

Art Star: Philly's quirky little art gallery

By Calista Condo
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In Northern Liberties Philadelphia lies a small art gallery and store called the Art Star. Although little in size, it is not little in stature.

Art Star is a gallery that holds affordable art and products; they have works priced from a dollar to \$4,000.

Carrying original paintings as well as limited edition prints and products, such as T-shirts, bags, jewelry, pins, and mugs, they are making art appreciators capable of obtaining art from many wonderful and valid artists.

Megan Brewster and Erin Waxman, both Tyler Art Institute graduates and 30-year-old artists and entrepreneurs, were both trying to sell their art after they graduated.

Brewster, before opening Art Star, worked at The Clay Studio, another Philadelphia art gallery. She liked the idea of having a working schedule and helping other artists as well as the community helping to fuel the possibility of having her own space with Waxman.

Waxman sold her jewelry outside of The Clay Studio, prompting her and Brewster to hold their first craft fair, now an annual event, called the Art Star Craft Bazaar at the First Unitarian Church in Philadelphia. This learning experience made them realize that they needed their own space to show the artists that shared their somewhat unappreciated aesthetic.

Blending craft and all other forms of art, Art Star has created a unique and fresh art environment at-

tracting much attention.

"No galleries have the work we have," said Brewster. "We are different to the Philadelphia art scene so people seek us out."

However, they were not always met with such admiration and acceptance. Many people rejected the works they carried, claiming they were not art. They fought Art Star's idea that a product can be quality art.

"That world is starting to accept us now and the artists we represent," said Brewster. "This is what young artist are doing and it's valid."

They wanted to create a place that would help artists make a living and that would make art affordable to non-millionaires, thus Art Star was born three years ago. With an official gallery in the store front that changes its exhibition every six weeks, Art Star does double duty as a quirky little store and full fledged art gallery. This design allows them to encourage the artists they host to create high-quality, lower-priced products to sell along with their original pieces.

"We want artist to be able to make a living," said Waxman. "They shouldn't be starving."

With determination and focus, Brewster and Waxman were able to make their dream come true and



Photo by Calista Condo

A rack outside of Art Star offers reasonably priced shirts decorated by the same artists featured in the gallery.

now run a successful business that attracts innovative artists from around the world to Philadelphia. They have come to represent the changing face of

the art world to a city ready for transformation.

"Art is always changing. It's important to us that this art is seen as real art," said Brewster.

Holiday Hints



If you are looking for that extra-special or unusual Christmas present, look no further than Art Star. Until Dec. 30 they will be holding their Annual Holiday Exhibition that has handmade ornaments, cards, stockings, and so on. Art Star is located in the Liberties Walk on North 2nd Street. To shop online, visit their website at www.artstarphilly.com. Also check out their MySpace website at www.myspace.com/artstarphilly.com



T-shirts \$25-\$40



Ceramics \$10-\$50



Wallets \$18-\$40



Bags \$20-\$90

Photos courtesy of www.artstarphilly.com



Photos by Calista Condo

Giving starving artists a place to showcase their artwork in the heart of Philadelphia Art Star, owned and operated by Megan Brewster and Erin Waxman, sells quality hand-crafted artwork that ranges in price from one dollar to \$4000.