

# Gallery owner shifts to contemporary gear

Who: Meyer-Milagros Gallery  
 What: "The Fete at Meyer-Milagros"  
 When: 5-8 p.m. Sunday  
 Where: 155 Center St.  
 How much: Free

By Melanie White

For Mariam Alaskari, her acquisition of the Meyer Gallery was nothing short of miraculous.

Hence her renaming of the 155 Center St. venue as Meyer-Milagros, incorporating the Spanish word for "miracle" to reflect her feelings about the new venture. Though Alaskari was the gallery's director for three years, she now intends to steer the business in a new, more contemporary direction. A grand opening show will display new artists' work alongside established gallery painters and sculptors until July 20, while "The Fete at Meyer-Milagros" will celebrate the gallery's new incarnation from 5 to 8 p.m. on Sunday. Chef's Table will cater the party, champagne will flow, and the Snake River Strings will perform string duets.

About 10 artists will be present at



PHOTO COURTESY MEYER-MILAGROS GALLERY

**Sculptor Brad Rude's *Wandering* can be seen at the Meyer-Milagros Gallery grand opening on Sunday.**

the Fete, including painters Ann Leggett and Gary Faigin and sculptor Rod Zullo, all new to the gallery. Current gallery favorites Shanna Kunz and Mary Roberson also will attend, Alaskari said.

"We're very excited to have a Roberson piece in the show," she said, as Roberson work also is currently part of the National Museum of Wildlife Art show, "Wildlife Art for a New Century II." The Roberson painting on display at Meyer-Milagros, *The Mystic Forest*, features bears and ravens on a large oil canvas.

Alaskari culled the gallery's new artists from around the country, adding about 15 painters and sculptors to the gallery's stable of established artists. "I'd been watching their work for quite a while now," she said, "so when I purchased the gallery I called them up and didn't have much trouble securing them." She cites Jackson's reputation as a major art center in the West as a significant draw for artists nationwide.

Ann Krasner, a Russian artist who lives in Malibu, displays her bright, figurative pieces at the gallery, alongside another new sculptor, Jim Budish. A Colorado native, Budish forms whimsical horses, moose and rabbits out of bronze. His animals are "a lot of fun," Alaskari said.

Kathleen Earthenrowl, from Texas, paints vibrant, abstract landscapes. Faigin lends his architectural paintings of aerial plans of towns a three-dimensional aspect.

"I'm interested in taking the gallery in a more contemporary direction, with a bit less focus than in the past on the western and the wildlife," Alaskari said. "There's already a lot of that in Jackson, so I'm focusing on art I really like myself and hope other people will like it too."

Following the opening group show, the Meyer-Milagros Gallery will host new work by Galina Perova from July 28, Shanna Kunz and Jeff Legg from August 11, Sheila Norgate and Tim Cherry from August 18, and Brad Rude and Kathleen Earthenrowl from August 25.