

Proprietor's knowledge of art makes gallery



Photo by Paul Wheatley

Kalli Halpern stands among some of the Trillium Gallery's fine art work, made mostly in Michigan. The leg piece — part of the gallery's present show — is one of the more exotic works.

By **PAUL WHEATLEY**
Staff Writer

The unique blend of artistic works that Kalli Halpern has brought together to fortify the Trillium Gallery, 327 Abbott, is awesome — especially once you consider the limited amount of time she had to locate them.

Sure, the gallery walls are chock full of intriguing paintings while the shelves glitter with multi-colored explosions of Polish crystal — but things didn't start out that way.

An offer to gain the gallery space came suddenly and Halpern jumped at the opportunity. In just a short amount of time she had a gargantuan room — by gallery standards — to fill.

Thanks to previous contacts with the local art community — which she gained by holding open houses in her East Lansing home — Halpern accommodated the gallery nicely for its April 15 opening.

In the beginning there was some bare wall and floor space, but now a prospective buyer's eye is easily dazzled by hundreds of objects, many of them produced right here in Michigan

with a few from other countries.

"I had five weeks to put a gallery together," Halpern said. "I don't think I could have possibly started if I didn't know artists in the area."

A particularly interesting batch of work are cork boxes made by Lansing framer Todd Mack. The beautifully finished, wood and glass-covered boxes feature matted pictures or other objects meant to accent the corks popped after each year's wedding anniversary.

For those with wilder tastes there's the blown glass bowls, vases and sculptures from Poland-based artist Jablonski.

"A lot of times my artists go out and if they're traveling they'll bring something back, which is kind of fun," she said.

Pieces also come in from Mexico and Japan.

Halpern's six years of experience while working in other area galleries has definitely aided her eye for sellable material — nearly everything in her showroom would seemingly charm one taste or another.

"I have some artists that have never shown before," said Halpern, who has a Bachelor's degree in art from Wilmington

College in Wilmington, Ohio. "That's really exciting to be on the front end with them."

The Trillium Gallery has also forged a working bond with The Evergreen Grill, its next-door neighbor. Art from the gallery is hung upon the restaurant's walls and the Grill often holds banquets and meetings in the gallery.

Tables and chairs are set up in the middle of the room, allowing guests to dine surrounded by glance-stealing

work.

"It's a great ice-breaker," Halpern said. "If people don't know each other very well they can talk about the art or get up and move around."

Among these activities are the ever-changing shows. The gallery's current one is called *Sculpture as Book*, created by Susan Hensel and her former student Matt Addonizio. The work blends unusual sculptures — created from a variety of mediums — with literary pieces.

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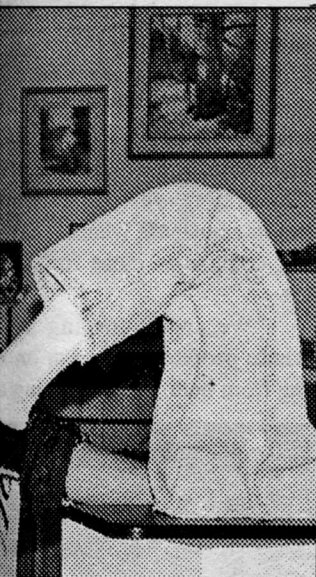


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Shows run about a month each.

Halpern said one of her biggest goals is always keeping the displays fresh.

The Trillium Gallery is open seven days a week.

11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Saturday.

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday.

Any group can reserve the space for a fund-raiser or dinner by calling the Evergreen Grill.

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