



RETAIL AESTHETICS & DESIGN, MORE THAN 1,201 SQUARE FEET

Awarded to the gallery/frameshop with 1,201 square feet or more of retail space with either the most beautiful or well-planned art and framing space



▲ Andy McAfee (left) and Lenny Dolin

When clients enter The Art Shop, the impressive array of art isn't the only thing Gallery Director Andy McAfee is excited to show off. The actual space itself gives him and his colleagues a sense of pride.

"When customers walk

WINNER: The Art Shop
OWNERS: Lenny and Arlene Dolin
LOCATION: Greensboro, N.C.
WEB SITE: www.artshopnc.com

in, we're beaming, and we're proud, and that equates to sales," he says.

He designed the layout from top to bottom in September 1999 and worked daily with contractors on every aspect of the construction until the grand opening in April 2000. The Art Shop acquired the 5,500-square-foot building (3,500 dedicated to the gallery and 1,500 to a production area) after a developer took over the former location and the stores around it.

"We were lucky to have such an opportunity" to start from scratch, says McAfee, who visited about 100 galleries before



coming up with the design.

Today, people travel from all over the United States not only to purchase art, but also to experience the upscale setting.

"There's not another gallery out there that's been built quite like this one," McAfee says.



THE ATRIUM

The most distinctive feature in the gallery is the atrium. The columns and marble floors give patrons the immediate impression that they've entered a fine-art gallery. The Art Shop's most impressive pieces hang from the walls, and the space showcases originals—sometimes even sculptures rotating on the center pedestal—during an event.

THE EXTERIOR

The upscale exterior of The Art Shop promises beauty inside. The saw-tooth-shaped entrance changes up the traditionally flat storefront design. Fourteen-karat gold sig-

nage also makes The Art Shop stand out against nearby stores, most of which feature white lettering.

The building is one story, but the box windows lining the top create the illusion of a second floor. Lights shine through the glass at night, and wreaths add a festive decorative touch during the winter holidays.

Because the gallery is set at an angle, window displays are visible from both directions. Horizontal and vertical walls in the front windows hang by chains in the ceiling, and art changes on them every six months or so. Sculptures are often featured in the spaces as well.

THE LIGHTING

A myriad of lighting (nearly \$1,200 worth of bulbs per year) hangs throughout The Art Shop—striking the right amount of light in the right

places. Halogen lighting (Par 38 120V Flood) hangs in the main gallery, and cool, white fluorescent lighting over the frame counter provides clarity and helps depict colors in certain pieces of art during the design process.

Because there are many window shoppers in the area, lighting for window displays is timed to stay on in the evenings. The gallery's Thomas Kinkadee window features an outdoor dimmer switch to allow passersby to view "The Painter of Light."



The high-end moulding display cases are backlit to make the gold leaf shimmer.



THE GALLERY DESIGN

The Art Shop's walls are carpeted to hide nail holes, and the box weave strikes a contemporary, timeless look. The sitting area features a comfy love seat and armchair, allowing clients to relax while making a decision on a purchase. Freestanding walls allow clients to view art without feeling confined by a small space.

THE SALES COUNTER

The frame counters have inset computers to allow designers to use LifeSaver software without hogging valuable space. The cameras mounted above the counter and the countertop



flat screens give clients a preview of the finished product through Frame Vue software. A slant wall at one end of the counter gives clients a better view of large pieces to be framed.

For designers, cabinets under the counter contain large drawers to store matboard samples and framing materials. The moulding display cases have sliding walls to house at least three times as many samples in the same square footage.

TIP:
 "People purchase the experience. They take the artwork home as a memento."

(all images courtesy of The Art Shop)