

Artistic development prompts gallery sale

By Karen Williams

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SANTA TERESA — Massey Fine Arts will close its doors Jan. 31 or operate under new ownership, according to gallery owner Ann Massey.

"I'm anticipating selling the gallery and I'm talking with several people — but nothing is final yet," Massey said this week. "I don't want to throw away everything that I built up."

As a gallery owner, Massey said, she succeeded at promoting other artists, but negligent in finding time to devote to her art career.

"I ran the gallery like a business but I treated the artists from the artists' point of view," Massey said.

As a forum for realistic artists, Massey created two national juried art exhibits, which she judged and showed. In the 15 months the gallery has been open, the annual shows saw repeat exhibits of the colored pencil and small works competitions.

Massey said she achieved recognition for the gallery, located at 5290 McNutt Road, Suite 208, but decided against committing herself to it long-term. "It's something where you need (to develop) a large clientele base over a period of years."

Unlike other businesses that stock necessary items and have continual repeat buyers, she explained, a gallery depends on art collectors who may purchase art at months-long intervals.

Massey said she achieved all of her business goals except for furthering her own potential as an artist.

"After putting so much heart and soul into the gallery, it's hard to let it go. But it's a choice that I feel that I have to make for my own career and creativity," Massey said.

Several months ago, Massey was offered a solo show by the Circle Fine Art Corp., which owns a chain of galleries with locations in major United States ci-

ties. But preparing new work for the show, which could take place in about two years, became impossible, Massey said, because of her businesswoman role.

"It's kind of open-ended but it's one of those things that if I don't start working to that goal the opportunity will close."

A key office holder of Circle Fine Art admired Massey's work when she was in California teaching a workshop, Massey said. Then, she was asked to prepare for a show of her wax pencil drawings.

"Very few artists do the detailed drawings using the technique that I do," Massey said, "so it makes me a little different than other artists . . . I'm not trying to chase anyone's work."

By February, Massey said she'll be ready to leave for Paris, where she has been employed by another artist interested in learning her techniques.

"So in essence I'll have two months absolutely free, all ex-

penses paid in Paris," Massey said.

While there, Massey intends to spend hours in the Louvre studying the Old Masters. Dutch genre artists are her mentors, she said.

"Steeped in it (art) as you are in Europe is inspiring; it recharges my batteries daily," Massey said.

"My best work has been done from European scenes."