



PHOTOS BY IGOR KRAGULJAC

At the Heart of the Arts

By **MACY MOORE**

Downtown Bryan has become a haven for art and artists of all styles. Even so, there was not a space where artists could create, learn new artistic techniques and skills, frame their work, and just mingle with other artists. Four women came together to change that.

FOR YEARS, GRETA WATKINS, Kristy Petty, Le Hale, and Cassidy Barton all contemplated the possibility of creating an art center. The Parker Astin Arts Center is now open in the heart of Downtown Bryan. Formerly a hardware store, the building brings together the Purple Turtle Art Studio, The Frame Gallery, and a “landing place” for the art979.com website and other artists – all under one roof.

Le Hale started the Purple Turtle Art Studio 12 years ago. A lifelong artist, she first taught in public schools but decided to start her own studio for the sake of a larger budget and larger canvases.

Le worked with Cassidy in the SEAD Gallery in Downtown Bryan and also shared space with Greta’s framing business for her art studio. The classes held at the Arts Center include everything from children’s painting to sewing classes and reverse glass painting to an adult figure drawing class. Le implements the idea of an open classroom where people are free to work on whatever they want. She says she feels the artist will be more invested in their work when they are creating freely.

Greta’s focus is on the framing side of the Arts Center. Owner of The Frame Gallery, she has been in the framing business since 2001

BLINN COLLEGE

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

PRESENTS



BRENHAM CAMPUS

All performances:
Dr. W. W. O'Donnell
Performing Arts Center
Tickets: www.blinn.edu/finearts

DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE

by T. R. Sullivan
Directed by Bradley Nies

Based on Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella, this melodrama, originally produced on Broadway in 1887, tells the story of a London lawyer who investigates the strange transformation of his old friend, Dr. Henry Jekyll, into the evil Mr. Edward Hyde. A great Halloween treat that explores good vs. evil!

Oct. 16 - 18 7 p.m.
Oct. 19 2 p.m.

Jr. High/High School
Preview Performances:

Oct. 16 & 17 1 p.m.

THE BLINN COLLEGE THEATRE ARTS PROGRAM

The Theatre Arts Program provides a quality education through study, application, and experience, and is committed to engaging the college and area communities with a diverse offering of venues, interactions, and performances.

All plays subject to change



BRYAN CAMPUS

All performances:
Blinn College – Bryan
Student Center
Barbara L. Pearson Banquet Room
FREE ADMISSION
www.blinn.edu/brazos/finearts

ANTIGONE

by Sophocles in a version
by Owen McCafferty

Directed by Greg Wise

A muscular version of Sophocles' timeless masterpiece, offering a profound reflection on the nature of power, democracy and human rights. The war has ended, but with peace comes conflict. Antigone's brother Polyneices lies on the battlefield where he fell, his burial outlawed by Creon, the new king of Thebes. Should Antigone obey Creon, or must she follow her conscience and lay her beloved brother to rest?

Oct. 16 - 18
7:30 p.m.

and is the acknowledged grande dame of the Downtown Bryan First Friday and Art Step experiences. "In addition to framing, I continue to feature original art by local artists as I have done for years," says Greta. "It's an important part of The Frame Gallery- having a place for local artist to share their work with the community."

When she isn't changing out the exhibits of the SEAD Gallery in the Federal Building, Cassidy deals with the brainstorming and logistics of the new Arts Center, which will also house the Barton Law Firm. Kristy describes her role in the new center as "the liaison between business and art." As owner of The Village Downtown, an art café that showcases local

music and art to diners, she is also creator of the art979.com site that allows artists to display their art and interact with one another.

While the four ladies behind the Parker Astin Arts Center are from different backgrounds, they each bring a common goal to their creation – a place that, in the words of Kristy, "fosters arts and creativity, whether you're taking a class, looking at art, or just hanging out."

They also all agree that one of the best perks of running the Parker Astin Arts Center is being able to work alongside best friends and kindred spirits. When they talk about the Parker Astin Arts Center, their expressions are joyful and vibrant...like beautiful art.



LE HALE

CASSIDY BARTON

GRETA WATKINS

KRISTY PETTY

What advice do you have for anyone wanting to start an artistic business?

KRISTY: "Follow your dreams and be willing to take chances. You have to identify what you want to do, and go after it."

LE: "You have to find families that want to invest in their kids' art education and build from there."

What is your favorite part about working at the Parker Astin Arts center?

LE: "My favorite part is instilling a passion for art that is liberating and not something that children are scared of; making them fearless jumping into art. If they don't start now, they will start to shut down. I love watching a child grow from being intimidated by art to being confident in their work."

CASSIDY: "I love being in a shared space where you have ready access to other people who are willing to talk, laugh and have the common goal of arts."

Because the arts center is new, what goals do you have?

KRISTY: "A big goal is marketing the space. Seeing it grow and expand is everyone's goal. We want to find artist's work and help them out." *i*