

Imagine: Contemporary Art in the High Desert

by Abby Metzger A&E Editor

After graduating with a degree in psychology, Shelley Hall came to one stout conclusion: It was time for a change in direction. She went back to school, fulfilled her dream of becoming an artist and now has over ten years of experience in both museum and gallery work. More recently, the artist accomplished another dream of hers by becoming a gallery owner.

Along with her husband and two kids, Hall moved to Bend from Southern California and secured a space above the Tower Theatre for her contemporary gallery, Shelley Hall Gallery. The business brings a spoonful of non-traditional art to the region and joins the ranks of other art hotspots that flank downtown Bend.

In addition to Hall's nature inspired abstract paintings, the gallery will feature contemporary pieces from artists all over the country, some at the start of their career, others with an established portfolio. Shelley and her sidekick husband Andy say their goal is not to overrun rural-inspired art, but to help collectors integrate contemporary pieces into their homes. "It's an alternative to the traditional. You can combine different styles to create a portfolio of artists," said Shelley. "We represent the client, so we will help them find the most appropriate art, even if it's at another gallery."

Most importantly, the Halls want to assist customers through the entire art buying

process, alleviating stress from purchase to installment. "If you have an emotion that connects you with a piece, then you buy it because you love it. We want to provide that emotional experience," said Andy.

Since they've assembled an expert group of art consultants, framers and installers, the Halls provide everything from in-home consultations, full-service delivery and installation to site specific commissions and shipping and packing of artwork worldwide. The Halls testify this in their mission statement: "With our team of experts, we streamline the entire process, from the beginning stages of art selection and frame design, to the installation; we work closely with clients

and their team of architects and designers."

Better yet, the gallery doesn't wear an exclusive feel, but instead remains inviting to experienced and novice art patrons alike. "We're a friendly contemporary gallery," said Shelley smiling. "We want to welcome everyone."

From the looks of it, Shelley Hall Gallery will greatly enhance Bend's artistic community. The owners have joined the gallery association and are eager to collaborate with other related businesses to keep the arts scene thriving. "Art should be a cooperative venture. Galleries need to help each other out, and artists need to help each other out," said Shelley. Andy adds, "I've never looked at business as competitive. You can't be everything to everyone."

It takes a little extra effort to walk up the stairs to the new contemporary gallery, but the unassuming atmosphere coupled with quality art make the trip worthwhile. Forget about traveling to the big city—collectors craving a taste of urban art can find it in their own backyard.

Shelley Hall Gallery will celebrate a grand opening that corresponds with Bend's April 7 Art Hop with a show titled *Faces & Figures*. Art viewers can check out featured art, covering close-up images of the face and snapshot style paintings. In addition, the gallery will feature the works and book by Helen and Alan Post, who both hold affirmed positions of artistic excellence. Prints and giclées will be available alongside original work. Every two months, the gallery will host a new exhibit, but will still have their core of artists showing at all times.

Information: 382-8696, www.shelleyhall-gallery.com or info@shelleyhallgallery.com



Shelley Hall, owner of Shelley Hall Gallery. PHOTO BY ANDY HALL