

Marty Walsh in front of a collection of work from Trifecta Gallery's "Minumental Invitational," including framed pieces by Shan Michael Evans, who is one of Walsh's latest picks for new collectors.

COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

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PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCIS GEORGE

Tucked just inside the back entrance to Downtown mainstay The Arts Factory is Trifecta Gallery, where on this winter day, filtered light from a sunken window dapples across a series of tiny paintings. Owner and artist Marty Walsh stands contemplating the exhibit, each piece a miniature priced at \$150 or less and created by an artist whose work usually fetches far more. The exhibit isn't an aberration, for in spite of the size of her gallery, Walsh begins planning each show with same big idea—to provide new collectors the opportunity to buy original work from emerging artists.

"Since First Friday began, I've been watching the crowds," says Walsh. "A lot of times they just ate and drank and socialized, but I also saw a lot of wannabe collectors."

So Walsh took a look around and realized that most of the galleries in The Arts Factory were studios or non-profits, without an emphasis on retail. Inspired by the thought of creating a gallery where young collectors could buy work from rising artists at affordable prices, Walsh snapped up an open space in the building and in 2005 she opened the doors to Trifecta Gallery.

"Without compromising the quality of art that I show, I tailor-make each exhibit to entry-level collectors," says Walsh. "I started my art collection in Vegas, with small work, so I didn't see why I couldn't provide that experience to the people that come to First Friday."

Walsh provides more than a simple transaction for her patrons; she hand-picks each artist she shows, focusing her

keen eye on artists with staying power, whose work will be an investment for the patron, beyond an aesthetic draw, making their collection more valuable with time. "But you shouldn't buy work based on its future value," she says. "You should buy what you love."

A figurative painter herself, Walsh has seen how quickly the careers of her featured artists have taken off. After selling out her solo show at Trifecta, Las Vegas painter Amy Sol's work has more than doubled in price in Los Angeles and New York. Walsh now points to Casey Weldon and Shan Michael Evans as the next two to watch.

"I find that people really like to meet the artist behind what they're buying, and a lot of the large-scale, upper-crust galleries seclude the buyer from the artist," she says. "I like for my buyers to meet the artists, so the artists I pick have integrity, personality and a good vibe—that's what weeds them out from the rest."

What weeds Trifecta out from many of the galleries Downtown is Walsh's passion for her work. She approaches each show, whether a solo exhibition of her own paintings or a themed group show such as the "Minumental Invitational," with infectious enthusiasm.

"I'm lucky enough to practice my art and the business of art," she says. "Whether I make extra money or not doesn't matter, because I'm truly doing what I love." **HD**

Up next at Trifecta Gallery: "Salon de Miscellany," a collection of assorted works. 702/366-7001, trifectagallery.com.

