



a transformative collaboration

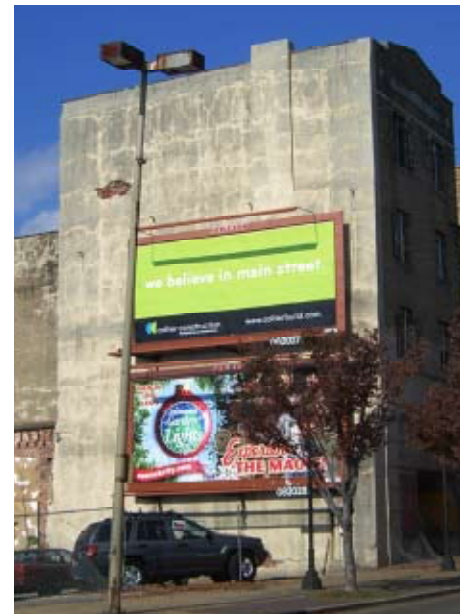
Mosey, Myers and Collier Team Up for iGNiS Glass Build-Out



Photo by Erick Anderson

The Main Street transformation embodies the spirit of Chattanooga; with clover overtaking the Rossville Avenue sidewalk and dilapidated buildings peppering the scenery, the new businesses, renovated homes, and We Believe In Main Street signs portray a spirit of community that is not only obvious, but inspiring. The persistent and inevitable revitalization has tiptoed onto the 1800th block of Rossville Avenue where a 40,000 square foot structure houses artists, entrepreneurs, and local businesses. One of the newest and perhaps most interesting residences is the iGNiS Glass Studio, where artist Christopher Mosey will feature his remarkable glass sculptures.

For most glass blowers, a studio in which customers and employees can all comfortably share in the same artistic experience would seem implausible. With two 3,000 degree furnaces, the impossibility of people browsing among the glass sculptures while watching the process was for six years, Mosey's dilemma. But that was before he moved his studio into the ramshackle 5,000 square foot space on Rossville Avenue and was introduced to Eric Myers, principal architect of Elemi architects. Myers saw beyond the rudimentary warehouse space to share Mosey's vision for transparen-



cy and openness. And only 7 months after Collier Construction signed on, the studio is operational and being prepared for its grand opening.

Perhaps artist Terry Cannon of Loose Cannon Studios should be credited for the artistic vision that has become 1800 Rossville Ave. Having two years ago bought the warehouse that now houses his own studio, it has been his aim "to create a community of creative people who work along side one another," explains Mosey. However, it was the shared vision and collaboration between Mosey, Myers and Collier Construction that ultimately led to what is now iGNiS Glass—

good.



Photo by Erick Anderson

an impressive 3-in-1 anomaly that includes a hot shop side for glass blowing and sculpting, a cold shop for grinding glass sculptures, and offices and a showroom for on-site sales. Such a marriage is not only improbable, explains Myers, but also a quandary for architects and builders who have to meet various building codes while creating a comfortable open space.

As for Myers, his philosophy is to stay clear of the mundane, so the problem with controlling heat while opening up the space was the kind of challenge he thrives for. While

he has drawn plans for a number of art studios, this was the first time Myers ever encountered a multi-use space with drastically varying temperatures and environments as well as industrial sized equipment all of which require either electrical lines, gas, water or all three. Darnell Bice, project superintendent for Collier Construction adds, "The biggest challenge was coordinating the project between electricians, plumbers and inspectors. What people do not realize is the amount of equipment and the kind of energy it takes to work with glass like Chris does."

good.

For Collier, it is all about taking on the new. He explains, “What it comes down to is that we love to build. We love the science behind what makes these kinds of studios work. We love the art of taking an Architect’s rendering and making it a real structure for people to enjoy. We love learning new systems and mastering them. And most of all, we love working for people.”

Mosey certainly loves his new studio, and it is certain that shoppers will love it too. As Myers says, “The idea for the space was to allow as many people as possible see Chris do what he does.” With this aim in mind, Myers set out to use many windows and windowed doors that allow bystanders, customers and employees to have full view of Mosey at work. The inside gallery wall features windows that look into the hot shop, an elongated factory style room whose 18 ft. ceilings and cinderblock walls accommodate the industrial sized equipment. “From the beginning, it was clear to me that Chris is adamant about his process. He works in a very linear progression, and he wanted the studio to accommodate that process,” says Myers.

