



The Downtowner

The Newsletter of Friends of Historic Downtown Louisville

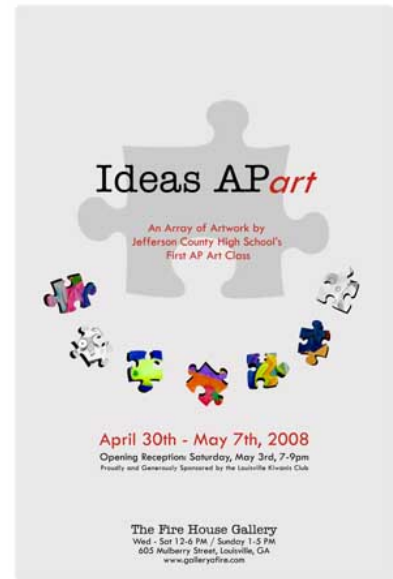
May 2008

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A First – JCHS Students Exhibit in Gallery

Cervantes Lewis' work focuses on ordinary subjects such as billiards tables and school hallways to explore approaches to perspective. Alan Handberry uses his quirky style to highlight the humorous side of his loves and fears. Kelvin Vasquez practices fine points of shading in his realistic approach to diverse subjects from cars to Christ as the Good Shepherd (see *Image of the Month*). Ashley Williams seeks a dreamlike quality in her work, and, like Tiesha Cunningham and Anthony Freeman, is captivated by surrealism. What do these divergent attitudes and interests all have in common? They belong to members of the first AP art class at Jefferson County High School,

whose work will be part of an exhibit titled *Ideas APart* at The Fire House Gallery from April 30 through May 7, with an opening reception Saturday, May 3, from 7 to 9 p.m. The exhibit is proudly and generously sponsored by the Louisville Kiwanis Club. Says Friends president and Gallery director Helen Aikman, "About the time [JCHS art teacher] Linda Merritt and I began planning this event, JCHS football Coach J.B. Arnold came to our weekly Kiwanis Club luncheon and brought [Parade All-American] A.J. Harmon with him to speak. During his talk, Coach Arnold kept hammering the point that his job is to make his sure his players get seen by college coaches



The Artists – First row, L to R: Jessica Lewis, Alan Handberry, Brandon Kirby, Tiesha Cunningham. Second row, L to R: Erel Benarao, Kelvin Vasquez, Samantha Kitchens, Ashley Williams, Elizabeth Johnson, Alexis Fields, Jaleesa Thomas, Thomas Newsome. Third row, L to R: Robin Studdard, Cervantes Lewis, Ashley Davis, Anthony Freeman, Darin Coleman, Holly Blackmon (Not pictured Devonta Gamble)

around the country. Well, Ms. Merritt feels the same way about the talented art students at JCHS. She wants to give them a proper venue to showcase their talent and hard work, and the Gallery is determined to help her do it."

"Many people don't realize the career opportunities that are out there for serious art students," adds Ms. Merritt, an ASU fine arts graduate who spent a decade creating promotional designs in the retail industry before turning to teaching. She says, "The study of fine arts creates so many options besides the stereotyped life of the starving artist. Engineers, architects, graphic designers, technical illustrators, cartographers, museum curators, art educators – and that just scratches the surface. Artistic ability

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The Downtowner's Image of the Month



The Good Shepherd as depicted by JCHS AP Art Student Kelvin Vasquez

Continued from front page

fuels all kinds of professional careers.” Stressing professional responsibility, Ms. Merritt and Ms. Aikman made sure the students understood they would be involved in every aspect of mounting a successful exhibit – even the nitty-gritty business details.

The students, already under a tight deadline to complete their individual portfolios for submission to the Advanced Placement Board, had to take on the additional burden of completing and framing three works each for the show. Beyond that, the students were required to review and sign exhibit contracts, cooperate in choosing a name for the show,

participate in design sessions with Gallery graphic designer Bridget Conn to come up with a promotional poster and postcards, write artist statements and provide digital images to be featured on the Gallery’s website at www.galleryafire.com – in fact, each student has his or her own page on the site.

Once the poster design was complete, the Gallery ordered an oversized banner of the design and presented it to the class. When the banner was unveiled at JCHS, says faculty member and Louisville Kiwanis Club president, Stephanie Hildebrant, “We all got chills we were so excited!”

The icing on the cake, though, will be the

exhibit opening reception, to be held this Saturday evening. The Gallery provided the students with complimentary stamped exhibit postcards to be sure they would be able to properly invite friends and family. Says Ms. Aikman, “The reception is a great opportunity for Jefferson Countians to come out and discover the young talent in their midst, and we hope the turnout will be all these remarkable young men and women deserve.”

The Gallery is especially grateful to Ms. Merritt, JCHS Principal Molly Howard, and the Louisville Kiwanis Club for the support and encouragement that made this exciting and important event possible.

