

# Arizona Daily Star®

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Published: 11.29.2007

## uSEFUL uGALLERY.com

### Students exhibit and sell their art

#### Stories by Ashley Houk

FOR THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Ugallery.com, an online art gallery for recently graduated or soon-to-graduate art students, has a roster of more than 125 artists from 70 universities and colleges.

It was launched by three University of Arizona students last October, the result of a class project.

"There are plenty of online art galleries out there that started with the dotcom era of the '90s, but we are the first college site dedicated to showing students' work, so in that aspect we are helping recent grads," said Stephen Tanenbaum, Ugallery co-creator and full-time employee.

"It's great so far. It's gotten a lot further than we envisioned," he said.

Art on the site ranges from \$20 to \$5,000. The site also has a "View on Wall" feature, where you can mimic the measurements, size and color of your wall at home, then virtually hang the art you're thinking of buying — to make sure it will fit and look nice in your house.

The Ugallery concept came about two years ago, when Alex Farkas, Tanenbaum and Greg Rosborough were UA seniors enrolled in the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship in the Eller College of Management. Students in the class formed teams and "came up with a salable idea, something that could become a lot bigger," said Tanenbaum, 25.

The gallery idea came from Farkas, 24, who studied art history and business. "All the students were making great work but having a lot of trouble getting their work noticed," Farkas said.

So the team created a business plan — one that they edited and re-edited — and submitted it to competitions at business schools.

Judges at those competitions choose the top 10 of 90 to 100 plans to compete. The UA team was accepted by two competitions: the Queens Entrepreneurs Competition at Queens College in Ontario, Canada, and the Enterprise Competition at Ball State University in Indiana. They won both, and came in second place in the UA's business plan competition.

Each of those competitions offered cash prizes, and with Ugallery's wins, the team won enough start-up cash, around \$23,000, to put their project into motion.

After raising another \$80,000 from friends and family, they launched Ugallery.com.

So far they have artists from 27 states. Farkas and Tanenbaum recruit artists through fliers at the UA art

#### Other art sites worth a look

There are dozens of online art galleries or art communities. Here are three that you should check out.

- **STUART:** An online gallery that shows student artwork, STUART was created as an aspect of Saatchi Online gallery. It now features more than 20,000 student artists who use the site to show, and sell, their artwork, for free. Go to [www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/stuart](http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/stuart).

- **Etsy.com:** The place to buy, or sell, all things handmade, including art, clothes and jewelry, although the site features most of the handmade crafts you can think of.

- **Redbubble.com:** Similar to Etsy, redbubble.com is an online gallery for art or creative crafts. People can buy or sell wall art, greeting cards, T-shirts, poems or short stories from this site that started in Australia.

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Head in clouds, oil on canvas

building, and also by speaking to classes of art students at universities nationwide. They advertise the site through the Internet using MySpace and Facebook, but also through ads on Google searches.

Ugallery is open to art students or recent graduates. The application process takes about 10 minutes.

Artists submit a little information about themselves along with their motivations and styles. The artists then submit three images, which are reviewed by Ugallery volunteerjudges.

There are four judges: Farkas; UA painting professor Alfred J. Quiroz; Deborah Mosch, a professor at Savannah College of Art and Design; and gallery owner Carol Wittner.

Wittner, who is Farkas' mother, shows art from Ugallery at her gallery, Sky Fire, in Jerome.

"I don't think the online art gallery is a threat to brick and mortar galleries at all," Wittner said.

Quiroz said online art galleries are becoming a new way to show contemporary art, but hopes that they aren't the future and that they don't replace brick and mortar galleries. "I think it's one way to show work, but it's less physical. You're not looking at it live," he said.

Quiroz chose to work with Farkas and Tanenbaum on the site because it promotes student art. "I'm really into it because it involves students," he said.

When a piece is sold, the artist is informed via e-mail. The artist then takes the piece to a UPS store where it is packaged and shipped at Ugallery's expense.

"The site is good for artists because other galleries can see that the artist has a sales history," Farkas said.

Half the sale price goes to the artist and half goes to Ugallery. The fee structure is in line with that of most brick-and-mortar galleries, said Terry Etherton of Tucson's Etherton Gallery.

Rosborough works part time, finding artists for the site, but is concentrating on his studies at the New York Fashion Institute of Technology. Although he's studying men's wear, he will work full time for Ugallery after he graduates, along with Farkas and Tanenbaum.

Said Tanenbaum: "This is our full-time job and we want it to be a great success like Amazon or eBay. We run the site for artists and people who can't access quality original art."

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