

Galleries

of Bloomington 2018

Supporting our visual artists 365 days a year



By Molly Brush • Photography by Martin Boling

Among Indiana communities, Bloomington has a well-deserved reputation as a thought leader in the arts. It was the first city in the state to establish an official Statewide Cultural District (the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District, or BEAD) through the Indiana Arts Commission and the first to pass a “percent for art” ordinance, which requires that 1 percent of the budget for publicly funded capital improvement projects go toward public art.

“What’s unique to Bloomington is how we value the arts,” says Sean Starowitz, the City of Bloomington’s assistant director of economic development for the arts.

That spirit of innovation is evident in Bloomington’s thriving community of art galleries, which range from well-known venues such as the Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center to relative newcomers such as Gallery406. The most recent addition, the FAR Center for Contemporary Arts, is a multiuse space designed to foster creative collaborations among different artistic disciplines, allowing visitors to experience art in new ways. Founded by Pictura Gallery owners David and Martha Moore, the FAR Center opened in June at West 4th and South Rogers streets.

This year also has brought change to some long-standing traditions such as the city’s monthly Gallery Walk, which features 11 downtown galleries. Like the FAR Center, Gallery Walk is embracing a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to the arts, with each month featuring a different cultural theme. In addition to exhibiting art, the galleries host performances and other special events related to the month’s

theme, such as Earth Day in April.

Starowitz hopes the galleries’ efforts to engage different audiences will spark a broader conversation about how the community can support the arts in Bloomington—and, in particular, about supporting local galleries and artists not only by visiting galleries, but also by purchasing art. “It’s important to support those galleries and those cultural institutions because they bring immense value to us,” he says.



FAR Center for Contemporary Arts

When Bloomington residents David and Martha Moore opened Pictura Gallery on the downtown Square in 2008, their aim was to bring the best in contemporary photography to Bloomington. Photography had long been a passion of David's, but neither of the Moores had experience running a gallery.

"We rented the space with no business plan. We didn't really even know any photographers," Martha says. "We had no vision of who we would show, or what we would do, and definitely, at that time, looked at it as more of a store."

But as time passed, Pictura evolved in unexpected ways that went far beyond what the Moores might have envisioned, becoming a nationally known gallery showcasing acclaimed photographers from around the world.

As the Moores prepared to celebrate Pictura's 10th anniversary in 2018, the couple began to consider how to take the gallery to the next level and keep it relevant, especially in an era when technology is changing the way people view photography.

"Our personal mission will always be photography, but wouldn't it be cool if we had a space where we could begin to show photography in a different way and do a little more collaboration?" Martha says they

wondered. "Maybe we would want to work with local musicians who would write a piece that we would choose photography to go with, and people would see a slideshow or a movie instead of just coming to see the photographs hanging on the wall."

At the same time, the Moores started considering what sort of legacy they wanted after they retire. "Our hope is that we'll leave something that will have a tremendous impact on Bloomington after we're gone," Martha says.

The opportunity to address both of those questions presented itself in the form of a vacant building on the southwest corner of West 4th and South Rogers streets. David first encountered the building as he was looking for space for his personal creative pursuits, and he soon realized it had the potential to become something more.

The culmination of that vision is the FAR (Fourth and Rogers) Center for Contemporary Arts. Working with Rhode Island-based architect Lauren Bordes, the Moores have turned the 5,000-square-foot building into a modern urban space where artists, musicians, poets, actors, writers, filmmakers, and dancers can come together and find innovative ways to collaborate. In addition to gallery space for Pictura, the

building is home to a theater, a library, and a garden. At the center of the building is an atrium that connects those spaces.

Bordes worked closely with the Moores and the entire Pictura staff throughout the design process. "Lauren allowed us to dream, and she listened to everybody's ideas," David says.

Bordes and the Moores have been careful to preserve the historic character of the building, which first opened in 1925 as the Roy Burns Grocery, while also making it feel modern. The theater features vaulted ceilings with exposed steel trusses and two large garage doors that open onto 4th Street. It does not have a stage or any permanent seating, but the space can accommodate 200 theater style.

"The space is beautiful, but also sort of raw," Martha says.

