



Moderne Life Interiors owner Sandi Young looks out the window of her Jenkintown store, where local art students are displaying their works throughout the month. Chronicle/News staff photos - REGINA RAHILL



Moderne Life Interiors owner Sandi Young in her Jenkintown store with some of the art work on display at the gallery this month. Chronicle/News staff photos - REGINA RAHILL

Gallery offers showcase for student artists

By Mischa Aaron Amosky
Staff Writer

Local art students have their pieces getting some "window time" at a venue in Jenkintown.

Sandi Young, owner of Moderne Life Interiors, opened her store in 2000 along with her husband. With a penchant for art (and admittedly a need for change via a "midlife crisis"), Young decided to open a gallery that sells contemporary furniture, which she said is a rarity outside of New York City.

The pieces inside her store are original and many are handmade. Young said she doesn't take a vacation without hunting down some new pieces for her store.

Young strives to keep it local, too ... though many of her local pieces are not for sale.

Teaming up with local independent art teacher Sue Puchowitz of Elkins Park, Young is displaying three-dimensional media from art students ranging from 5 through 15 years old through the end of the month. And though the pieces aren't for sale, as many of the students



Students of teacher Sue Puchowitz, of Elkins Park, have their art on display at Moderne Life Interiors.

aren't interested in selling, potential buyers are there.

"It's good for me [and] it's good for the kids — the kids just love it," Young said. "They love having it here and the parents get a kick out of it. People regularly come in to purchase the kids' pieces and some just stop to stare at the window."

Puchowitz, who formerly taught art in pub-

lic schools, has a degree in art therapy. She said regardless of a student's talent level, every student feels good about having his or her art on display.

"The point is to make them feel confident — to build their egos and to feel good about what they've worked on," Puchowitz said. "And one of the ways to do that is to display it."

Puchowitz started showcasing her students' work at the Elkins Park Free Library — and added that the two towers of tiles that flank the entrance are the product of her students. Her students' two-dimensional media are also on display at cafes like Cosi and Starbucks, but, she said, "Sandi's been good enough to do it all these years and deserves credit for showcasing all these students."

Young's 27-year-old daughter actually studied under Puchowitz when she was a child.

"... And I still have the little ballet slipper she made," Young said.

Many of the pieces displayed at Moderne

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Life Interiors are clay, and some are freestanding watercolor paper. Each wears a tag with the student's name and age. Puchowitz said she asks her students to "problem solve" when crafting a piece, and many are developed in stages. One project dealt with working with cutting holes in boxes; some of the pieces showcase clay with decals, Puchowitz said.

Her students' pieces were sold at an event in the past, and the proceeds went to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, but Puchowitz said something didn't feel right about selling the students' art (however some of her older students disagreed). She said she has made arrangements with the students' families to sell some of the pieces in the past.

"It's a privilege to have my students' work in such a wonderful place," Puchowitz said. "Sandi's very open-minded with a wonderful display and she always wears a smile."

Young has been displaying amateur art since she opened her store and often takes work from local photographers and work from Tyler School of Art students.

Moderne Life Interiors is located at 325 Old York Road, Jenkintown and can be reached at 215-886-8490; or www.modernelife.com.



Artist Lisa Hanratty's clay plate is on display at Moderne Life Interiors in Jenkintown.