

# Art in unexpected places

**By Joanna Ramondetta**  
**Eagle correspondent**

Thanks to many local businesses supporting Wichita's ever-growing art market, patrons can find original art hanging on the walls of some unexpected venues — a neighborhood bookstore, a restaurant, even a jewelry store.

Watermark Books is one of those businesses. The store has always had a strong community following, so displaying local art seemed a natural fit, says owner Sarah Bagby.

"My husband is an artist and we have many friends who are artists, so we began hanging our own art collection in the store," she says.

That evolved into showing the works of customers who were also artists.

"There are so many fantastic galleries in Wichita today that do such a good job, but when we first started showing works of art, there were not the opportunities that there are now for artists to have an exhibit," Bagby says.

"We have shown work that ranges from the more expensive to the very reasonable."

Another unexpected venue for art is **Monica's Bundt Cake Co.** on East Douglas. The frilly pink and white bake shop opened four years ago and has shown artwork every month since then except for Decembers, says owner Monica Schlegel.

"We began taking part in Final Fridays immediately," she says. "I wasn't sure how the main galleries that hosted Final Fridays would feel about us because we were not an actual gallery, but they were so warm and welcomed us right in."

"So many artists don't have a place to display their work but we have this great space that we call the ARTery, which provides the perfect gallery wall," she says. "It is a win-win situation."

Caffe Moderne in Old Town Square is another venue embracing local art. Janet Rine, who owns the restaurant and gelateria, says she always envisioned making art a strong component of her restaurant, which features an art deco bar and architectural details reclaimed from old buildings or machinery.

"When we opened we hoped that we would attract artists to work here, because it is that kind of environment," she says. "We have done that — just about everyone here is an artist of some sort."

The style of art that Caffe Moderne displays runs the gamut. Currently, the richly colored works of Margi Sweeton are on display.

"We are totally supportive of the artists, which is why we don't take any commission on the sales of their work," Rine says. "We want that to go directly back to the artist."

Of special note in the restaurant's banquet room is a 28-foot-by-7-foot mural by local artist Steve Murillo.

"This mural really captures so much of the restaurant and so much of Wichita," Rine says. "Wichita has a very healthy artists' community that other cities do not have at this level. We really have something very special here."

## **Other businesses showing local art**

- \* Melange Jewelry, 617 W. Douglas
- \* The Egret Room at Exploration Place, 300 N. McLean Blvd.
- \* Extraordinaire Salon, 4715 E. Douglas
- \* Sabor in Old Town Square, 319 N. Mead
- \* The Anchor, 1109 E. Douglas
- \* The Vagabond, 614 W. Douglas