



The ART

of business

RISTA MILES/Lincoln Journal Star

Artist Peggy Gomez has opened Gomez Art Supply, a downtown store catering to students and professionals.

Owner

Ten weeks ago, Peggy Gomez took the small business plunge, opening the doors of Gomez Art Supply at 1028 O St.

Starting a small art supply business is novel enough. But Gomez is a printmaker who has taken a far different career path than most artists.

"I don't know many artists who have gone into small business ownership of this sort," Gomez said.

"There are lots of artists who are entrepreneurs, but they don't go into retail."

Gomez, who taught drawing and printmaking at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said she opened her downtown store primarily to serve the student market.

"It just really seemed like there was a niche to be filled," Gomez said. "A lot of the students would come back from the other places where you can buy materials and feel unappreciated. And there has been a need for a downtown art supply store for a long time."

The connection between Gomez Art Supply and students is apparent from a glance at a table at the back of the store. On the table is a tag that reads "Dana Fritz" and a sheet of paper that lists the supplies needed for students in Fritz's Visual Literacy class. That makes for one-stop shopping for those students, an easy walk from Richards Hall.

But Gomez is also aiming at Lincoln's professional artists. Large buckets of gesso, an abundant supply of large 6.5-ounce tubes of oil paint and a case of Lava soap — used to clean both hands and brushes — is evidence of that.

And she's still a teacher at heart. In recent days, she's helped a student who broke a lithography stone come up with some options to keep working, and when she's asked about the "chatter" of paper, she knows what the person is talking about.

"I'd like to think that if people have a question, I'll be able to answer it," Gomez said. "I've been an artist for a long time."

Gomez says she wants her store to be more than just a place to buy pencils, paper, brushes, canvas and the like.

She plans to hang student work in the store and she has a couple of studio spaces that she rents out in back. She's also got a small space for her work tucked behind a large cabinet full of oil paint.

"I've got some downtime," Gomez said. "There aren't people in here all the time. I wish there were. But I've got a few



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things started of my own."

'Disarmed' fascinating read

I'd never given much thought to the Venus de Milo before "Disarmed" landed on my desk a couple of weeks ago. So I'm not real sure why I decided to read Gregory Curtis' book. But I'm glad I did.

This little volume — its text runs just 200 pages — is a smartly written, terrifically researched history of what is arguably the world's most famous sculpture.

Curtis tells the Venus de Milo story from its 1820 discovery on the Greek island of Melos to its use in contemporary advertising campaigns, incorporating lessons in Greek mythology, competition between nations, the birth of archaeology as a science and scholarly rivalry into a fascinating take on art history.

That Curtis is able to make the much-written-about Venus interesting again is a tribute not only to his considerable writing skills but to the insight he brings to the tale and to his detailed descriptions of the beautiful statue.

Stebbins at Sheldon

Theodore Stebbins Jr., curator of American art at Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum, will speak on "Painting in Venice: A Personal Point of View" on Nov. 10 at 7 p.m. in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery auditorium.

One of the nation's leading scholars of American art, Stebbins served as curator of American painting at both Yale University and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston before becoming the Fogg's first American art curator last year. His most recent publications include books on Martin Johnson Heade, Winslow Homer's Adirondack watercolors and the photographs of Charles Sheeler.

"My talk will be about Venice — its light, unique topography, architecture and history — and its special appeal for artists from Canaletto to the present," Stebbins said. "Of special interest to me is the unexpected 'conquest' of Venice of several American painters, including Whistler, Sargent and Prendergast, late in the 19th century, when it would have seemed impossible for anyone to interpret the city with originality."

Stebbins' talk is the next Norman and Jane Geske Lectureship in the History of the Arts, a series established in 1995 that features noted scholars in the history of the visual arts, music, theater, dance, film or architecture. The lecture is free and open to the public.

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