

# HAW/CONTEMPORARY

## **Haw Contemporary Starts New Chapter in Gallery Space**

Pete Dulin, KC Magazine, September 11, 2013

Bill Haw shares more about his vision for the gallery that will open on September 13 in the Stockyard District.

Earlier this year, real estate developer Bill Haw assumed ownership of Dolphin, a contemporary art gallery that relocated from the Crossroads Arts District and became an anchor in the flourishing Stockyards District. Rebranded as Haw Contemporary Gallery, the building is another key asset for the steadily developing community in the West Bottoms.

### **Pete Dulin: Tell us about your involvement with real estate in the West Bottoms.**

Bill Haw: My family has been involved in commercial real estate for around twenty years, starting with my father buying and restoring the Livestock Exchange Building in 1992. That building, which was essentially derelict at the time, has now become home to hundreds of artists, entrepreneurs, and charitable organizations, and is a cornerstone of our development in the area.

I got directly involved at the end of 2010, when we bought the Telegram Building at 1505 Genessee. We restored Telegram over a year and a half, and filled it up in mid-2012. The building currently holds Amigoni Urban Winery, Bill Brady Gallery, KEM Studio (architecture and industrial design) and DMH (advertising). It's a great group of people, and we see them as key partners and allies in the development of the Stockyards District.

### **What drove your interest in taking over the Dolphin space?**

The first time I walked in, I felt a powerful connection to the space, and to John O'Brien himself. I had just moved to Kansas City from Tokyo, and the feeling in this space was strangely similar to spaces I loved there. When John announced he was moving on, I initially just wanted to buy the building, and maybe lease it out. But over the next couple of weeks, I came to feel like operating the gallery and trying to build on what John and the community had made was the right thing to do. Sometimes opportunities pop up for a reason.

### **When will the new gallery open?**

The gallery, now called Haw Contemporary, officially changed hands on August 1. Our first show will be September 13.

### **What is happening with the other parts of the business?**

Emily Eddins will continue to work with the gallery, which gives us a huge head start. She has a great eye and knows everybody. Her support has already been crucial, and she'll play a big role in what we do

moving forward.

Archie Scott Gobber is now running the frame shop as a separate business, as is Bruce Bettinger with the printing, but they are still in the building. I'm excited they decided to stick around, and I look forward to continuing the collaboration.

### **Will the emphasis be on local artists or contemporary artists outside KC as well?**

Initially, it will skew toward local and regional artists, but we'll also focus on pulling from farther away in the near future. There is some incredible work out there, and we're excited to stretch things out a little and see what happens. Local or not, it ultimately doesn't matter. It's all about finding what's great, and what fits. I also want to expose the gallery artists to collectors nationally and internationally, and that will be part of the agenda once we understand the smart way to do it.

### **What will you do to give this space its own identity, following in the wake of the iconic Dolphin space?**

Over time we'll define our own aesthetic and way of operating, but it won't happen all at once. We want to honor and respect what's there, and make our choices after careful thought. People will notice that the front room already feels different with everything cleared out, and we're excited about the opportunities the new configuration provides.

I also like the idea of empowering creative people to curate some of the spaces inside the gallery, and you'll see some of that soon. There will be times when we have two or even three shows going on simultaneously, and the additional perspectives will foster multiple dialogues.

### **Who are some of your favorite artists?**

The list shifts all the time, but I have always gravitated to post-war stuff. Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, Richard Diebenkorn, Josef Albers, Frank Stella, Robert Ryman, Helen Frankenthaler, Alex Katz and Andy Warhol have been consistent favorites over the last twenty-five years. Since moving back, my wife and I have collected work by a number of Kansas City artists, mostly through Dolphin. You'll see some of them in the first show.

### **Other thoughts you'd like to share?**

I'd just like to thank all of the people who have been so supportive over the last couple of months. Being able to jump into something like this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it's exhilarating and humbling to work with the artists, collectors, and other people in the community who helped build all of this. We'll try our best to do our part in supporting the creative momentum Kansas City has already achieved.