



Artist Gil Garitano is vice president of the Alameda Art Association.

## The Art of Association

BY WANDA HENNIG  
PHOTOGRAPHY LORI EANES

### Gallery Finds a Home at Alameda Towne Centre

It's a sunny afternoon down by the waterfront in Alameda, and the Towne Centre is abuzz with shoppers. Some quick and deliberate, others slow and ambling, make their way past what, for a long time, was Waldenbooks; now it's the Alameda Art Gallery. On the walls and on freestanding circular hanging structures – plus on shelves and in cases near the entrance – is the work of around 40 member artists. Some are weekend hobbyists; others are painters who consistently sell their art. →

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### Around the Town

There are landscapes, cityscapes, seascapes, botanical sketches, portraits, some pretty jewelry and lots more.

The gallery, which will celebrate its first anniversary on May 1, is the permanent home of the Alameda Art Association. “The association was formed in 1944 to encourage the visual arts and to support and provide community for Alameda (county) artists,” says real estate agent

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and abstract watercolorist Carol Burnett, who is president of both the association and the gallery. Despite her name and ebullient personality, Burnett has no Hollywood affiliations. She is quick to tell you, however, that an early Art Association member (in the 1950s) was the famed actress, comedienne and erstwhile Island resident Phyllis Diller, and that at one time Art Association happenings were “always big social events, covered by the local newspaper.”

Island resident, retired longshoreman, art entrepreneur and long-time portrait artist (well-known in the 1990s for his paintings of Oakland Raiders stars) Gil Garitano,



who one might guess is an artist by the way he dresses (all the way to the beret), is vice president of the association and the gallery. “I’m usually a loner,” he says, “but I liked what Carol was doing for the art community with this gallery, so I became involved.”

He designed the logo and has spoken to members about turning a profit from art. His daughter, Tavia Garitano, makes the jewelry that is on display. He, like all the artists, pays \$25 annually for membership, \$20 a month to exhibit, and the gallery takes 25 percent commission on work sold. “The idea is that we be self-supporting,” he says.

The day we visited, Island videographer and photographer Glenda Barbera was

doing her once-a-month, three-hour volunteer stint that members are required to do. She was quick to welcome those who wandered in, guide them around, give them flyers on future happenings and tell them: “Do come back soon. We have art events and new things coming in all the time that are great for gifts.”

The spacious color-drenched gallery has two comfy couches, plus magazines on a coffee table. There’s a pile of yellowing scrapbooks to browse through that trace the history of the Alameda Art Association all the way back to 1946. The work of participating artists has been shown at different spaces over the years – “we’ve had other galleries off and on,” says Burnett – the first time at the original Alameda Free Library in 1946; more recently (in 2007) at the “new” Alameda Free Library. Given that the association now has a permanent gallery and that the place – and members like Barbera – are so welcoming, people will, no doubt, be inspired to come back.

The Alameda Art Gallery is open 12:00 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. New work is hung on a six-week cycle, and art demonstrations are scheduled on Estuary Art Attack evenings (second Friday each month). 2242 Alameda Towne Centre, (510) 523-4475, [alamedartassociation.com](http://alamedartassociation.com).

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Update: The Alameda Towne Centre has new Owners Jamestown, they have renamed the center to the original name “ALAMEDA SOUTH SHORE CENTER” on July 4th 2011, we look forward to new community connections and support, as well as new businesses coming to SOUTH SHORE. The Alameda Art Association has a new President and Manager: Gil Garitano. Check the Gallery web site for updates and any announcements, [www.alamedartassociation.com](http://www.alamedartassociation.com)