News From

The Fire House Gallery



Kristin Casaletto – Stretching the Limits



88 Square Feet:
The Art of the Large-Scale Woodcut
New Work by Kristin Casaletto

May 8 - June 8, 2008
Opening Reception: Saturday, May 10, 7-9PM
Generously Supported by Red Truck Wines

The Fire House Gallery

Made possible by generous support from the Porter Fleming Grant, Blue Mountain Center, Hambidge Center, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

Wed. Sat. 12-6 PM / Sunday 1-5 PM / 605 Mulberry Street, Louisville, GA | www.galleriafire.com

88 Square Feet: The Art of the Large-Scale Woodcut – New Work by Kristin Casaletto May 8 – June 8

Opening Reception, Saturday, May 10, 7-9pm

Hardware stores provoke all kinds of creative projects. Associate Professor of Art and printmaker Kristin Casaletto of Augusta State University, noticed that, “The biggest board you could get there is 4x8 feet, and I said to myself, *I want to do that.*”

It was a natural progression, moving to large format images, and the artist quickly found her work outgrew the presses at Augusta State. “I had been doing them in pieces and joining them after – I guess about five feet is as long as I had done. I was sick of joining them and didn’t want to saw them up any longer and join them after the fact; I wanted to work on compositions that were bigger – crazy, over the top, baroque, really energetic, fully composed pieces with a lot of work in them. So I made a commitment to scale without knowing how I could solve the printing problem.”

Ms. Casaletto needed a real solution and sought out large format presses, finding them in places like Florida, Missouri, and Washington D.C. “I was getting kind of bent because they were so far away, and then I went to a print show and met an independent printmaker who told me Clemson has a big press. I was so excited because that’s close by.”

Ms. Casaletto promptly contacted Sydney Crop of Clemson and followed up with a visit. After getting a sense of the artist, Ms. Crop offered to let her use the press for one week; and by summer, Ms. Casaletto headed north with her

big boards.

She did not go it alone. With increased scale comes increased difficulty – muscling big wood blocks and dealing with the great span of the prints, requiring inking a single artist cannot reach without the inefficiency of switching side to side. But thanks to a Porter Fleming Foundation grant, Ms. Casaletto was able to hire her sister Laura as an assistant to help her through the arduous week-long printing ordeal.

Despite all the difficulties, the week was a great success. “Maybe we had the sister power going,” Ms. Casaletto says. “We were absolutely in synch once we got it figured out. It took about 15 minutes or so to ink each print; we could pull a print in 45 minutes. It was a very absolutely repeatable engineering problem. At this point, the creativity is done, the block is executed, and you know how you want the ink to look.”

The Casaletto sisters spent one week start to finish including the loading and unloading of trucks to produce editions of ten of three oversized prints featured in this month’s Fire House Gallery show. Constrained by time, the color element came later as Ms. Casaletto hand-painted each print with watercolors to finish out her vision of the work.

In the end, though, spreading the entire process – from conception, to drawing, carving, printing, and painting – over three summer residencies proved “too disjointed” for Ms. Casaletto’s comfort. “Your mind moves on to other concepts as the work evolves,” she notes, “and there’s always a

danger in working on something so long.” Grateful finally to wrap things up and see the result, Ms. Casaletto notes she will include not only the three large prints in the exhibit, but also framed studies, as well as two of her oversized boards (“Apocalypse” and “Grace’s Long Walk”), and a pedestal displaying some of the tools of her craft.

“For me it’s really informative and helpful to see how artists get to a finished product – seeing how things leading to other things.” Describing a recent Degas exhibit Ms. Casaletto notes, “It’s a little rare to see a show that offers so much of a behind-the-scenes look, and it’s very instructive to see how people arrive at where they go.” Similarly, visitors to the Gallery who may be unfamiliar with the printing process – seeing the blocks and tools, cutting and reversal – may find the exhibit especially enlightening.

Of the whole experience Ms. Casaletto reports, “I learned a lot and feel like I can print anything now.” Still, her next project will be an etching, which, she adds, “is going to be smaller.”

“**Grace’s Long Walk**” is an image of a janitor at a school where Ms. Casaletto taught in Mississippi. Grace worked a very early custodial shift but was still on campus late at night when the artist finished her classes. “She was pulling an awfully long day and it turned out she had been going to night class after doing her shift all day.” This homage was inspired by Grace’s tremendously hard work and the fact that “she wasn’t talking about it and needing support – she was just kind of heroic.”

“**Apocalypse**” has to do with “longing for justice” amid various kinds of violence.” (The artist cites the Emmet Till case, Darfur, and the Iraq War.) The work, she says, is epic, violent, classic, literary. “I don’t tend to make political art, but I think about how things happening affect peoples’ lives and basic humanity,” the artist offers. “No matter what your stance, you have to reconcile yourself to all of that destruction.”

