

New Gallery Works to Make Art (and Art Careers) Accessible to Everyone

The Open Door Gallery specializes in discovering new talent and creating a platform for artists of all backgrounds.

The Open Door Gallery unlocked its doors and invited the public in for the first time on Saturday August 3, 2019. A grand opening event is planned for Friday August 28.

Dale Martin, the owner of the gallery, has deep connections to the regional art scene. His past employment includes work at the Pink Art Museum and as a buyer at several local galleries. He has also worked to plan or sponsor a number of art events over the years.

"One thing I always noticed is that it's hard to break in," says Martin. "People don't realize how hard it is to break into the art scene. It's open-minded and friendly; I love the people involved. But you still a lot of times have to know someone. What if you don't know anyone? That's what I always thought — if you didn't know anyone and you didn't get a lucky break, where were you?"

Martin says he started The Open Door Gallery for those artists who didn't know someone and were still waiting on their break. He displays art from people of all types of backgrounds — those with art degrees and formal training, those who have been painting for years and just developed enough courage to show their work, and young artists who just started but show innate talent.

"That's really all you need to get on my walls," says Martin. "Talent. Just a piece that works, you know? Something that's likely to speak to people."

Martin does more than display and sell original artwork, though. The Open Door Gallery also includes a print element. He works with artists to create prints of their works that can be sold for less than the originals, and he sells those too.

"A lot of times, I work with people who don't know how to do that yet. I help them if they want. It generates money for them, but it also is a business line for me. A lot of people can't afford original artwork, but they can buy a print. It's about making art available for everyone too."

The Open Door Gallery is hosting a grand opening event from 6 pm to 10 pm Saturday August 28, 2019. The event is free and will include light refreshments. Martin says many of the artists will be onsite to mingle and discuss their art. The grand opening will also include live music and door prizes.

"People can come as they are," Martin says. "It's not a fancy art event. Bring your kids. We're trying to make art accessible to everyone."

Martin says the event is only the first in what he hopes are many more. He has plans to host art classes, including both studio classes to teach painting or drawing as well as classes for those interested in learning more about art history or art appreciation.

Currently, The Open Door Gallery is displaying art from more than 20 artists. Martin says he wants to increase the number of artists he works with and that "there's always room on the walls for other people."

While Martin still spends a lot of time searching for artists, he hopes people will feel comfortable coming to him. Artists who are interested in The Open Door Gallery can find out about submitting a portfolio at OpenDoorArt.com.

Individuals and families interested in the grand opening event or art in general can check out the website and visit the gallery at 111 7th Street.