



Work by Jean Mason, above, Thomas Hamilton, bottom left, and Valerie Light Anderson, bottom right, will be on display through March 28 at the Artists' Cooperative Gallery in Omaha.

'Blue jeans art' on display

KIM BOUSQUET
Staff Writer

kbousquet@nonpareilonline.com
(712) 325-5736

OMAHA — When money is tight, splurging on artwork is one of the first habits to be shelved. It shouldn't have to be a splurge, if you ask painter Jean Mason.

The Carter Lake artist has changed how she's exhibiting her work. Her 3 feet by 5 feet canvases are unstretched as they hang at the Artists' Cooperative Gallery, 405 S. 11th St., Omaha.

"It's to keep things affordable in this economy," said Mason, who has been a member of the co-op since 1999.

Her husband calls it her "stimulus package."

Mason, along with Council Bluffs potter Thomas Hamilton and painter Valerie Light Anderson, are exhibiting work at the co-op through March 28. The artists will hold an opening celebration Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m. They will demonstrate their techniques Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m.

Mason said Sunday's demonstrations will be pretty casual. She and Anderson will be painting, while Hamilton will have his potter's wheel there. If there's a crowd, he may let some children help out and make pinch pots.

"It's more blue jeans art than tuxedo art," said Mason.

Mason's energetic paintings feature movement and bright colors. Perhaps best known for her portrayal of musicians, Mason has created new works that are spontaneous, loose and affordable — something she calls a "little bit hippy-centric." They are more casual than her usual work, she said, and



unlike her portrayal of musicians, they're more focused on movement and dance.

"Jean's work is very, very vibrant," said Hamilton, who is the last remaining charter member of the co-op. "I like to think my glazes tend to be the same way."

Hamilton is excited to show his series of small vases and bowls alongside Mason and Anderson, because he's always admired their work.

"Their technical work is amazing," said Hamilton.

After more than 40 years of working with stoneware clay, Hamilton's work is something to behold, as well. The retired Lewis Central School District teacher creates wheel-thrown as well as hand-built pieces. Four decades of pottery and Hamilton still gets a thrill out of what he does.



He developed his own blend of stoneware clay and his extensive research led to using multiples glazes to create dynamic pieces that often include references to clouds, wind and water. An avid outdoorsman — he is co-founder of the Pottawattamie County chapter of Pheasants Forever — he creates ceramics pieces inspired by the outdoors.

The third artist in the show, Anderson, paints landscapes, figures and still life.

During the show's run, members of Omaha's Ikebana group will bring their skills in the Japanese art of flower arrangement to the gallery. Members will each choose artwork in the gallery to inspire a floral design. The arrangements will be on display March 19-21.

Events at the Artists' Cooperative Gallery are always free of charge.