

POINT REYES LIGHT

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Welcome to the Heartful Art Gallery

by Point Reyes Light staff

Bright yellow, green and blue molding decorates the entrance to the Heartful Art Gallery, Point Reyes Station's new gallery in the gas station building. It is covered from wall to wall, and from floor to ceiling in brightly colored canvases of every size, all painted by owner-creator-painter Raphaella Vaisseau.

"My whole focus is empowerment," Vaisseau said. Part of empowering people is releasing them from fear and inhibition, she said. "I want kids to be able to come in and not feel like they can't touch anything."

Eleven years ago Vaisseau was a Los Angeles secretary painting in her spare time when, inspired by some early success selling her work, she decided to devote herself full-time to painting and "assisting people everywhere to empower themselves and others." She spent three years running a gallery of her work in Ashland, Oregon before moving to Sausalito, where she sold her paintings to a larger, more cosmopolitan crowd.

Last Monday, Vaisseau gave *The Light* a tour of her gallery and a demonstration of her painting. One minute she was at her desk in front of her computer (she sells her work, retail and wholesale, over

the internet to customers all over the country) and in the next she had gathered up a small canvas and brush and effortlessly laid in a few dashes which, in moments, assumed the shape of a bulbous, red heart. She describes her output as "prolific."

"I don't have writer's block," Vaisseau said. In addition to her acrylic and watercolor paintings, she also makes and sells postcards and magnets, some decorated with quotations. One reads, "Never get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life."

Vaisseau did not know the community of West Marin existed until two months ago when, in a chance encounter, a stranger described the towns and their remote, rural setting. They toured the area and, on April 1, two weeks after she had first laid eyes on Point Reyes Station, she rented the space where formerly was Susan Hayes Handwovens.

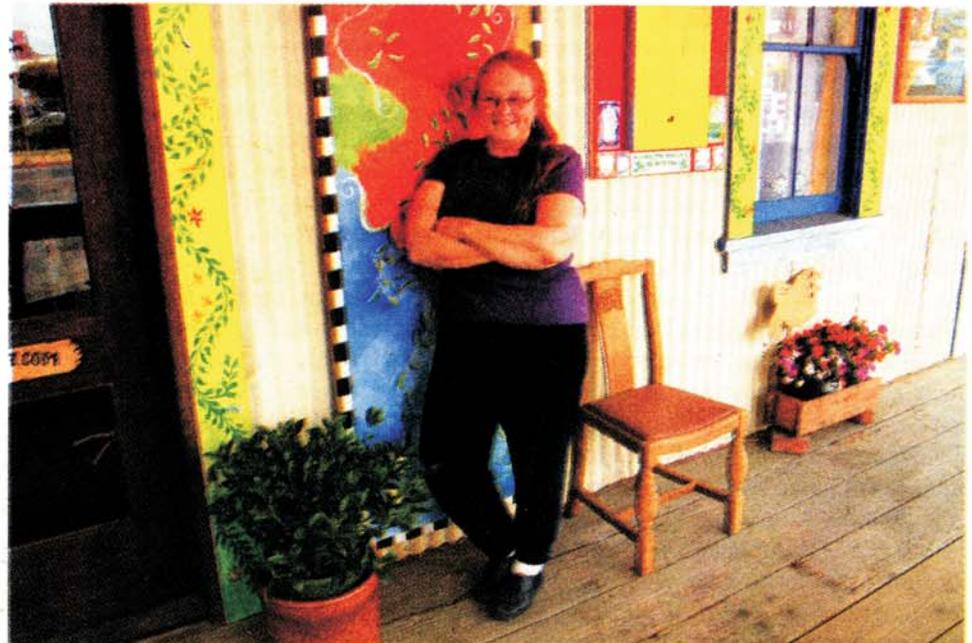
Vaisseau, now a resident of Lucas Valley Rd, saw the move as an opportunity to change the face of her former gallery, which relied on retail sales. "I decided to reinvent myself as a wholesale and internet business," said Vaisseau, who continues to sell her work to walk-in customers

Thursday through Monday.

Vaisseau recently started attending art shows, conferences and wholesale gift shows across the continent. Since February 1 her wholesale sales have nearly doubled.

Although she is used to a more urban

environment, she said she appreciates the rural character of West Marin, as well as regular visits from locals. "Hopefully I will be embraced by the community," Vaisseau said while adding a few final brushstrokes.



Gallery owner-creator-painter Raphaella Vaisseau. Photo by A. Humphreys.