



Attendees creating art during a mixed media class in late April.

*Continued from Page 4*

in downtown Clatskanie. When the coronavirus pandemic started last year, the group considered permanently closing the gallery, Odoms said.

“That bothered me because I was going to be watching the outlet for the artists disappear and in a small community I think that’s very important. I mean for artists in general but for a small community, I wanted to keep it running,” she said.

With the approval of the gallery’s building owner, Odoms took over the 450-square-foot space and reinvented it into the GB Studio + Gallery in October 2020. The space now represents up to 25 local and regional artists and artisans.

With the coronavirus going around, Odoms said, it was impossible to hold art classes at the gallery due to its limited space. Instead of waiting in defeat for the pandemic to end, the lack of a larger space for art classes and artists spurred Odoms to open a new location where the surrounding community could go for a creative outlet.

“People have been sequestering in their homes for so long, getting stuck in there, and they need something to do — this is a

safe alternative,” Odoms said. “Some people aren’t comfortable with the social gatherings and that’s OK but this is a larger space and it gives them an option.”

### What the center offers

After facing medical retirement, despite not being ready to retire, Odoms began taking classes at the Astoria Art Loft in March 2015. Thinking back to that time, she fondly remembers the sense of community she felt at the loft and how she fell in love with the artistic process.

With the room to learn and develop her skills, Odoms said taking courses at the loft was the best thing she could have done. She hopes to give her community the same opportunities she had.

“That’s my focus, getting people in, even if they’ve never picked up a paintbrush or a pencil or anything,” she said. “My classes right now are extremely basic, and so if somebody is just curious, I have a class for that.”

In the month of May, for example, the new art center will be hosting an “Introduction to Acrylics & Mediums” workshop. The course is structured for beginners and will provide participants with all



Workshop participants get creative in the Studio II Art Center.

the necessary supplies.

For those over the age of 21, the center will also hold a paint and sip event where attendees will get to hold a paintbrush in one hand and a drink in the other.

Moreover, the art center contains up to six studio spaces that artists can lease on a monthly basis. The Studio II member-

ship will provide 24/7 access to the workshop space and tools; a discount on art supplies; and commission for any artwork sold through the gallery.

“Come on in, bring your own supplies,” Odoms said. “(The Studio II Art Center is) a place where we can socially distance and still get together and learn from each other.”