The FAR Center is available for private events such as weddings and receptions. The Moores plan to use the rental income to start a nonprofit organization to support the arts and arts education.

UPCOMING SHOW

August/September

• *Paradise Wavering* by Alice Hargrave



Martha and David Moore.

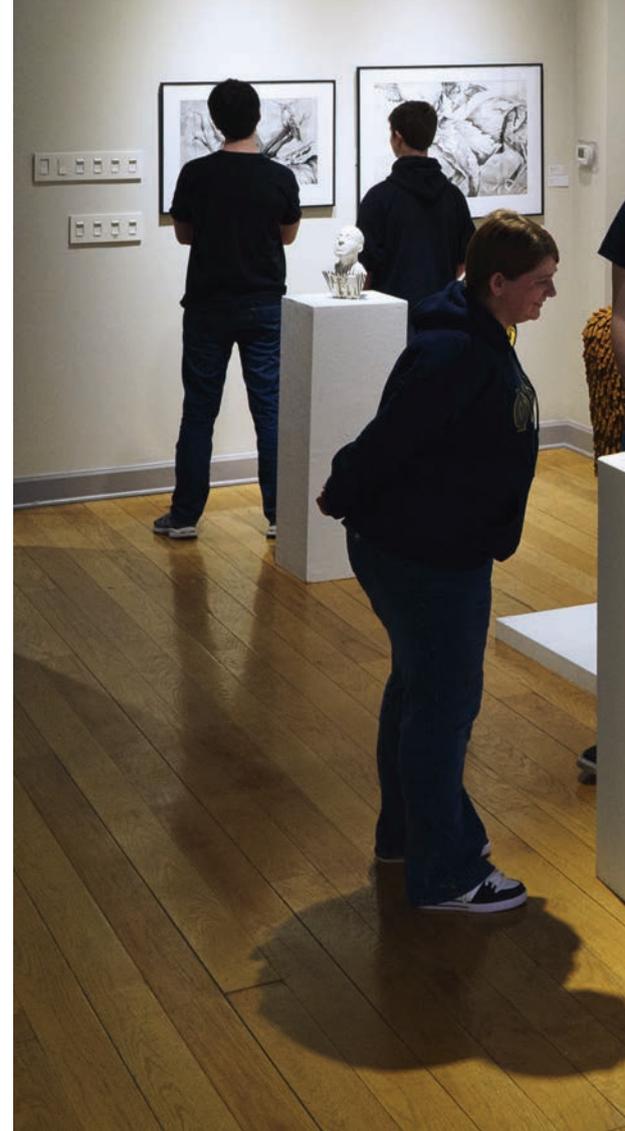


“The arts are important. They’re vital to the fabric of the life that is Bloomington,” David says. “We are glad to be a part of that.”

As they venture down this new path, the Moores are confident that, like Pictura 10 years ago, the FAR Center will evolve in unanticipated ways that will surpass their expectations. “We know that what we’re imagining isn’t as good as what’s actually going to happen,” Martha says.



(left) FAR Center for Contemporary Arts at the corner of South Rogers Street and West 4th Street. Photo by Rodney Margison



Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center

With four main galleries each hosting 12 shows a year, the Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center is one of the busiest gallery spaces in Bloomington. “That’s why our slogan is ‘more art, more often,’” says Julie Roberts, The Waldron’s gallery director.

Housed in a historic building at 122 S. Walnut that served as Bloomington City Hall from 1915 until 1963, The Waldron’s main art space is the Rosemary P. Miller Gallery. Adjacent to the Miller Gallery is a smaller space called the Vault, which is sometimes used in conjunction with Miller Gallery shows and sometimes for separate exhibitions. The other three galleries are the Treasurer’s Gallery, located in what was the city treasurer’s office; the Flashlight Gallery, on the upper level outside the auditorium; and the Education Gallery, on the lower level.

Shows at The Waldron feature virtually every medium, including painting, photography, printmaking, ceramics, glass, textiles, large installations, jewelry, and video art. The majority come from an an-

nual submission process in which artists’ works are reviewed by a panel of four jurors. The work of Ivy Tech students and faculty is featured several times a year, and The Waldron also partners with other educational institutions for events such as the Monroe County Community School Corporation Youth Art Month show.

