomez herself is also a working artist, she understands their needs and wants, Kunc said.

Gomez said the art professors at UNL were supportive in her business endeavors. They even stapled fliers for her store to their class syllabi, she said.

"We feel like she's still one of us, and we want her to succeed," Kunc said.

The downtown space owned by Gomez is 25 feet by 140 feet, and Gomez rents out extra backroom space to two local artists. The space also includes room for a studio of her own.

The prices at Gomez Art Supply are comparable to those of Dick Blick Art Materials or the Nebraska Bookstore, Gomez said.

"Some things are more, some things are less," Gomez said. "But if I get a good deal on something, I pass it on."

Even though this is Gomez's first business, she said being an entrepreneur hasn't been too difficult.

As a printmaking technician at UNL, Gomez was responsible for ordering supplies and keeping the printmaking shop running.

"She already knew the ins and outs of ordering materials," Kunc said.

"But salesmen are a new addition to my life," Gomez said.

Though Gomez Art Supply is currently doing good business, Gomez said she believed there was much that still could be done with the space.

She said she wanted to do more advertising and display more student art pieces.

Kunc said she was impressed and excited by how much Gomez had already done.

"It is great to see (Gomez) have this dream come true," Kunc said. ■