

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Encounters with bright, warm places

By Andrew Roiter, Berkshire Eagle Staff

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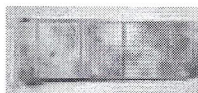
NORTH ADAMS - Downstreet Art is a sprawling mini-metropolis of visual artwork. Old storefronts have been converted into art galleries and studios that anyone can check out free. Tonight, from 6 to 8 many of the galleries premiere their new shows in a monthly Downstreet Art reception and street festival.

### Avalon Seafood Gallery

Gallery founder and curator Andrew Davis named the gallery after a restaurant in Oklahoma. He thought that the non-sequitur would be memorable.

Several artists work in the small combination studio/gallery on Holden Street, including Davis.

Tonight, "The Little People from Somewhere Else" opens at the gallery. The work of artist Claire Fox, who helped Davis renovate Avalon,



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this new show combines folk art with realist and surrealist landscapes and imaginary tiny creatures.

"I wanted to do something with the leftover pieces of wood after building the wall," Fox said.

More than 50 watercolor painted wooden dolls will inhabit wooden structures that Davis has assembled. The rest of the wooden world is filled with dolls that Fox created from bought and recycled cloth.

"I like to work small. It feels more personal somehow," she said. "And I've always liked kaleidoscopes, where little things come together. Where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

"[Avalon has] been a wonderful participant in this burgeoning art community," said Downstreet Art director Jonathan Secor. "It's an interesting

and quirky little space. Their stuff makes you come to your own conclusions."

The following show, opening Aug. 26, will show the results from an all-night drawing marathon Davis will lead at Bascom Lodge at the summit of Mount Greylock on Monday from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. The 12-hour marathon welcomes artists to come and draw together.

Following the end of that show, Davis is welcoming artists and members of the community to help him reconfigure downtown North Adams in an exhibit that asks, "How would you re-design and improve the city?"

Davis describes his passion for art in terms of an addiction.

"If someone were to ask me what they should give

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up to support a drug or alcohol addiction, I'd tell them to get help. But if they asked about art, I'd tell them 'whatever it takes,'" he said.

## Gallerie Haiti

Gallerie Haiti is part of the Haitian cultural preservation movement that has gained strength in America since the Haitian earthquake in January. The gallery, organized by Art for Change, a New York City based non-profit and curated by Melanie Mowinski, displays the art of Haitians and Haitian-Americans.

"One of my goals for the next show is showing contemporary Haitian art that re-envisioning Haiti and Haitian culture," Mowinski said. "There's more than just the traditional folk art that is mostly associated with Haiti," Secor said.

Robert Henriquez, who currently lives in Pittsfield, will have a significant presence in the new show. Henriquez is a multimedia artist whose work recently appeared at MCLA's Haitian festival. His new work will juxtapose Voodoo gods with modern interpretations of what those gods mean.

"The next show is really about juxtaposition and keeping the idea of Haiti alive," Mowinski said.

Gallerie Haiti is spelled using a combination of the English "Gallery" and French "Galerie" to symbolize the mixing of American and Haitian culture.

Mowinski and Secor created it together.

Secor said, "I asked, 'how do I continue that spirit that was started by the MCLA students showing another side of Haiti?'" "We were trying to come up with a way to do something good," Mowinski said.

The gallery will help raise money for rebuilding Haiti and preserving the art and culture there. 30 percent of all sales in the gallery will go to Haiti.

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