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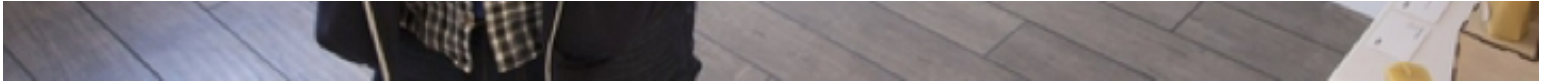
Local Business

New Faces: Expanded gallery hopes to boost local arts community

Two new businesses reopened in Saskatoon recently. These are their stories.

Alex MacPherson • Saskatoon StarPhoenix
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Michael Peterson hopes his newly re-opened commercial gallery, Void, can serve as a hub for emerging artists in Saskatoon.
PHOTO BY GORD WALDNER /Saskatoon StarPhoenix

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Void Gallery

After finishing his bachelor of fine arts degree in 2009, Michael Peterson felt disconnected from the art world. Commercial galleries seemed inaccessible, while the campus art community is closed to professional artists.



“It was a challenge to make that transition,” Peterson said. “Commercial galleries generally ask you to have a bit of a sales history. They want to see some proof that your work sells before starting to show your work. And yet, at the same time, getting out of university, that’s kind of hard: how do you establish that sales history?”

In 2012, Peterson opened Void Gallery in an Eighth Street basement. By showing and selling the work of inexperienced artists, he could boost their careers while at the same time making quality artwork available to more people.

In 2013, Peterson left for two years at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver, B.C. Although the gallery stayed open, the sabbatical gave its founder an opportunity to reflect on the project’s successes — and failures.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

“We had a gallery, we would put on shows, but we really didn’t have the opportunity to work with artists who weren’t quite ready for a show, to help them get ready for a show,” Peterson said.

Void Gallery, which reopened in Riversdale earlier this month, has been reimagined. Now the stark white gallery space is complemented with room for workshops as well as space for the Saskatoon printmaking collective Ink Slab.

Peterson said repositioning the gallery as a hub for emerging artists will benefit the community by creating a few part-time jobs and exposing young artists to a range of skills. The new space could also slash the traditional barriers to entry for customers, he said.

Since it reopened, Void Gallery has hosted a show of small works by local artists. Its second exhibition, which opens Jan. 9, will feature vibrant oil paintings by the Rockglen, Sask. artist Sandra Knoss.

Peterson said he’s looking forward to continuing to support a community he cares deeply about.

“It’s something I care about, and something I’m passionate about,” he said. “You see a need, and you see how you could offer support in that area. For me, it’s about exploring how we can do that.”

Void Gallery

Address: *312 Avenue B South*

Phone: *306-850-6545*

Web: *voidgallery.ca*

Hours: *Wednesday, 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. — 9 p.m.; Friday to Sunday, 10 a.m. — 6*