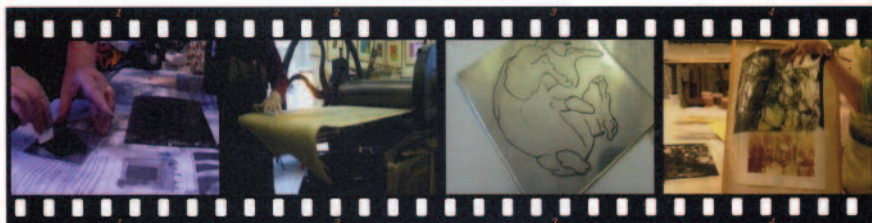


Art as Rich Media



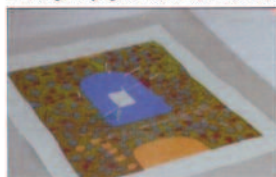
The population profile in Devon is changing. The number and variety of people buying art is growing. The ways people view art and buy art are gaining in sophistication.

Some of these new ways are linked with advances in technology, and in many respects we are seeing an increase in art appeal.

There are new galleries opening. Existing galleries are changing hands. Galleries are expanding, moving to bigger premises, adding new services, changing their décor and even the type of work they promote. Through all this there is a sense of growth, optimism and stability. Every business needs financial stability in some way or other, and galleries are no exception. Yet the extent of change and progression throughout Devon shows a combination of grit and flair which benefits all, from collectors and galleries to artists and practitioners.

The web is one major change, with galleries reporting a wide variety of successes. In some months, galleries have seen 50

per cent of their sales come from online activity. Of course, the process is not that simple. Collectors may have seen the work in the gallery, gone home and made the



By demonstrating techniques, galleries can break down the barrier between the public and the artist, and create a relationship with the process, the work, the artists and the viewer for a richer experience.

decision, and then actioned the purchase over the web. Equally, a collector may have researched on the web, found some work and galleries of interest, and made the purchase in the gallery.

Yet even the web is changing. There are now dynamic image galleries, webcams, online video clips, podcasts and forums, all vying for your attention and appreciation. Online searching is now as much art and craft as it is technology. Updates on artists, types of work, even individual pieces of work, can be sent to you. And all of this helps raise the profile for creators, dealers, galleries and collectors.

The cornerstone remains the gallery, however its role is expanding. Growing from a shop front, galleries now are becoming hubs of services and options. In some cases these changes reflect the backgrounds and interests of the gallery owner. Brook Gallery in Budeigh Salterton has new owners, and a bundle of energy for adding new features and services.

Angela Yarwood explains their strategy stems from a desire to be ambassadors for fine art and the artists who they represent. With a background in IT and



Tilly Whittle in her studio, part of the Drawn to the Valley group. Open studio events help break down the barrier between artist and the public. Galleries, too, are using various methods to engage the public more in the art and the artist.

marketing, she argues that using the many means of communication available allows more people to have access to art, and find inspiration and enjoyment.

"We want the gallery to appeal to a wide range of people, and at the same time offer



Friendly and informative videos which feature artists and techniques have been produced to provide an unexpected look at artists and methods

information in a variety of ways. We will have large screens playing short information videos, alongside the works of art. We have commissioned these videos ourselves, and some will feature a particular artist while others will go behind the scenes in a studio or workshop.

Videos produced so far feature artists (Lynn Bailey, Sonia Rollo, Simon Ripley and Mark Heald) and techniques (lithograph, collagraph, screen print, relief print, etching) in a friendly and informative way. Angela likes the immediacy of the short videos, providing an unexpected look at artists and methods.

Some changes to the décor and display areas at the gallery also reflect anticipated changes in the needs and interests of collectors and browsers. Some sculpture and bespoke pieces of craft will be added, along with new lighting and wall displays. The on-line web-site is also unique in



its presentation of the art, and has been extremely well received by both regular and new customers alike.

"The gallery needs to combine professionalism with enjoyment. People need to feel welcome. We see art as part of life, not separate and exclusive."

Angela also sees the combination of business and art as a rich lifestyle choice, where passion and creativity can flow into the presentation and marketing in this new, rich media world.