

April 21, 2008

# LAS VEGAS SUN

## Her house, the gallery

It's mostly a place to serve private clients, but Michele Quinn puts on exhibits, too



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By *Kristen Peterson*

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The Las Vegas art community is an evolving life-form — expanding, recoiling, weakening and strengthening. Galleries and boutiques come and go. Events succeed and fail. Limits are tested, key players sigh, and the scene grows up.

The latest change can be seen on South Seventh Street near Charleston Boulevard, two blocks outside the Arts District. You wouldn't know from driving by that Vera Lutter photographs hang on the walls of 1950s brick house, or that this is the home office of Michele C. Quinn Fine Art Advisory.

From the street, it's just another charming house in a well-groomed older neighborhood. Inside, it's a charming salon. It's just what Michele Quinn wanted when she bought the place last year and closed GC Arts on Main Street near Charleston Boulevard.

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“My business has evolved into something different,” she says, standing in the main room. “I don’t have the showroom pressure. I have private clients, corporate clients. We go to them.”

Quinn was director and curator of GC Arts (formerly Godt Cleary Projects), which gave Las Vegas its first public showing of works by James Turrell and John McCracken, hosted an installation and exhibit of works on paper by Las Vegas artist Tim Bavington and displayed prints by Robert Rauschenberg, Ed Ruscha and Ellsworth Kelly. The gallery closed in August and Quinn purchased the Seventh Street house to open an intimate salon-style space for private art consulting that operates as an appointment-only facility.

But Quinn, who also oversees art acquisitions for MGM Mirage’s \$8 billion CityCenter and heads the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art, hasn’t foregone exhibitions at her new space. The opening of the Lutter exhibit this month brought the usual crowd of casino executives, artists, collectors and downtown employees, some of whom walked over to attend. Wes Myles, owner of the Arts Factory, and his wife, Debra Heiser, rode their tandem bicycle to the event. Same crowd. Different space. The landscaped yard, wood floors, crown molding and mullioned windows of the new location give a different feel from the white walled, high-ceilinged storefront gallery on industrial Main Street. The back yard offers a neighborhood atmosphere for receptions.

“That block, that area is the nicest in the city,” says Myles, who had his first photography studio on Seventh Street before opening the Arts Factory. The only drawback, he says, is

that it’s a legal corridor, rather than a creative community. “But it’s not a retail business looking for foot traffic. It’s for collectors who are looking for a more personal experience.”

Quinn says she will continue to have exhibits and openings in the 1,470-square-foot house because that’s what she knows.

The Lutter exhibit, on view through May 16, features six gelatin silver prints from “Venice Porfolio II,” a collection of ghostly black-and-white images of Venice, Italy, taken by the German-born photographer (who is one of the bigger names in camera obscura). To create the works, Lutter creates a small dark room with an aperture that allows sunlight through a tiny hole and creates the image on photosensitive paper. (Think giant pinhole camera.) The tones are reversed, causing the images to look like photographic negatives.

“This whole sense of time and space in architecture is pretty extraordinary,” Quinn says, standing before an image that was loaned to the exhibit by the New York-based Gagosian Gallery. “You feel like it’s the end of time looking at it.”

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The next exhibit will feature the images of Ultimate Fighting Championship fighters taken by Los Angeles photographer Kevin Lynch, who has been documenting the fights for the fine art, large-scale, handmade limited-edition book “Octagon,” which includes an essay by Dave Hickey. A couple of the large limited-edition prints will be on view at Quinn’s gallery, but the main exhibit will be featured in a penthouse at Sam Cherry’s SoHo Lofts during June.

Following that will be “Art Handlers Group Show,” featuring the work of local art handlers and artists.

