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Ruiz-Healy widens scope with public art gallery

By **Steve Bennett**, *San Antonio Express-News*

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Art dealer Patricia Ruiz-Healy, who has shown the work of her artists in small, private exhibitions in her home, has opened a public gallery space, Ruiz-Healy Art, just off Olmos Circle.

Steve Bennett / San Antonio Express-News

SAN ANTONIO — For the past six years, Patricia Ruiz-Healy has showcased the work of the artists she represents — including Pedro Diego Alvarado, grandson of Diego Rivera — literally in her Olmos Park living room, in intimate, limited-access

exhibitions.

With the recent opening of Ruiz-Healy Art, a new gallery space just off Olmos Circle, the art dealer is going public — hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday — and at the same time widening her scope.

“My emphasis is broader now,” she said. “I used to focus primarily on Latin American artists, but I want to respond to what is happening in the city and in Texas.”

So her inaugural exhibition in the small, sun-drenched space is a thoughtful gathering of cultures and media titled “Continuous Change.”

It features not only the moody, somewhat ethereal photography of Peruvian Cecilia Paredes, a large, dynamic charcoal drawing by Argentinian Nicolas Leiva and the neo-aroque paintings of Mexican Benjamin Dominguez, but also colorful, abstract woodblock prints from Nate Cassie's South Texas “Flora” series and carefully constructed collages by Constance Lowe. Both are prominent San Antonio working artists and university-level teachers.

“I think it's great,” Cassie said. “San Antonio needs more commercial galleries to represent the wide array of artists who work here, as well as to bring in new work from outside San Antonio. Ruiz-Healy Art has been an evolving space since its inception, and this is a very positive new step.”

Otis Parchman, owner of PSG Fine Art, echoes the thought: “The more good art that people have access to, the better.”

“Patricia is a well-qualified art dealer and will show good work,” he added. “It is great to have Ruiz-Healy (Art) in their new, very accessible location.”

As Cassie points out, San Antonio has a rich community of artists but is not exactly overrun with spaces that sell fine contemporary art.

Ruiz-Healy, who considered space in the Pearl complex, has been contemplating

opening a gallery for a few years.

“I really wanted to do it for the artists,” she said, “to get them more visibility. I loved my domestic setting — clients could really visualize how a piece of art would work in a home — but I wanted to do justice to the art and get the artist more notice.”

Ruiz-Healy said she will do four to five exhibitions a year in the Olmos Park location.

Next month, she will show new paintings by Alvarado, and next year she is planning solo exhibitions by Cassie and Berlin artist Neo Rauch.

Also coming is a pairing of Spanish artist Andres Ferrandis with Lowe, who both incorporate photography into their collage works.

As the exclusive representative of the estate of Chuck Ramirez, she is planning an exhibition of the late San Antonio artist's photographic work in Spain.

“2014 is going to be a very busy year, ” she said.

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