

Friday, February 27, 2009

Gwinnett artist finds success

By Holley Calmes
Art Beat

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Kim Schuessler is a Duluth mother of three, but she certainly has more on her plate than family life. Make that "on her palette." Schuessler is one of the area's most successful artists, selling her work to collectors across the country.

Her colorful paintings are exhibited at Atlanta's Bennett Street Gallery, and her work has become extremely collectible.

"People buy Kim's work not just because they love her captivating imagery, but because a Schuessler painting is a wise investment," Bennett Street gallery director Susie Pryor said.

In 2008, the value of Schuessler's paintings, which sell for between \$3,000 and \$12,000, increased in value by at least 30 percent in less than seven months.

She also enjoys an impressive list of collectors.

Among those who have purchased her work are NASCAR's Jimmie Johnson, SPANX's Sara Blakeley, the IBM corporate collection and Jeffrey Bonner, president of the Indianapolis Zoo.

Schuessler has admirers as far away as Hawaii. The minute her "Don't Forget" collection was unveiled in Atlanta, collectors rushed to purchase her paintings. Many bought paintings over the phone after seeing the work on the Bennett Street Web site. One woman even ordered a painting while she was traveling after viewing Schuessler's work for the first time on her Blackberry.

People love Schuessler's paintings for her use of child-like imagery that conveys real, grown-up issues and struggles of everyday life. Her bright, image-packed pieces pull the viewer in with aggressive color. Her work recreates simple moments in complex collages.

Being a busy woman herself, she has focused on the harried and tumultuous lives of women. Her collection "Don't Forget" includes 20 paintings with such whimsical titles as "Don't Forget to Eat a Box of Red Hearts" and "Don't Forget to Play Ring Around the Roses." She turns simple, every day moments such as a ballet recital, a walk in the rain and children singing, into colorful pieces of art.

Schuessler is a graduate of the University of Georgia and the Parsons School of Design in New York City, and she studied in Italy and France. Her list of accomplishments continues to grow. Gov. Sonny Perdue appointed her to the Georgia Council for the Arts, and she serves on the Board of Directors for the Woodruff Arts Center's Young Audiences of Atlanta.

The media has caught on to her work as well. Her paintings have appeared in Better Homes and Gardens, Atlanta Magazine, the Charlotte Observer and Florida Design. Last May, one of her pieces was featured on the program cover for The Congressional Club's First Lady's Luncheon in Washington, D.C., honoring Laura Bush.

Although her work is prized nationwide, it can only be seen and purchased through the Bennett Street Gallery

located at 22-F Bennett St., Atlanta. View her work on www.bennettstgallery.com/kim_schuessler.html.

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