

Artist's motto: 'See the good'

Gail Mardfin says she's not into angst-filled art

BY JESSICA SHANLEY
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

"See the Good," an exhibit full of uplifting paintings, collages, monoprints, and photographs with text, is currently creating an optimistic atmosphere on the third floor of the Atrium Art Gallery, located in the Administrative and Records Building in Morristown.

A total of 63 various works, which will be on view until Oct. 25, are the creations of Gail Mardfin, an artist who believes living in the positive day in and day out, as well as conveying such themes in her artwork.

"I can barely tolerate a complainer anymore because I'm usually feeling so good all the time," Mardfin said, which has much to do with her spiritual beliefs.

Mardfin, a Religious Scientist, considers herself to be a spiritual seeker and a believer in the Law of Attraction, which, she said, means all things in the world vibrate at different levels. When a person is feeling happy, she said, he or she is more likely to attract more happiness.

"Part of what makes me feel so good all the time is doing this (art) work," she added.

Mardfin's art at the exhibit contains many still-lives of flowers and food, while a majority of her collages incorporate encouraging quotes or text.

"The photos and the collages ... are mostly dependent on the words that are in them," she said, referring to her book of quotes when deciding on text that would compliment her photography.

One of Mardfin's favorite collages in the exhibit is titled "Thinking Outside the Box."

Mardfin's paintings in the exhibit can be described as having similarities to the outlines in a coloring book, she said, suggesting such a memory can be a happy one for most people. Some have even suggested her paintings to look like stained glass, she said.

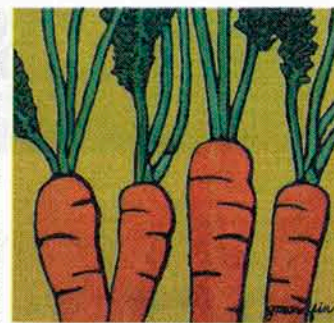
"My affinity for outlines seems to have come forth in my latest pleasure, acrylic painting," she says in her artist's statement. The use of line is something Mardfin believes ties her paintings together.

"I'm not trying to make (my artwork) look super realistic," Mardfin said. That's why she prefers acrylics to oil paints, while agreeing the colors she uses in her works



DAWN BENKO / DAILY RECORD

Gail Mardfin has an exhibit of her work on display at the Atrium Art Gallery in the Morris County Administration & Records Building in Morristown. At right is her painting called 'Olcott Square Tulips.' Below is one called 'Carrots.' In the box at far right is 'Asparagus.'



tend to be vibrant.

Mardfin said she uses about 10 or 12 different acrylic pigments, choosing to mix her own colors.

Some of Mardfin's paintings at the exhibit incorporating such rules are "Asparagus," "Pink Tulips Field" and "B.L.T.," which she came up with while meditating one morning.

"I ended up going ... out to breakfast or lunch ... with my camera," she said.

Mardfin said many of her paintings, especially those of food, start out in this way, by taking a photograph as a reference, and only a reference, for the painting she wants to eventually create.

The majority of Mardfin's works at the exhibit were completed within the last two years. Many of these works were sold the night of her artist's reception Aug. 3. Almost 250 people, friends and others, came to view her works, Mardfin said. She is continuing to sell other artworks from the exhibit and hearing positive feedback from the

viewing public.

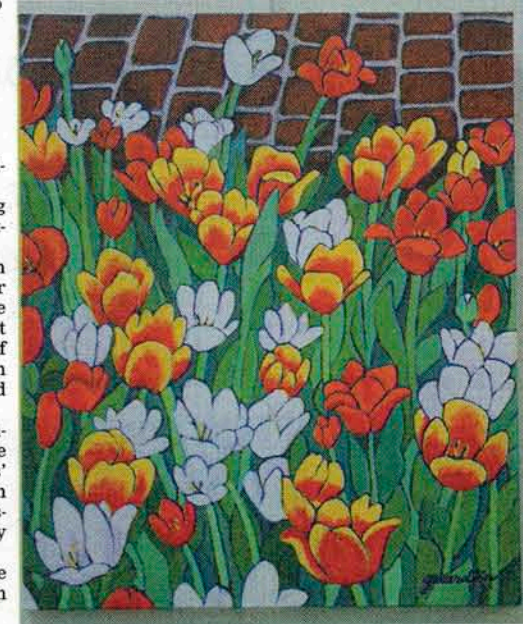
Having the exhibit has been a very satisfying experience on all levels, Mardfin said.

"It makes me feel so good to know that ... I'm affecting people. ... (As an art student) you had to do these angst-filled art pieces. ... I am done with that," she said.

Mardfin, 53, lives in Bernardsville. She graduated from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., and obtained her master's degree in studio art from Montclair State University. She was once the head of the art department at the Purnell School in Pottersville and is the founder of PLP — Peace, Love and Prosperity — Graphic Design Services, which Mardfin, the principal designer, formed in 1996.

She is also a member of various art related organizations, such as the Printmaking Council of New Jersey, the Somerset Art Association and the Myhelan Artists' Network. Mardfin has displayed her art through Myhelan and has previously exhibited, along with her former husband, Robert Starkey, in Morristown's Community Theatre.

Mardfin plans to fulfill a number of commissions, one being for a restaurant, and to exhibit her work at shows in the future.



If you go

"See the Good," exhibit by artist Gail Mardfin
Through Oct. 25
Atrium Art Gallery, on the third floor of the Morris County Administration & Records Building, Court Street, Morristown
Hours: Weekdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wednesdays until 8 p.m.
For more information about Mardfin's art, call (908) 696-1363.