

Never Pay A Monthly Phone Bill Again!  Local & Long Distance for only \$19.95 A Year! **Try It FREE!**  COMPATIBLE WITH 

Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#) | [Subscribe to paper](#)Find it: [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Coupons](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Place an ad](#) | [Dating](#)

TENNESSEAN.COM

SEARCH
ALLAll [Local News](#) [Calendar](#) [Jobs](#) [More »](#)

SPONSORED BY:

[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [COMMUNITIES](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [SPORTS](#) [SHOPPING](#) [MOMS](#) [LIFE](#) [VOICES & VIEWS](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [OBITUARIES](#) [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#)[Environment](#) [Government & Politics](#) [Crime & Courts](#) [Education](#) [Faith & Values](#) [Business](#) [Health](#) [Nation & World](#) [Multimedia](#) [DataCentral](#)

Comment, blog & share photos

[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)

powered by you and THE TENNESSEAN

Downturn causes artists, galleries to refocus

By Naomi Snyder • THE TENNESSEAN • January 11, 2009

[Read Comments\(7\)](#) [Recommend \(1\)](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#) Here's something else art imitates: [the stock market](#).

Artists and art galleries are trying to adjust to a market plunge last year, as a worrisome economy has left art buyers wary of investing in the finer things in life. Although some local galleries and artists say sales continue at a robust pace, many are reporting a steep drop in demand as buyers take more time to make decisions, choose lower-priced items or eschew galleries altogether.

ADVERTISEMENT

Galleries and artists are trying to adjust by focusing on sales of more affordable pieces or seeking out other forms of income such as outfitting hotel and office space, hoping that corporate source of income won't disappear as well.

"We're amazed we're still here," said Anne Brown, the owner of The Arts Co. in downtown Nashville. "I think this is a really rough time and we're trying to be really sensitive to it."

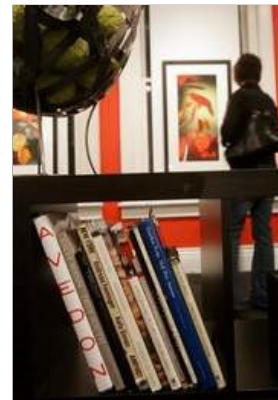
As sales in the gallery have dipped, Brown said, she has stopped hiring part-time contract workers for odd jobs around the gallery and is aggressively pursuing corporate clients, such as Pinnacle Bank, which has been buying the gallery's artwork for its offices.

"These are new ways to go into the market without waiting for people to walk in the front door," she said. She also noticed the average sale has dropped in value; things like Picasso books are selling better than \$5,000 framed photographs.

Sales have fallen at least 10 percent in 2008 at the Cumberland Gallery in Green Hills, said gallery director Carol Stein. Tinney Contemporary in downtown Nashville has seen its revenues cut in half compared to 2007.

The TAG gallery in Nashville closed last summer after eight years in business. Owner Jerry Dale McFadden said sales started on a downhill slide more than a year ago.

Virginia Cannon, an independent dealer and consultant in Nashville, described 2008 as "miserable," with just one-third of the sales of the year before. "People just aren't spending money," she said. "They're spending money on posters."



Books are good sellers as art lovers look over photographs at The Arts Co. during the First Saturday Gallery Crawl in Nashville on Jan. 3.

(SANFORD

MYERS / THE TENNESSEAN)

Photo Galleries & Multimedia

 [Artwork sold amid recession](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

hoops.

The one place to get all your high school hardcourt team news, schedules, scores, stats, rankings, photos and videos. Nothing but net!

TENNESSEAN.COM

POWERED BY 

More Business headlines

[Downturn causes artists, galleries to refocus](#)

Artists Adjust...[HeathersWeightBlog...](#)

"I saw this coming awhile ago," said Adrienne Outlaw, a Nashville sculptor and installation artist who hasn't sold anything since 2007. She has worked as an artist for 15 years and lived through past recessions.

Top 3 Colon Detox Cleanses...

Personal reviews from people who have tried the real...

[ColonReview.com](#)

"People stop buying art in a recession," she said.

Outlaw took on some work last year organizing art projects, getting grant funding and lining up two arts projects — one involving high school and college students and the other putting art in public places around Nashville, including prints in coffee shops and libraries.

Bruce Matthews, an oil painter who lives outside of Ashland City, said he's considering going back to figure drawings or watercolors, which are less time-consuming.

