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WELCOME

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By BRYCHELLE BROOKS
Editor-in-Chief



"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. [...] You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed over into... the Twilight Zone." — Rod Serling

Picture, if you will, a stage without boundaries. A world so vast that silver screens are everywhere: in theaters, in your homes, in your hands. Giving value to a thing we call entertainment. An illusion into things we trick ourselves into thinking are real, weeping over stories we know to not be true, singing melodies that linger in the air, these things, convince us — for a little while — we aren't in the real world.

Within these pages, you'll meet dreamers: musicians, actors and painters. Treat them nicely, dear reader, for you don't know your fate.

Between these pages lies a dimension you and I know so well, a dimension of imagination. A place to get lost. Somewhere between these pages lie applause or a final bow.

This new dimension produces something magical constantly.

It's a dimension of bright lights, rhythm, parchment and screaming fans. A place where reality waits on you in the wings. You're not reading it, friends, you're in it. Welcome to the Twilight Zone.

LUCA FLORES | PHOTO EDITOR
A headshot of Brychelle Brooks.

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Auburn-Opelika Tourism's art gallery: Where COMMUNITY meets CREATIVITY

By BETSY NEARN
Lifestyle Writer

As cold, dreary weather sets into the South, visitors and locals alike escape into the bold, bright colors of Auburn-Opelika Tourism's office art gallery on North Gay Street. Over 20 artists contributed roughly 150 paintings to share stories and encapsulate the beauty found within the local community.



CONTRIBUTED BY MARI LOTT
Art gallery at AO Tourism.

AO Tourism Communications Manager Cat Bobo brought her love of art to the bare office walls when the company moved to downtown Auburn last October. Since the office is located in a high-traffic area, showcasing art was the perfect opportunity to support local artists and promote their destination.

"What makes us special is that we charge no commission, and a buyer is able to pay the artist directly. We make no profit off of it; we are simply here to enhance the visitor experience, as well as the quality of life in our destination for our residents," Bobo said.

Bobo began by inviting artists she knew to showcase their work on her walls. Soon, artists reached out to her directly, and recommendations for new talent fluttered into her inbox.

Another artist is a friend of Bobo's named Lauren Duncan. She is a gallery artist and an Opelika native who paints her prayers. She states that God created her to create.

Her family owns J&M Bookstore in Downtown Auburn, so her Auburn-specific art began with Tigers Unlimited and J&M. She watercolors Aubie portraits found on cards, stickers and even t-shirts.

Through J&M, she started a local market store and met Bobo. Duncan describes Bobo as a lover of art, a great customer and a supporter of the arts. Bobo reached out to Duncan to contribute to the gallery.

"She has done a great job with it. It is a great thing for our community, and they have a great space and a great platform. And I'm very grateful for that opportunity and for what they're doing," Duncan said.

Along with Aubie paintings, Duncan's abstract art hangs on the walls as a depiction of her prayers. She uses painting as prayer time with the Lord and recounts that it is a place for her to process life.

"I just think the art gallery is a great addition to our city. As Auburn grows and changes, there's always going to be new things, and I'm just really grateful for Cat and her team and how they bring people together and show off our city," Duncan said.

Auburn native Katy Doss also paints abstract paintings with her own clever twist in the titles.

As the owner of both a local marketing and design firm, Here Molly Girl, and a nationwide landscaping firm, Script, Doss uses art as an outlet from the stress of running two businesses.

She initially picked up painting again during COVID-19, beginning with florals. She later moved on to abstracts with humorous titles. In efforts to take life less seriously, Doss keeps a running list on her phone of statements she finds funny.

The AO Tourism coworkers love reading her new titles, such as "Claps When the Plane Lands" and "Let's Slip Into Our Drinking Trousers," when they see her abstracts on the walls.



CONTRIBUTED BY MARI LOTT
Abstract art showcased at AO Tourism's gallery.

Whether visitors come in to plan their next Auburn adventure or simply wander the halls of AO Tourism, the gallery invites them to slow down and see the city through the eyes of its people.

For Bobo and her team, that is exactly the point: to make the Auburn-Opelika Tourism office feel like more than a stop for brochures. It is a place where community meets creativity, and local artists get the chance to shine.

As Amy Winehouse would say, "why don't you come on over" to the gallery?