

PHOTO BY TERRAH BAKER

White Lotus Salon and Massage owner Patricia Kulish, standing in front of her salon, with a backdrop of displayed photos by local artist Cat Donnelly.



White Lotus Offers Artists, Patrons Needed Outlet

By Terrah Baker

For seven years, White Lotus Salon and Massage owner Patricia Kulish has featured monthly a local artist at her location at 4750 E. Mission Blvd. in Fayetteville.

Some are nationally recognized, award-winning artists, while others are just getting started. Either way, Kulish and her team said what's important is they're filling a need for patrons and artists who love and appreciate art.

"I didn't even think when I started this would be a gallery," Kulish said. "My first goal was just to have art on the wall. Then I wanted to have a reception every month. And now we want people to come in just for art."

The need for showrooms like this is evident enough to Kulish in the number of applicant artists she receives. Her small gallery in the entryway of her neatly arranged and decorated salon and spa is booked years in advance, she said. Part of that is because Kulish and her crew don't try to edit the art and will give most artists a chance to show — new, old, advanced or beginner.

"I don't choose them; they show up and choose us. They come to one of our receptions; they meet us. It's somebody's sister or neighbor, and we really don't edit the art," she said.

To help out the artists, Kulish will hold an artist reception at the beginning of each exhibit and help create the layout, information cards and even frame if the artist has no experience in doing it. They take care of the advertising, marketing, collecting money and offer food at the reception. The commission is 30 percent; less, she said, than some galleries because she's

in it to "show support for the artists."

Galleries like this bring in a wide clientele, which has allowed sales of art to stay steady in the last year. From farm boys to soccer moms, Kulish said her customers will become enamored with the art on the walls and have to have a piece.

"What's changed this year is we've sold art every month, and we haven't always done that. Some years we'll have a great month and a slow month and sometimes nothing. This year we've been consistent in sales," Kulish said.

Her experience in an art-driven family is what she attributes to her appreciation of the arts, but it's the spirit of NWA that keeps her passion for helping artists alive.

This month's artist is photographer and writer Cat Donnelly. Donnelly is a graduate of the UofA English/Creative Writing program and has her poetry, short stories and flash fiction published in journals such as the *Lamplighter Review*, *@Urban Magazine* and the *Idle Class*. Her photographs explore thresholds such as garden gates, ruins and aging things in both Arkansas and Ireland. The reception will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 at White Lotus. Donnelly's show will be a combination of photography and poetry, both available for sale.

White Lotus Salon and Massage also offers one-of-a-kind healing and relaxation practices such as acoustic therapy, EFT, hypnotherapy and Reiki. And, of course, they offer all of the beautification practices of other salons and spas, soon to include laser treatment. For more information, and to find out about upcoming and past shows, visit whitelotussalon.com.