

ART FOR EVERYONE



By Liz Yokubison

Photo by

Timothy Timmes

Connecting people with art. That is the mantra of Park City's Gallery MAR. Focused on bringing emerging artists and collectors together, this eclectic gallery offers affordable, contemporary art in a variety of media forms.

The brainchild of Maren Bargreen, Gallery MAR has quickly become known for its hosting of fundraisers for local nonprofits. The "Glass and Green Please" event, which raised \$2,500 to continue recycling glass at Recycle Utah, demonstrates the gallery owner's commitment to the community. "My goal is to host one non-profit event in the gallery each month. It's important to give back," says Bargreen. With past events benefitting the Swaner EcoCenter, Arts-Kids, the Eccles Center and a host of others, Bargreen has gained a reputation as a friend of local nonprofits.

Raised in Seattle, where her family began recycling in the 1980s, Bargreen walks and talks eco-friendly practices. The 1,000-square-foot gallery is entirely wind powered via the Blue Sky program. "It's not as much of an inspiration as a necessity. If we approach green living in that manner, more people would do it," she says.

Bargreen, who studied art and English at both Pepperdine University and a semester abroad in Florence, became the gallery director of the Meyer

Gallery upon moving to Park City. During her four-year tenure there, her passion for emerging artists bubbled to the surface. "It was my favorite part. They were so excited and so grateful," recalls Bargreen.

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs (her family has owned the Bargreen Coffee Company since 1898), the ambitious gallery owner always knew she wanted to have her own business. "The timing became right for me and I just took this incredible leap of faith," she says. "Looking back, I know I probably didn't open at the right time for the economy, but it was the right time for me and the perfect time to support artists in our community."

By opening the gallery, Bargreen has given 30 artists the opportunity to show their work. About half are from Utah with the rest spread out from Seattle to North Carolina. One notable Utah artist, Brooks Yates, is a 28-year-old father of four who works full time during the day and paints at night. Bargreen explains, "He uses an outsider artist approach and is mostly self-taught."

Gallery MAR takes art submissions at any time and displays everything from traditional to abstract work. In selecting which pieces to showcase, Bargreen says, "There has to be something that speaks to me on an emotional level, either the artist or the



GALLERY MAR



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piece. Obviously, the pieces need to resonate within a mountain contemporary home, but there has to be that extra special something in the artwork that pulls you in.”

Known for forging personal relationships with her featured artists, Bargreen has even hosted some, such as Shawna Moore, in her own home. Moore favors the ancient method of encaustic painting, which is believed to be the first form of painting. The process involves creating a mixture of hot beeswax,

resin and pigment. Moore then paints with the melted mixture creating as many as 30 layers, which add color and texture to each piece.

Another emerging artist, Sharon Jackman, is one of the most popular in the gallery because her pieces are so unique and reasonably priced. Jackman creates one-of-a-kind, crystal encrusted ceramics using crystalline glazes. The firing process, which occurs at over 2,000 degrees F, causes crystals to grow and form on the ceramic piece over several hours.

While the focus is on promoting emerging artists, Gallery MAR also features well known, mid-career painters such as Ginger Bowen. Bowen is a still

life artist who collects vintage items and uses them in her paintings. Bargreen says, “Bowen is known for realism and does amazing work with shadows.”

Approaching its one-year anniversary, Gallery MAR was created to make art accessible to everyone. Muses Bargreen, “I’m promoting artists, connecting people with art, making pieces affordable and connecting artists with nonprofits. I want to be a part of this community. I’m here to stay.” 🐦

Liz Yokubison is a freelance writer whose artistic ability is limited to the written word. She is proud to say that her 9-year-old twins seem to have inherited her husband’s drawing and painting abilities.