

Rye art gallery is planning a May exhibition of nudes

By JERRY MILLER

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RYE — When the Collector's Art Gallery at Foye's Corner holds its first major event May 11, it will be an exhibit of nudes, according to Michael Labrie, the owner of the newly renovated, 5,000-square-foot gallery.

The show, one of six planned for the coming year, will feature the work of six to eight artists, from New England and elsewhere.

Labrie, a sculptor and painter, said the theme of the show, titled "The Naked Truth," is meant to be "mildly provocative."

"The point of this show is absolutely not to shock people," said Albina Colden, the gallery curator, an artist and a former Dartmouth psychologist. "A lot of galleries don't really allow nudity and that limits the artists."

"We want to put on a show, where the artists won't be censored. A show that allows artists to paint what they wish,"

she said. "If we don't censor the artists, we have more creative shows. It's more authentic, because it's what they really want to create."

While some of the works will include frontal nudity, Labrie insisted that's not the purpose of the exhibit.

"The idea is not to be shocking for the sake of being shocking," he said. "What is important is to explore the artistic nature of the nude form, without undue consideration of society."

The 44-year old Labrie, who grew up in Rye, said the exhibit is not meant to offend the community. "Many people here know me. I live here and will be living here for a long time. I want to enhance, not damage, the community."

Labrie said he wants to make the gallery someplace special for the public and artists.

"Most galleries around here cater to the home decor or tourist markets... we really don't represent that."

"Some people are sort of surprised that this kind of gallery even exists here. To see what we offer, you really have to travel to New York or Paris... it's challenging and provocative, which I believe art should be," he said