The Waldron is home to two theaters: Whikehart Auditorium and Rose Firebay. The galleries are open whenever there are performances, and many audience members view the exhibits while in attendance. “We get a lot of synergy from the performance spaces,” Roberts says.

The Waldron holds an opening reception for each month’s shows during Bloomington’s Gallery Walk on the first Friday of each month. Roberts encourages people to stop by during Gallery Walk—or any time the galleries are open—to take a break from the visual chaos of the digital world.

“To just immerse yourself in the work of one person or one group of people can be such a great brain refresher,” she says.





(opposite page, bottom right) Gallery Director Julie Roberts.

(far right) The Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center entrance on South Walnut.

UPCOMING SHOWS

August

- Pamela Hignite Deaton—sculpture
- E.R. Spiegel—photography
- Cathy Williams—mixed media
- Rose Brenner—painting

September

- Lotus Education & Arts Foundation—25th anniversary exhibit
- Michael Ann Carly and Sarah Pearce—sculpture & painting
- Cassidy Young—mixed media





The Venue Fine Art & Gifts

When Bloomington attorney Dave Colman retired after a 40-year career, he faced the question of what to do with the building at 114 S. Grant St. that had been his law office. It was his son, Gabe, who saw the potential for the space's next iteration.

"It just seemed hungry for art," says Gabe, who earned a fine arts degree from Indiana University. Dave and his wife, Michelle Martin Colman, agreed, and in September 2008 the family opened The Venue Fine Art & Gifts. None of the Colmans had experience running an art gallery, but Michelle had owned her own business, a designer lingerie store in downtown Bloomington, for many years. Her background in retail combined with Gabe's expertise in fine art positioned them for success with The Venue.

Nearly 10 years later, The Venue has grown into a thriving business that displays and sells the work of more than 200 artists, including painters, printmakers, jewelry makers, ceramicists, woodworkers, and limestone carvers. The Colmans have assembled a diverse roster of local, regional, national, and international artists ranging

from emerging talents to internationally acclaimed professionals.

"We constantly show new artists," Dave says. "We open a new show every Gallery Walk."

Though The Venue has a website that features samples of artists' work, the gallery does not sell online. The business thrives on foot traffic, says Gabe, who serves as the gallery's curator. "We connect with locals and visitors who come through the door," he says.

The Venue also regularly hosts public events such as live music performances, poetry readings, book signings, and artist demonstrations. During November and December, a kiosk at College Mall brings the work of Venue artists to holiday shoppers.

As The Venue approaches its 10th anniversary, there are some changes coming. Gabe recently started his own business, Colman Art Appraisal Services, and as he turns his focus to his new venture, he is transitioning more control of The Venue to his parents. Though his own role is shifting, Gabe is quick to note that the gallery itself will remain unchanged. "The Venue will go on," he says.



UPCOMING SHOWS

August

- Cheryl Duckworth—painting

September

- *Ekphrasis III*—12 artists/12 poets: The poets each select a painting to inspire their poems. The paintings and poems become the exhibition.



(above, left to right, and below) Artwork is on display in a series of rooms in the building that had been Dave Colman's law office.

(opposite page, center) The Venue Fine Art & Gifts on South Grant Street.

(right) Gabe Colman (left) with parents Michelle Martin Colman and Dave Colman.





Bloomington/Monroe County Convention Center

Though the Bloomington/Monroe County Convention Center (BMCCC) isn't a typical art gallery, it plays an important role in exposing visitors and residents to the work of area artists. An auxiliary member of the Gallery Walk, the BMCCC maintains a permanent display of works by local artists, and is home to the Ralph Rogers Room, a multipurpose event space that also serves as a venue for art exhibitions.

Because the Rogers Room hosts a wide range of events, the exhibitions are viewed by a broad audience, including people who might not ordinarily seek out art. "They wouldn't necessarily go into a gallery, but they'll come into this space," says Patti Russo, BMCCC arts ambassador, who oversees the exhibitions.

The Rogers Room hosts six shows a year, each spotlighting a different artist from Monroe County. The shows feature diverse media, including oils, watercolors, mosa-

ics, textiles, photography, and printmaking. Special emphasis is given to supporting emerging artists. "This is the first show ever for many of our artists," Russo says.