1 Flat Stomach Rule: Obey

How I cut 2 lbs of fat per week by obeying this 1 old rule.

[karlasweightloss.com](#)

"There is a need for art in any civilization, and it is up to the artist to meet that halfway," he said. Matthews said a few corporate commissions of his work fell through late last year, costing him income.

"People are cutting back on everything and people are panicking," said the artist, who has been selling his work for more than 20 years. "I'm optimistic. They'll be back. There is a lot about art that is about being patient."

The thorny question of whether artists are taking deep discounts on their work to survive a recession is difficult to prove; artists and galleries are reluctant to confirm reports of slashing prices.

"The truth is they'll make a deal if they're hungry enough and they need the money," said Cannon, the art dealer. But she said she didn't notice a trend of artists accepting deeper discounts than they would in better times.

No one can be sure how long the recession will last and how long it will take for the [stock market](#) to recover. Stock losses and falling home prices have eviscerated wealth for the well-to-do art patron as well as the middle class.

Although there has been a slight recovery in the early part of this year, the S&P 500 fell 38.5 percent in 2008 and the Dow industrials fell 33.8 percent for the year, the worst performance since the Great Depression.

Sales at big art auction houses didn't match that dismal performance, but they came close. Sotheby's auctioned about \$4.9 billion worth of art last year, down 8.5 percent from the year before. Christie's International sold more than \$4 billion, down about 20 percent, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. A Christie's spokeswoman wouldn't confirm that figure.

Organizers canceled the annual International Asian Art Fair scheduled for March in New York City after citing the "global economic situation."

Nashville art collector Howard Stringer, who once lent out a Roy Lichtenstein painting to New York's Whitney Museum, said he and his wife, Hope, are focusing more on emerging artists, whose work can be acquired for lower prices than well-established ones.

"When times are tough, people put off the purchase of art," he said, adding that the stock market's slide had an impact on his portfolio. "We and others probably won't be buying art."

Some Galleries Gain

But some say they have seen sales increase. Painter Rachael McCampbell, who recently moved to Leiper's Fork from Los Angeles, said she sold more paintings last year than the year before.

She and Nashville artist Herb Williams think their work is selling because buyers see art as a better investment than the stock market.

Bumps are likely in digital TV shift (6)

Despite missing players, Detroit auto show to go on (1)

Newcomer Tom Oreck leads fight against English bill (57)

Cost of owning a dog can add up (4)

Latest headlines

No. 24 Vanderbilt stuns No. 7 Lady Vols

Belmont, Lipscomb gird for latest 'Battle of the Boulevard'

Related news from the Web

[Auctions](#)

[Retail](#)

[Housing](#)

[Sothebys Holdings](#)

Powered by Topix.net

ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

Washington Mortgage Protection Insur.

Pays off your mortgage in the event of your death. Get a free quote!

[www.NAALife.com](#)

Globe Life Insurance

\$1 Buys \$50,000 Life Insurance. No Medical Exam, No Waiting Period

[InsuranceFor1Dollar.com](#)

Interactive Mktg. Cert.

Become an Interactive Marketing Guru. Certificate Courses Online!

[www.USanFranOnline.com](#)

"This has been the biggest year I've ever had," said Williams, who also is the curator of the Rymer Gallery in downtown Nashville. He sold a colorful representation of President-elect Barack Obama — done in crayons — for \$25,000 last month.

Williams also said his gallery benefited from a move this summer to a new, more visible location on Fifth Avenue.

Shelley Liles McBurney, the owner of Gallery One, said her sales increased in 2008, in part because of several sales to corporations.

"Perhaps the budgets of those corporations haven't caught up with what was happening in the economy," she said. "I'm not so smug to think it won't have an impact on my business."

Contact Naomi Snyder at 615-259-8284 or nsnyder@tennessean.com.

In Your Voice

Read reactions to this story

Newest first



spewey wrote:

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

[New post](#)

[Reply to this Post](#)

[Report Abuse](#)



spoe1234 wrote:

[Recommend \(1\)](#)

[New post](#)

[Reply to this Post](#)

[Report Abuse](#)



rickshaw wrote:

[Recommend](#)

[New post](#)

[Reply to this Post](#)

[Report Abuse](#)



cutshaw wrote:

[Recommend](#)

[New post](#)

[Reply to this Post](#)

[Report Abuse](#)



cutshaw wrote: