

By Lisa Reisman

**CENTERBROOK** — In these cold, drab winter months, with the crush of the holidays over and spring far off, we need color, warmth and light. And to slow down and recognize what we may not have noticed as we've rushed from one place to another.

That's according to Barbara Nair, director of the quietly exceptional Spectrum Art Gallery and Artisans Store in Centerbrook, which will host an opening reception on Friday, Jan. 24 for its first 2020 exhibit, "Appreciating the Everyday," with artwork that celebrates the mundane objects and events in our daily lives.

The show runs through March 15.

"Take a breath and visit us at the gallery to find more to appreciate," she said.

That might mean a young girl with blond locks communing with a drowsing cat in a scene depicted in exquisite, cozy detail by Catherine Satsuk. Or stalks of asparagus luxuriously stretching upwards photographed against a rich black backdrop by Maryann Flick. Or a Melissa Imossi oil painting showing a flaky croissant languidly resting on a tea cup and saucer.

The themed exhibit, which also includes the candid, unposed subjects of Howard Margules and John Hsu's photographs capturing animals in their beauty, furthers a mission of Spectrum Gallery "to showcase regional and national artists and artisans, both emerging and established," as its website reads.

It also may explain how the Main Street space that formerly housed the Essex hardware store has become, since opening in April 2014, among the premier art galleries in Connecticut.

"People really like coming here," said the spirited Nair, a former actor and director with a degree in nonprofit arts management, who visited galleries, museums, and her favorite shops in Manhattan for ideas on how to



Contributed photos

"Best Friends," oil on canvas, by Catherine Satsuk, part of "Appreciating the Everyday" exhibit at Centerbrook's Spectrum Art Gallery from Jan. 24 - March 15.

SPECTRUM GALLERY PRESENTS:

## 'Appreciate the Everyday'

1/24/20



"Bicycle in Moonlight," acrylic and gouache on canvas, Steven Ostrowski



Asparagus Bouquet, digital print by Maryann Flick

display artists' work to maximum effect.

The result is a space that's open, airy, and flooded with natural light, and with moveable walls that allow the gallery to be rearranged for every exhibit and lighted from different angles.

Another reason that Spectrum Gallery is thriving is the broad range of artwork, from painting, sculpture, and mixed media in the gallery, to the hand-crafted work in fabric, glass, ceramics, and jewelry in the Artisans Store, as well as the constant "refreshing," as Nair put it, that has both the gallery changing themes and the store changing inventory every six to seven weeks.

"There's always something new to look at," Nair said, "and something for everyone."

That philosophy also applies to Spectrum's emphasis on keeping prices affordable, both in the gallery and the store.

"Not everyone can afford pricey pieces," she said. "You can find something that's lovely and well-made and still at an affordable price point."

Above all, it seems, the gallery runs on the generator of Nair's sheer love of art and artists, which has the gallery hosting classes, workshops, and summer art and fashion camps for children and teens.

Not to mention her welcoming nature. "We're very chatty, and we're always interested in why people come in," she said. "We tend to make friends with most of our customers."

Which, of course, is just the natural warmth needed to get us through until spring.

► "Appreciating the Everyday," at Spectrum Art Gallery, 61 Main Street, Centerbrook runs from Jan. 24 through March 15. Opening reception is on Friday, Jan. 24 from 6:30 - 9 pm with wine and refreshments. The reception is free. All are welcome.

► Spectrum Gallery's store hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 12-6 pm, and Sunday, 12-5 pm. For more information, visit [spectrumartgallery.org](http://spectrumartgallery.org) or call 860-767-0742