“**Male Gaze Reciprocated**,” ironically titled, features a cattle auction. Studying art history, “I had to read a lot of critical articles about *the male gaze*,” Ms. Casaletto notes. “The title amused me because when I went to this cattle auction place I was the only female there and because people have told me I draw like a man, which I find annoying.” Adding to the irony, “The only creature looking right out at you is a female: a big, dumb cow.”

More News From

The Fire House Gallery



Louisville Academy students of all grades explore local artists' work in the company of their teachers

Spring Gallery Days –

Youngsters Brimming with Curiosity about the Arts Guild's Sixth Annual Spring Exhibit

During the week of April 21, all 581 Louisville Academy students had the opportunity to tour the 6th Annual Arts Guild Spring Exhibit in The Fire House Gallery. Forewarned on the fine points of Gallery behavior, the students entered with their arms tightly glued to their sides. For the Pre-K students, this was their first visit to the Gallery. Art teacher Sharon Sasser hopes that bringing these younger students to the Gallery this year will prepare them to visit again next year as kindergartners and first graders. The rest of the grade levels

have visited the Gallery during this past year and were excited to see creations of our local artists.

During the student visits, teachers Sharon Sasser, Paige Brown, and Donna Borders led students around the exhibit, discussing the different media and styles. Ms. Brown and Ms. Borders even shared their own artwork, to the surprise of many students.

On Friday, fourth and fifth grade students met artist Mary Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds explained that she has been painting since she was 11 years old and shared her hope

that she will inspire the students to begin creating their own works of art. Ms. Reynold's painting of infamous Wadley killer rooster "Junior" was a big hit. Artist Robert Hohmann, husband of fourth grade teacher Kerry Hohmann, shared his digital infrared photographs.

Louisville Academy leadership has always emphasized the importance of the arts, and we at the Gallery hope that this taste of our own local talent will inspire these students to venture into their own creative experiences.

Friends of Historic Downtown Louisville



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Requiem for Something More than a Lunch Place

We at *The Downtowner* are not bashful about our enthusiasm for little Louisville's beautiful downtown. Most of the time we're downright sanguine about it. We cheered for Southern Home Interiors and we'll root for Twisted Sisters when it arrives on the scene next month. We applauded the arrival of the Bookworm and the longevity of Randi's. We embraced the streetscaping when it was nothing but a muddy ditch. We acclaimed the greening of the Courthouse. And we nearly wept for joy when Ms. Culvern became our mayor. Nobody greets change with more gusto than we do. But we have to say we're not so delighted about losing Pansy's.

We know, we know – it's all going to be okay. Nothing much will change ... well,

This Month

At The Bistro . . .

- Saturday, May 3 – Lifeside – Christian Music
- Friday, May 9 – Brandon McGuinness – Acoustic Originals
- Saturday, May 10 – Faith Pilots – Contemporary Christian
- Saturday, May 17 – Velocity – Alternative Rock
- Friday, May 23 – Des Imonde – All-Girl Alternative from JCHS
- Saturday, May 24 – Open Mike Night
All Entertainment begins at 7 p.m.

maybe there'll be a few additional offerings – maybe sandwiches deli-style ... and a carving board ... maybe feta cheese and cornichons and capers at the salad bar ... maybe a pecan-crust this or that ... and what about WIFI – how cool would that be! ... and being open for supper, er, dinner – wouldn't that be something!

Sure, it'll all be just great. We don't doubt it for a minute. Dave and Emily know their stuff and they know Louisville. Make no mistake about it – *The Downtowner* is deeply grateful that this talented duo is willing to take on a new challenge. In a way, it's a dream come true.

But Pansy's was its own kind of dream. Maybe it wasn't exactly a gourmet dream, but where else could you find fried chicken and sweet tea that delicious? And so what

if the deserts weren't homemade – they hit the spot. (I hadn't had Boston cream pie since I was 12 till I fell for it again at Pansy's and, besides, the lemon cake was just plain awesome, especially when it was still a little frozen.) And that was just the food. What better place was there for catching up with all sorts of friends after church and at Kiwanis. (Come to think of it, I don't think I'd said the Pledge of Allegiance since I was 12 till Mr. Frank first brought me to Kiwanis at Pansy's.) All kinds of friends, for sure – including Ann, with her trademark smile. We're not too bashful to say it – we'll miss you and your hospitality, Ann, and we appreciate all you did for us all those good years.

And so it goes and so it goes See you at Fosters!

(Who is this ugly character and what is he doing here anyway?)



Know people who'd like to receive *The Downtowner*? Just send their email addresses to OurLouisville@aol.com!

. . . And The Pal

The Pal's listings for May were not available when *The Downtowner* went to press.

Showtimes are Friday, Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday at 7 p.m. For more information, call The Pal at 478.625.9998.