(top) While artwork is on display throughout the Convention Center, the Rogers Room serves as an official gallery for exhibits and shows.

UPCOMING SHOW

- *His & Her Abstract Paintings* by husband and wife Brent and Linda Sievers



Gallery406

In 2008, Bloomington photographer Kendall Reeves opened Gallery406 as a venue to display and sell his own work and that of other local photographers. In those 10 years, the gallery has been in three locations and evolved into a showcase not only for photographers, but for other kinds of local artists.

In fall 2017, Gallery406 moved from the Wicks Building to its current location in Fountain Square Mall. The new space also houses Spectrum Studio, the photography, design, and printing business that Reeves owns with his wife, Stephanie.

In addition to photography, Gallery406 offers paintings, jewelry, metal sculpture, and wood and stone carvings for sale. As the gallery settles into its new home, Reeves hopes to expand its offerings.

Although Gallery406 has been at the Fountain Square location for less than a year, Reeves says that he and Stephanie already feel at home there. “We feel like we’re part of a community of other retail businesses and art businesses,” he says.



Kendall Reeves. Photo by Rodney Margison



UPCOMING SHOW

- Max Monts—woodturner





The Vault at Gallery Mortgage

It's not uncommon for first-time customers to Gallery Mortgage to wonder if they're in the right place says branch manager John La Bella. That's because the first thing they see when they walk in the door is not an office—it's an art gallery.

The story of how a mortgage broker's office became home to an art gallery goes back to 2009, when Gallery Mortgage was moving into the 109 E. 6th St. space vacated by Prima Gallery.

"We were excited about it being a new space for our business, but also sad to see Prima Gallery no longer be here," La Bella says. "So, we decided that it would be really neat if we could continue to have an art gallery in that space." Soon the business had set up a gallery within the office and was regularly hosting shows for local artists.

In late 2014, when Gallery Mortgage moved to a larger location at 121 E. 6th St, the business wanted to continue to house a gallery. La Bella arranged for the new building to include dedicated gallery space, which was named The Vault.

The first auxiliary member of Bloomington's Gallery Walk, The Vault hosts six shows a year, each spotlighting a Monroe County artist. Past shows have featured painters, printmakers, photographers, and illustrators.

UPCOMING SHOW

- Bloomington Watercolor Society show featuring more than 20 artists

Not only does The Vault provide a unique venue for local artists to showcase their work, it also supports local nonprofit organizations. Gallery Mortgage donates its portion of sales from shows to the Centerstone Bloomington Stepping Stones program, which provides transitional housing for young people experiencing homelessness.

La Bella says the company receives positive feedback from its mortgage customers about The Vault. "They think it's really unusual and unique," he says. "It's something that sets us apart a little bit from the other mortgage providers in Bloomington."

But The Vault is more than a way for Gallery Mortgage to distinguish itself from its competitors, La Bella says. It's also an innovative way for the business to support local artists and give back to the community. "The primary motivation is to support the artists and give them experience and exposure," he says.



John La Bella.

By Hand Gallery

Founded in 1979, By Hand Gallery is an artisan cooperative owned by 12 local artists. Here, they display and sell their work, as well as the work of approximately 90 other local and regional artists. By Hand features a wide range of work, including ceramics, jewelry, fibers, photography, wood, glass, and painting. “We try to represent everything that Bloomington artists have to offer and more,” says Tova Lesko, the gallery’s manager.

One of the founding members of Bloomington’s Gallery Walk, By Hand regularly hosts solo shows in its space in Fountain Square Mall. The shows typically run from one to two months, and each begins with a reception during Gallery Walk on the first Friday of the month.

Lesko says that By Hand plays an important part in connecting artists with the public. “It’s this really central place where the artists and the community come together,” she says. “Nothing feels more rewarding than making a relationship with a new customer and introducing them to a new artist, and vice versa.”



Gather: Handmade Shoppe & Co.



Gather is the creation of owner Talia Halliday, who started the shop in 2013 as a pop-up. Now located in a permanent retail space on the east side of the downtown Square, the store sells handmade items from more than 300 local, regional, and national artists—everything from jewelry and bath bombs to T-shirts and stuffed animals.

