

THE VEGUE

ART & CULTURE

TRENDING art *Couture*

FUN AT
THE ARTS
FACTORY

ERICA BELL & LISA HERR

FUN AT THE *Arts* FACTORY

ERICA BELL & LISA HERR
update us on what is new and
happening at the Arts District
in downtown Las Vegas

By: Tony Ferriera

Photographer: Michael W Rogers

THE ARTS DISTRICT

TF: How did you both get involved in the Las Vegas Arts District and for how long have you been thriving in it.

EB: I am one of the newer implant's in the Art's District. I moved to Vegas from the Bay Area almost 3 years ago and was searching for that culture I grew up with in San Francisco and the Arts District was the perfect fit. A mentor of mine, Jolene Mannina called me about helping her coordinate culinary for First Friday. While working as the Culinary Coordinator Joey Vana's President of First Friday and Christy Carrasco First Fridays Event Coordinator asked me if I wanted more responsibility and of course I said yes. Now I am the First Friday Production Manager and Event Coordinator for several of Jonathan Kermani (First Friday Board Member, Property Owner) properties in the heart of the Art's District and I couldn't be happier.

LH: I started out showing a few small pieces in Jana's RedRoom gallery. Jana is great at helping artist create a following. As my work started to sell Jana invited me to take part in a group show in the main gallery and I was lucky enough to be featured on her famous red wall! Eventually, I was fortunate enough to also start showing at Lynne Adamson Adrian and Kat Tatz's Wonderland Gallery and have now gratefully become their first resident artist.

TF: What growth and change is happening in the Arts District?

EB: I feel The Arts District as a whole is in a unique position. Jonathan Kermani property owner of The Arts Factory, Art Square, 1st and Main, Union House, and Opportunity Village lot is very passionate about enhancing all of the properties and working with all the tenants in each location. When Jonathan and Joey approached my team and I about coordinating events in The Arts District we were beyond excited but also understood the amount of work we were signing up for. Our number one focus is community. We want to broadcast the Arts District, the artist that thrive in it and make a safe, enlightening, artistic environment for all ages to come spend their time. The next big attraction we are most excited for is 1st and Main building that is schedule to open beginning of 2017. 1st and Main will have a recording studio, art galleries, restaurants, bars, a beautiful rooftop, patio space and much more. On California St. and Casino Center a gorgeous salon has just had their grand opening. Make Shift Union Cutting and Grooming. On Charleston Blvd and Main St. we will have The Cornish Patsy Co. opening mid October offering a huge bar and restaurant that we are all very excited for.

LH: For me, The Arts District had been through some rough times awhile ago and it was a struggle for the galleries to stay afloat. I am happy to

say through new ownership and management it is recovering and with renewed artist participation and attendance rising each and every month it is on track to be better than ever.

TF: What is it that motivates you to stay in the Art's District?

EB: I am in love with my role in the Arts District. First Friday is my baby and Event Coordination is never a dull moment. Making our clients event come to life whether it's a baby shower or an all ages block party is the fun part for my team and I. My biggest motivation is our artists; They are the heart and soul of this district and we are working very hard to highlight and expose their presence here in a new way. Every event we host we encourage our clients to incorporate live art whether it's an indoor event or street block party. I am honored to work along side artists that have called The Arts District home for 20+ years and get their input and wisdom on ways we can improve.

LH: It is really important to me to support and stay active in the Arts District because quite frankly it is the heart and soul of the arts community. The Galleries have been there for years through all the ups and downs. I want to help in every way I can to get the awareness out to all of Las Vegas that the galleries are open all week long and also has the greatest variety of amazingly talented artist. The Arts District is so much more than just First Friday.

TF: What do you each see for the future and what are you excited for?

EB: With the growth already happening and plans for the future I see: crowded street's, more block parties outside of First Friday, wine & art festival's, music festival's, beer festivals, cultural festivals, foodie festival's, youth program's, coordinated murals, and so much more. What I want to see is the downtown community to come together and make The Arts District flourish more and more. We have so many possibilities at our finger tips the horizon is endless. I am excited just to be apart of this all and growing more with this culture.

LH: The future of 18B couldn't be better thanks to the hard work of Jonathan Kermani, Erica Bell and the endless work of the galleries to stay fresh and current with the combination of emerging and established artist. The new restaurants, offices and housing will bring new traffic to the area. Having events all month long will not only bring more people to the area, it will help make the 18B Arts District a destination spot for tourism. The exciting part is working with Erica on combining all kinds of art and experiences, whether its our live music concert events or just bringing the community together as a whole for outdoor movie night.

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