

Living on the Edge

Our featured artist for the Greater Memphis Chamber's "Calling All Artists Initiative" and our Spring Edition of the *Memphis Crossroads*, Anthony Lee, is very active in the local arts scene. Below you will find some of his upcoming projects as well as changes that are taking place to the "Edge District" in Downtown Memphis.

Marshall Arts

Lee currently serves as the Facility Manager and Exhibition Coordinator at Marshall Arts, which also houses his studio. Located in downtown Memphis and established in 1992, Marshall Arts is 15,000 square feet of studio and exhibition space and has evolved into a creative laboratory on par with any alternative art space in the country. Lee has made it his obligation to see that Marshall Arts remains interesting, visible, and competitive in an ever-widening local art market.

A Class of Hicks

Lee is also the Curator for an upcoming exhibit at the Memphis College of Art titled *A Class of Hicks*, which opens from February 16-27, 2009. The reception for this show is Friday, February 20, at the Memphis College of Art from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

This exhibit is a tribute to one of the finest art educators in Memphis during the 1990s. Bill Hicks' phenomenal success as an art teacher at the high school level is evident in his former students that now have professional careers based in visual art. The fine artists in this exhibit demonstrate only a fraction of those inspired and taught by Hicks over the last two decades.

GAP

In addition, Lee is working along with neighborhood business leaders as the Art Director for a new initiative called the Graffiti Art Program (GAP)- selecting artists and designating wall space for their ideas. These murals revolve every 3-4 months giving other artists a chance to showcase on the same wall. Since this program is new, we're only currently limiting it to our business neighborhood- The Edge District in downtown Memphis. Pending the success and support from our immediate community, we will then consider painting outside of our boundary.

We theorize that graffiti in our neighborhood will be diverted onto the permissive walls for show of a higher standard quality of work. If the artists have permission, time, support, and additional equipment, they can really do some stellar creations, which will add a visual interest in our district.

In order to assist the artists in becoming a little more professional at their trade, each one will have to "pitch" their visual idea through a proposal process, much like dealing with public art. They will begin to understand meeting the needs of clients, committees, and the community at large. This type of education will help them to transition their skill from something deemed unappealing and inappropriate, to something that may be able to sustain them financially as valuable "urban artists." The City of Philadelphia has had tremendous success with this type of program! (Click this link for the CA article: <http://www.memphisedge.org/images/GAP%20-%20Edge%20Neighborhood.pdf>)

Merge

Merge is an annual event that introduces the world of fine art to an unwary audience.

Merge combines different elements of entertainment- all in the attempt to elevate the guests' cultural standards and ultimately spark an interest in each of them for the consumption of art... in all its forms. It is also a production umbrella for smaller events held throughout the year.

For more information, please contact Anthony Lee at mrpnut77@hotmail.com.