The store also is home to a gallery space that hosts monthly exhibitions, usually solo shows. When selecting participants for the shows, Halliday looks for artists who are doing something new and different or whose work hasn’t yet received much exposure. “We try to show people who aren’t being shown everywhere else,” she says.

Halliday also aims to showcase a wide range of work. Shows have featured photography, ceramics, painting, and printmaking. But whatever the medium, Halliday makes sure the work displayed in the gallery fits Gather’s aesthetic. “I want the gallery to be an honest and reasonable offshoot of the store,” she says.



Art on display at Rainbow Bakery (left) and Untitled Light at Blueline (right).

And More . . .

You don't have to visit a traditional gallery to find art in Bloomington—many of the city's businesses display and sell works of art. The next time you get a cup of coffee, grab a bite to eat, or have your hair styled, take a closer look at what's around. You might discover a new local artist.

Rainbow Bakery

Rainbow Bakery may be well-known for its vegan baked goods, but it's got more on the menu than cookies and cupcakes. The shop at the corner of West 4th and South Rogers streets is also a popular venue for art shows that highlight the work of local artists. Past shows have featured photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, mosaic, and fiber art.

"We love stuff that's really colorful," says Marketing Manager Erin Tobey. "The space is super vibrant and fun."

The bakery became an auxiliary member of Gallery Walk in 2018.

Untitled Light at Blueline

As a design agency, Blueline has a creative environment that makes it an ideal venue for

showing art. Its office on West 4th Street is home to gallery space that is managed by the agency's sister company, Untitled Light.

A full member of Bloomington's Gallery Walk, Untitled Light at Blueline hosts monthly shows featuring local artists or artists who have a Bloomington connection. Chelsea Sanders, founder and owner of Blueline, says the gallery's objective is to host interactive, experimental shows that allow visitors to experience diverse media. It also hosts special events such as artist talks, music shows, and film screenings. "We like to fill the space with music and people and energy," Sanders says.

The Thomas Gallery

Founded by Bloomington real estate agent Tom Gallagher, the Thomas Gallery opened on North College in fall 2017. Partnering with the Arts Alliance of Greater Bloomington, a volunteer-run nonprofit organization that supports the local arts community, the gallery provides space for Arts Alliance members to show their work.

"The Arts Alliance wanted a greater presence for their organization, and they

wanted to serve the needs of the members," Gallagher says.

The Thomas Gallery joined Gallery Walk as an auxiliary member in 2018 and is also open every Friday evening from 5 to 8 pm. In addition to monthly art shows, it hosts special events ranging from a poetry reading by the winner of the Mexican National Prize in Poetry to stand-up comedy by a Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist.

Soma Coffeehouse and Juice Bar

For Soma Coffeehouse and Juice Bar, hosting art shows is a way to connect with the community. "So much of getting coffee is connecting with people," says Evan Moser, Soma's director of operations.

Soma regularly displays the work of local artists at its three Bloomington locations. The shows, which usually run for three to four months, typically feature photography, prints, drawings, and paintings.

Moser hopes having art on the walls makes people feel welcome at Soma. "We're happy to bring a part of the community into our atmosphere," he says. ✨

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Contact **ELAINE GUINN**:
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Deadline to sign up: Thursday, August 30.

The Way We Are



ANSWERS

1. Michael Cassady - F
(restaurateur)

2. Iris Kiesling - B
(politician)

3. Fred Glass - G
(IU athletic director)

4. Malcolm Abrams - J
(*Bloom* editor, publisher)

5. Guy Loftman - H
(lawyer, activist)

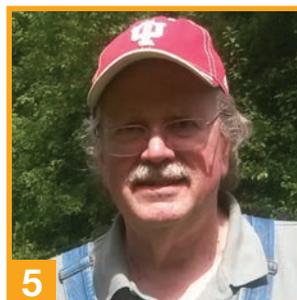
6. Jaime Sweany - C
(Former *Bloom* associate publisher)

7. Sylvia McNair - A
(opera star)

8. John Whitehart - I
(educator, politician)

9. Charlotte Zietlow - E
(Bloomington grand dame)

10. Sue Talbot - D
(politician)



Answers to the quiz on page 18.



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