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12-22-2020

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University Park, IL,
December
22,
2020

Governors State Staff, Faculty Art Showcased at Flossmoor Pop-Up Gallery



A group of student, faculty and staff artists from [Governors State University](#) transformed a vacant storefront in downtown Flossmoor into a vibrant pop-up artist's cooperative almost overnight.

The Flossmoor Artists Co-Op, which opened in late November at 1056 Sterling Ave., features fine art created by nine artists with ties to Governors State. A mix of abstract ceramic sculptures and the bright hues of oil paintings are visible through the large windows at the corner of the suburb's shopping district.

The gallery, a holiday pop-up with long-term potential, came to reality in about six weeks. Flossmoor business owners Morgan Sullins, who owns a nearby home decor

store, and Jessica Gadowski, owner of a local botanicals business, envisioned an artist co-op and partnered to make it happen. The pair reached out to the community hoping to draw area artists.



Associate Professor and Art Program Coordinator [Leanne Cambric](#) saw the collaboration as an opportunity for students to display their work in a space where the public can see and buy it. She responded immediately to secure gallery space, then collaborated with [Jeff Stevenson](#), director and curator of Governor State's [Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park](#) and [Visual Arts Gallery](#), to invite students and recent alumni to exhibit.

Featured artists include ceramic artists Kenya Moffet-Gardner and Taylor Mezzo, who earned their [Bachelor of Fine Arts](#) degrees this spring; Jason Blohm, who earned his B.F.A. in 2017; and Lauren Bushchek, who will graduate with a B.F.A. in 2021. M.F.A. student Debbie Burk, who received her B.F.A. in 2018, brought several large ceramic pieces. Additional M.F.A. students exhibiting work include Hannah Mobley, with painting and collages; Heather Cox, with prints and paintings; and Madeline Henry, who

contributed small paintings.



The gallery provides an opportunity for art students that had not been available due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Students normally have a thesis exhibition on campus before they graduate, but of course, with COVID, it had to go online this year,” said Cambric. Showing work at the co-op brings the art into a physical space and highlights GSU’s partnership with downtown Flossmoor, where student artists have been invited to sell their work at special events in the past. Foot traffic in the area brings people into the space.

Cambric, whose work is also on display, said ceramics students now have a rare opportunity to exhibit alongside other fine art. “Ceramics, being in the functional world, has one foot in the craft fair circuit,” she said. “Usually galleries focus on painting or sculpture. There aren’t a lot of places in the Chicagoland area for ceramics to be shown.”

The co-op includes paintings and collages by Stevenson, who said the exhibit helps students to think about their professional futures while they are still working on coursework. “They need to think about the larger art world and how they’re going to move into it,” he said.

Cambric agreed. “A quote I try to share with my students is, ‘Unseen is unsold,’” she said. “It’s good to see the art outside the studio context and hopefully get it into someone’s home.”

Stevenson adds that the co-op is also helping GSU students learn about the social nature of the art community. Collaborating to exhibit with multiple artists leads to a stronger presence than an individual effort, he said.

“There’s a mythology that artists are creative geniuses who go into their studio in isolation. But it’s really a very social profession,” he said. “If you engage with the art world, the art world engages with you.”

The Flossmoor Artists Co-Op is open Thursday through Sunday. Hours are as follows:

Thursday and Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sunday to 4 p.m.