

One-stop design shop

By Denise K. James, Special to The Post and Courier
Thursday, July 22, 2010

If you visited the pop-up gallery at 438 King St. during May and June's Art for Charity event, then you know what a fantastic space it is for showcasing the work of regional artists. But if you missed out, you'll be pleased to discover that the gallery, which began just as a pop-up for the event, is now a permanent space in Charleston. It's in the former Nancy Koltes space in the design district.



Photo by Carmen Ash

The Michael Mitchell Gallery, 438 King St., was part of the recent Art for Charity event, and originally was going to close in June. Mitchell decided to keep the gallery open. **"It's enjoyable working with the public, and having people in the gallery. I enjoy finding out what people envision for their homes,"** Mitchell said.

Owner Michael Mitchell has decided that the space is the perfect place to acquaint Charlestonians with Michael Mitchell Design, in addition to showing hand-selected artists.

"If you come into the gallery, you can talk with me about comprehensive design for your home, in addition to viewing the art displayed," says Mitchell. **"I am open to assisting in any capacity that is needed. I travel to places in Atlanta, New York and L.A., and I hunt for furniture, accessories and fabrics. It's all about the right thing for each person, and I'm always looking for a fresh approach -- something unique and unexpected."**

Mitchell has had a passion for design since he was a child, and Michael Mitchell Gallery is the result of wanting to share that passion with the city. **"I've done art and design all my life,"** he explains. **"I took classes at the Gibbes when I was 6 years old; I've always loved to draw and to create. I started out working at a furniture store in Columbia, and it just took off from there."** Currently showing in the gallery are new artists such as Jim Victor, J. Renee, Tammy Papa and Ron Lovejoy, to name a few. **"We've also just received around 500 pieces of art glass in all sizes and colors, mostly from the '50s and '60,"** says Mitchell. **"It's Murano glass, created by a legacy of designers."**

KC Collins, another artist showing at the gallery, is excited about the new space. **"I was one of the Piccolo Spoleto outdoor artists, and Michael saw my work and appreciated it,"** she says. **"He wanted me to display my art in his gallery, and I think it's a really neat space. It's very contemporary. I was also excited to be featured with Tammy Papa. She's great. I think Michael really works well with all of the artists."**

"It's enjoyable working with the public, and having people in the gallery," Mitchell says. **"I enjoy finding out what people envision for their homes. This space is a comfortable environment for discussing design. There will constantly be new artists added to the space, and most of the Art for Charity artists will continue to show work. The goal is to offer truly unique pieces at a reasonable price point. I want to make sure people get something extraordinary."**