It was Mosey’s goal to have a comfortable, yet fluid area, which explains how the studio is simultaneously divided up and opened up. The front of the studio serves as a good example with a glass garage door accompanying the gallery entrance—that is, anyone walking by on the street can look into the hot shop through a garage door comprised of large glass panes. And if you pay attention, you will see that an identi-

cal garage door encloses the far end of the studio. Even the office area, kitchen and shipping room are left undivided with windows and windowed doors drawing your attention to the hot shop where Mosey’s extraordinary glass sculptures are first shaped and formed. Having seen Mosey blow glass, Bice says that “anyone visiting Loose Cannon will want to stop and watch him work from the sidewalk. His business will be derived from people shopping in that area.”

And for Mosey it is all about being able to open the front and back garage doors to let a breeze through while he cools off on the back patio. And though the studio opens up a comfortable working environment, it is the basement that has become the symbol of transformation. Having been flooded and in disrepair, the basement has become a clean and comfortable storage space. “It is the one room that surprises me the most. I can’t believe how nice it is now compared to how it was when I bought the space,” Mosey reveals.

Likewise, the collaboration between Mosey, Myers and Collier serves to capture the kind of transformation Main Street has seen over the past two years. The Chattanooga community has been continually surprised by the development of downtown’s south side, and the iGNiS Glass Studio reminds us of what can happen when artists and businesses team up to share the same vision for Chattanooga. Says Mosey, “After going through all of this, I consider Eric a good friend. And Darnell is a saint.”



Photo by Erick Anderson

good.

making collier work

Ethan Collier

Last year this time I was preparing to leave the country for eight weeks to adopt our son Caleb. Since my arrival home, many people have asked me how things went with Collier Construction while I was gone. I have realized that people are really asking, “How could the company survive with the owner out of the country for so long?” Before leaving, I asked myself the same question—how? How would the customers feel about it, how would the employees respond, how would the company continue bringing in contracts? But quickly, I remembered why I hired



Dylan Terney Photo by David Brumgard

the individuals who work for Collier.

Some people are surprised to hear that I was able to leave and everything be okay; those people typically don't know Collier Construction very well. This is a unique company—it is what it is because of the people who work for it—not because of me. Numerous times I recall the days when the company was just me and one other guy. And to be completely honest, it really wasn't very good. But don't get me wrong; we worked hard, and I tried to make it a great company. And over the past six years I have added the staff of over 30 individuals who have made Collier Construction a great company.

Simply put, a company is not successful if the whole thing is riding on the shoulders of one individual. That is why one of my goals is to hire individuals who are all stakeholders in the success of this company. These people have become representatives of the company, not representatives of me. Collier Construction is an idea, a really good idea if you ask me. And as these individuals have embraced the idea, the company has experienced the kind of success that allows me to leave the country.

While it often seems that growing companies become impersonal, as Collier grows, we continue to build on our customer service. That is, we

believe in face to face relationships that last as long as the home. And while I never get a chance to meet some of our clients, I know that they are working with the most personable construction workers in Chattanooga. The bottom line is that I don't carry this company alone, and that is a good thing. It has allowed me to concentrate my efforts on building Collier Construction and attending to its needs instead of always supervising projects or overseeing operations.

We have successfully estimated and managed entire projects without my personal involvement. iGNiS Glass is a perfect example. Jason and Matthew estimated the project while I was out of the country, and Darnell managed the project. I saw the project completed for the first time at the “Pallet to Pallet Tour.” When Chris Mosey, owner of iGNiS Glass, hired us, he didn't hire me, he hired Collier.

So, while it may seem strange for me to have never met Chris Mosey, it is perhaps an indication of how good our employees really are. I know that Collier Construction's staff is the best in town. I want to thank them for carrying this company and allowing me to leave the country for eight weeks. This company would not be a success without you.