

Making the case for artists

Revolving art gallery becomes Baltimore intellectual property law firm's trademark

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The walls of the law office of Goldman & Minton P.C. in Baltimore are adorned with a collection of framed watercolor prints, many featuring wild animals in motion: three monkeys swinging through treetops, an elephant swimming with just the tip of its trunk above the water's edge.

The works are prints of paintings by Peter Collins, a Baltimore County artist who died in 2010 but whose works have become the latest to be displayed in the firm's revolving art gallery. Goldman & Minton's showcase of local art began more than a decade ago, said Kathryn Goldman, an intellectual property attorney and partner at the firm.

"It started because of empty walls in the space we had just moved into at that time, which was down on Redwood Street" in downtown Baltimore, Goldman said. "There were these big empty walls, and the building manager suggested Art Exposure, which is the company that represents all the artists whose work we show."

Ann Wiker, director of Art Exposure, curates artwork for a variety of venues through her organization, which launched in Baltimore in 2000. Some are offices like the firm's, she said, but others are building lobbies, restaurants or retail spaces.

"The one commonality is that they all have a lot of pedestrian traffic," she said.

While some venues take a "hands-off" approach to the works that Art Exposure arranges to be shown in their space, others, including Goldman & Minton, are eager to be involved in the selection process, Wiker said.

"Having the gallery has really become part of the identity of the firm — I represent a lot of artists, a lot of creative folks," Goldman said. "When we took this space [on Union Avenue in Hampden], we were one of the first tenants, and we really had our choice of where we wanted to be in the building."

Artists whose works have appeared recently on the walls of the law firm also include Jeff Cohen, a photographer who has captured Baltimore landmarks such as the Bromo Seltzer Tower and the iconic Domino Sugars sign, as well as Nick Aumiller, a local painter and printmaker.

Common theme

The atmosphere and physical environment of a venue dictate, to some extent, which works will be shown there, Wiker said. At Goldman & Minton, the artwork shown at a particular



MAXIMILIAN FRANZ

'Having the gallery has really become part of the identity of the firm,' says Kathryn Goldman of Goldman & Minton P.C. in Baltimore. The law firm changes its art gallery four times a year, with passersby occasionally buying the pieces.



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The gallery space at Goldman & Minton P.C. in Baltimore currently features the work of the late Peter Collins, a Baltimore County artist.



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KATHRYN GOLDMAN, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ATTORNEY AND PARTNER AT GOLDMAN & MINTON

time needs to have a common theme, since much of the display space is visible as soon as clients enter the office, and multiple works will be grouped together.

On the other hand, a venue with an "industrial chic" design featuring exposed duct work and high walls would be a fitting spot to display contempo-

rary art, she said. Wellness or massage centers that wish to show art frequently prefer abstract art over figurative works featuring people, since the aim is for their clients to disconnect from the world around them, she added.

At Goldman & Minton, the artwork is changed four times a year, Goldman said. Reactions from clients and other

building tenants to the office gallery have varied, she said, but a number of works have been sold to people who happened to pass by and admire a particular piece.

"That's the hope, in terms of the benefit to the artist," Wiker said.

Goldman & Minton itself has purchased several pieces. Because Goldman and her law partner, Thomas J. Minton, occasionally practice maritime law — and Minton represents the Maryland Port Administration — the firm bought a painting by Aumiller of a tugboat viewed from Clinton Street in Baltimore, Goldman said.

"That kind of spoke to us in terms of our legal practice," she said. "We have some beautiful pieces — if it strikes us, we buy it."

But in broader terms, the concept of an office art gallery also ties into Goldman's intellectual property practice, where she helps writers, photographers and other artists protect their creative works, particularly in the online sphere.

"What's happened now with the developments in technology is that artists are able to really grow viable businesses, because they can get their art out there and there are mechanisms to help them sell their art online," Goldman said, "but their art becomes open and at risk for online content theft and infringement, so I work with artists to teach them how to protect their online work, how to monitor their portfolio and how to enforce their rights."