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# Community & Arts

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**A new gallery opens this summer, a local  
artist represents freedom to experiment  
and an artist's animal-focused art  
tells a greater story behind each piece**

# Amy Keever Gallery

## Showcasing and sharing

**A**rtist Amy Keever's smile, like the state of Texas, is wide, warm and welcoming. Today she's wearing a bright Western shirt, its pointed yoke covered in sprays of red and magenta cabbage roses. Her ten-gallon hat signals a fun and fearless fashion sense. "I'm a maverick," Keever says, surrounded by the small bits of glass that will become one of her fanciful artworks.

She picks up a carbide-tipped hammer and taps the glass against a steel hardie, which is essentially a small upright chisel. Keever sharply snaps the Italian glass, called smalti, into tiny tesserae.



"I began creating mosaics while living in Texas more than 20 years ago," Keever says. She explored her passion for artmaking in off-hours, teaching herself the ancient artform while working a job in finance. Finally, Keever followed her heart and left that career to pursue art full time. "I took a leap of faith," she says.

The choice was scary. "Later my boss told me that she wished she was brave enough to do the same," Keever says. "I was parenting two teenagers alone."

But she had faith in what she had learned while earning a business degree at John Brown University in Siloam Springs. Keever opened her eponymous gallery near the Bentonville Square, at 120 South Main St., in November 2021. The voluminous space reflects her personal style. It's an informal mix of patterned surfaces, saturated color and textures bathed in light. Crossing the threshold, there's an immediate sense of uplift and freedom — the freedom to experiment.

"I do my own thing," notes Keever, "and I like to dream." A studio in the back of the space allows her to work on new projects and to share with clients and patrons her artistic process, all while minding the gallery.

"I really enjoy talking with art tourists who discover me while exploring Bentonville as well as connecting with locals who are curious about art," she says.

Keever's bright paintings — some are explorations that inform her glasswork — hang on the gallery's 19th-century interior brick wall. The building housed Buell's Hardware Store for decades. Like the hardware stores of yore, Keever imagines her gallery as a community meeting place. To that end, she plans events that draw people to celebrate art throughout the year. In March, Keever hosted an exhibition of artwork created by two Bentonville high school students. "Mentoring young people has been important to me for a long time, and there's nothing better for an artist than to exhibit their work professionally," she says.

Keever made space among her own mixed-media artwork to accommodate the students' paintings, then threw a big party for their friends, family and art enthusiasts in the community. By featuring student work in the gallery multiple times each year, she hopes to support young artists to create new connections in Northwest Arkansas. "Art is all about relationships," Keever notes.

This foundational belief underpins the commitment Keever makes to herself to seek out and listen to the perspectives

#### FOR MORE INFO

**Sign up for Amy Keever's newsletter to stay informed about fun events such as the Couture Gala on June 16 where she will debut her new line of handmade enamel jewelry. Access to the newsletter and links to her social media pages can be found online at [www.AmyKeever.com](http://www.AmyKeever.com).**



of trusted advisors, especially to set up effective gallery business practices. "Working with Martha was a gamechanger," she says. Martha Londagin is a business consultant at Startup Junkie, a nonprofit based in Fayetteville that advises, at no cost, emerging as well as established entrepreneurs to strengthen or build viable businesses. Londagin often works with artists.

"My role is to help artpreneurs to blend their passion with the business side so they can earn a true living through what they love, producing art," Londagin says. Londagin observes that artists like Keever are unique among entrepreneurs. "For most artists, their work is who they are and who they have been since childhood."

Working together, Londagin and Keever explored strategies that could intersect Keever's established routines of creating art with new routines promoting her work. Learning how and where to tell their story is essential to every entrepreneur, no matter their passion. ■

## HAuTe Couture Gala

JUNE 16TH - 5-8PM

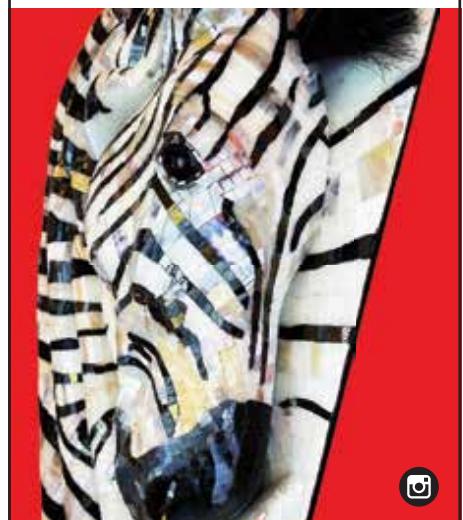
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