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Artists showcase their work at Neonopolis

Finding art that fits your home's décor while projecting your personality can be a time consuming job. But, we have a new resource here in Las Vegas that could make that easier, if not down right fun.

Carl Corcoran, president of Southern Nevada Center for the Arts, has opened an art center on the second floor inside the Neonopolis on Fremont Street. The grand opening event was held Jan. 23-25.

"We're looking forward to a bright and beautiful, art-filled 2009," Corcoran said.

Amazing and diverse are the artists at the new arts center. Walk the halls and you will be awed by the talent that abounds in our city. We are so fortunate to have this level of creativity in our midst, and this resource within our grasp.

It doesn't matter your style, there are artists that satisfy every criterion. And, if that's not enough, most of these creative souls will do commissioned (custom-made) pieces. If you have something in mind for your home but nothing you see feels right, consider a commissioned piece. Find an artist's work that amazes you and talk to him or her about creating a piece that will fit like a glove.

Here is but a glimmer of the glory that caught my eye as I walked through this energetic new space, with my apologies to the 30 additional suites and 41 artists that I couldn't fit into this article.

Artist A.D. Cook does what he loves. Whether he is using airbrush, photography or metal, his artwork is moving. His studio is alive with pictures of nudes that are so realistic, you may need to ask which ones are photographs and which are paintings. His metal work art is yet another avenue of intrigue as the pictures change when you walk from one side of the room to the other. Sure to inspire, Cook has been in Las Vegas since 2006.

Photographer William Carr's worldwide travels are documented through such detail and vivid color at World Focus Images. Most photos don't begin to compare to the detail, intensity and intrigue that comes through in these masterful photos. With an artistic eye for beauty and a high-resolution camera, these amazing images bring exotic places into your home.

Ruel James is a sculptor and artist. The British artist, born in Jamaica and educated in England, has a working studio in the Center for the Arts. His sculptures also are seen in the Palazzo and Station casinos. James has excelled in a variety of mediums such as oil, water color, air brush, acrylic and sculpture. His studio at Neonopolis also offers drawing and sculpting classes. His work is skillful and something we are proud to embrace in our town.

Windancer Studio is shared by two artists. Lovely and imaginative porcelain creations by Teresa Testa are displayed on shelves as the walls are filled with paintings from nature-loving artist Bonnie Kelso. Kelso paints vibrant, whimsical interpretations of nature. It was delightful to see her work in progress as she painted in the hallway.

Around the corner sat Jill Czerwinski, one of Testa's pottery students. Czerwinski was "throwing on a wheel" (she had clay on a round table that was spinning and she was working the clay). Although Czerwinski only claimed to be a student, I believe her to be a talented, albeit humble, soul as I realized her teacher Testa proudly displayed her work. I do believe Czerwinski is developing a clever clay niche.

Another multifaceted suite is Shine, which belongs to artist Leslie Rowland. Rowland has a passion for humor and poetry. Her artistic styles are developed and contrasting. She is widely known and regarded for her witty quotes, poetry and messages carved into custom-painted pieces of furniture, but has now added larger-than-life abstract, mixed-media artwork to her repertoire. The grace in which she selects and blends the various colors are hypnotizing.

Also showcased in the Shine suite are metal sculptures by Scott Sandoval. The metal is hand formed from cold-rolled steel, ground, polished and powder coated. The effervescent colors are extraordinary. You can find his abstract metalwork in various forms, from platters to statues. And finally, Gulten Dye, a renowned jewelry designer, displays her amazing creations along with those of Deborah Pittman, who paints Japanese floats (balls). Remarkable designs that fit every mood are one-of-a-kind and sure to impress.

Artists creating every genre of art you can possibly imagine walk among us. The Southern Nevada Center for the Arts is a fun place to absorb the brilliance of the various artists that live in our city. We are truly blessed.

My hope is that you will walk through the Neonopolis to view our local talent. It is sure to enrich your life and speak to your soul. And if you will stand in front of a piece of art and let it speak to you, it just might say, "take me home."

Southern Nevada Center for the Arts plans to have future art openings, classes, workshops and master workshops. The Web site, www.artcenteronline.com, will keep you abreast of the artful events to come, and introduce you to all the artists who show their crafts.

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