

Giving gifts, supporting art

Pomerene Center's Art as Gift shop offers work of local artists

By **VALERIE GRACE**
Staff Writer

COSHOCKTON — Located at the corner of Third and Mulberry streets is a unique shopping experience for holiday gift givers.

The Pomerene Center for the Arts has opened its doors for Art as Gift 2003 through Dec. 23.

"It's an exhibit and museum shop," said Anne Cornell, director of the art center. "Things are displayed in an exhibit fashion where everything has a space and is visible in itself."

Unlike regular exhibits at the center, visitors can purchase items and take them home the same day. Items for sale include enamel work, ironwork, hats, rugs, ornaments, furniture, dolls and pottery.

"Most of (the artists) are pretty local," Cornell said. "We have things as far away in Ohio as Kent and Medina."

Todd Malenke spends unknown hours working on his ironwork art from a studio located next to his home near Fresno.

"The work I do is tabletop sculpture, some of it's nonfunctional but some of it's candlesticks," Malenke said. He also uses his blacksmithing techniques combined with modern equipment to create his pieces. "I think the forged iron goes well with most interior decor so you don't have to be too worried about that. The colors are subtle and the surface texture is very attractive."

The 51-year-old artist sells most of his work in the Mid-Atlantic region, but he looks forward to displaying his work

GO! At a glance

• **When:** 1-4 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays, through Dec. 23

• **Where:** Pomerene Center for the Arts, corner of Third and Mulberry streets

• **Cost:** No charge
Handicapped accessible, ASL interpretation available by reservation.

• **Info:** 622-0326

each year at the local art center.

"I like to sell my work locally," he said. "I think my art is a good gift for the holidays because it is not something you could buy (in stores)."

Malenke has participated in the exhibit for five years.

A popular item which has come from Seattle, Wash., the past three years are Lao Hats by Heather Davenport.

Davenport has been making Lao Hats for 15 years. According to her Web site, www.lao-hats.com, the hats are inspired by medieval design and are hand embroidered and hand finished from mostly recycled materials. The hats are unique pieces of art that are functional and decorative. Davenport is best known for her fondness for celadon-colored Chinese jades.

"I have introduced a couple new styles this year," Davenport said. "One is a cap which is a lighter weight with no fur and the guys actually like them. I have also introduced a Santa hat aiming at kids."

Davenport describes her hats as warm, wearable and



VALERIE GRACE/Tribune

Heather Davenport of Seattle, Wash., has many of her hats for sale at the Art as Gift 2003 exhibit at the Pomerene Center for the Arts. Lao Hats are inspired by medieval design and are hand-embroidered and hand-finished from mostly recycled materials.

unique. They're popular with all ages, genders and cultures.

"They are extraordinary," Cornell said. "They're wool and beaded ... people say how much they love wearing them."

Cornell is excited about all the work on display.

"We have two rooms full of items and then there's the Coshockton Art Guild Gallery that you can purchase from," she said. "It's a way to give very personally to someone."

Price ranges fit most budgets with items as inexpensive as \$3.50 to the furniture which goes up to \$400. Cornell said most items are under \$100.

"We have really nice little Christmas ornaments ...

Santa's and snowmen ... they are really fun," Cornell said. "We've packed some baskets this year with items in them ... they're nice, ready-to-go presents."

The eighth annual event was instituted as a fund-raiser for the center.

"Nonprofit art in a small community is always a struggle," Cornell said. "Every dollar that comes into the center is very important."

Twenty percent of all sales from the special exhibit will go toward operating the center.

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