

Up Front Art Space: So much more than an art gallery.



Kay Phelps
Owner/Framer/
Restorer

Mystye Gorgan
Manager and
Merchandiser

What were you doing before you started Up Front Art Space?

Mystye: Starting other businesses. After leaving my first profession, social work, I started my first business so I could go back to school. That happened to be an online clothing store. This was before Amazon, and there were not many online clothing stores. After obtaining a degree in English Literature, I decided to get a Masters in Library and Information Sciences and then started my next adventure as a Bibliographic/Citation Editor.

Kay: I started a side business taking photos of local bands and doing layouts and minor graphic design work almost right out of high school. That evolved into selling at craft shows and pop-up art festivals. Up Front Art Space was always a side project while I worked full time, first as a framer, then in the artwork disaster recovery industry, and then in a commercial photo studio.

As a business owner, what is one thing you never imagined yourself doing?

Mystye: Convincing amazing artists that their work is good enough to hang in an art gallery.

Kay: Accounting! I struggle with the books and I always

thought I would pay someone to handle that, but that hasn't worked out yet!

You had the vision to start your business. What is something that defines your vision for tomorrow?

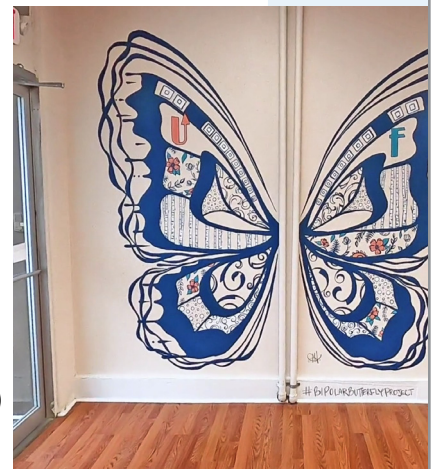
Mystye: Education is very important to me and I would like to get even more involved with the CFHS arts program as well as offer an Up Front Art Space Scholarship to a graduating Senior. I would like to be more involved with community art events. Physical accessibility to art is another area I would like to see us grow in, and be able to provide 360° view walkthroughs of all our shows.

Kay: We want to establish a permanent and enduring presence in our community. We want buyers to know they can find quality pieces of art, framing solutions that work for them, and that they can count on us to provide exceptional customer service. And we want to make the art gallery experience available and accessible to demographic groups that are typically underrepresented in the art world, such as women of color and ethnic and religious minorities.

What's the most ridiculous fact you know?

Mystye: William Shakespeare, in his will, left his wife his second best bed.

Kay: I know exactly how much a buttload is.



(cont.)

UP FRONT ART SPACE | 127 Portage Trail, Cuyahoga Falls



Up Front Art Space

What made you choose CF for your business?

Mystye: Actually, CF chose me. When Kay approached me about the business, the location and space had already been obtained. As soon as I saw the space and walked down Front Street, I knew it was the right place for us.
Kay: My friends and I used to dream about when we were older how cool it would be to have an art gallery in one of these old buildings. A friend of mine owned a shop down here and I contracted framing and restoration through his store. Another building owner saw my cards there and contacted me out of the blue about renting a space they had available as an art gallery. The timing was perfect, and thus Up Front Art Space was born.



What do you like best about living/working in CF?

What are your hobbies and interests?

Mystye: I love the people, the artists and fellow business owners of Cuyahoga Falls. From day one we have been shown amazing support and it was so appreciated during this extremely tough year. I read and write science fiction novels. Well, I used to when I had more time; I will eventually get back to doing that.

Kay: I love love love the community in CF. The people and the DTCF business community welcomed us with open arms and have stuck by us throughout the pandemic. We are extremely grateful for that. I'm a giant nerd and I like history, researching unsolved murders, bad movies, sci-fi, seeing live music, art, and travel.

Is there a story behind your business name?

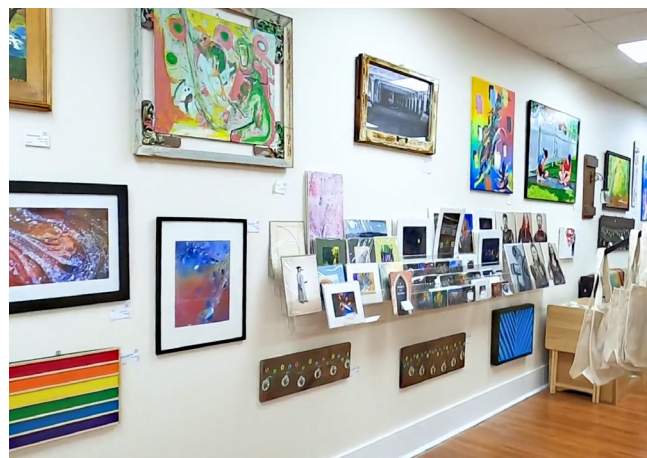
Mystye: A fellow Business owner suggested our name because (at the time) we were upstairs on Front Street. We loved the name, so we used it.

What product/service should everyone try at Up Front Art Space?

One of our top sellers is LED Luminary Lanterns by the Cleveland company Modgy. They are eco friendly, safe, and pretty.

Mystye: Photo Restoration. If our customers are like me, they have old photos that mean a lot to them but have been damaged over time. We can save and preserve the photo and the cost is extremely reasonable. We also offer art restoration.

Kay: Framing! Almost everyone has something they



All photography by Black Dog Photo Co.

want framed—from family photos to giant paintings or the weird stuff. We can frame it all and we'll work within customers' budgets to find the best solution.

What's something that drives you crazy?

Mystye: Misophonia - the sound of someone chewing food, which drives me crazy.

Kay: I have an irrational anger toward sharks.

What's something that people may not know about you?

Mystye: I helped transcribe the diaries of Mary Franklin and Hannah Burton. The diaries were written in 1689 and 1782. I love *Dr. Who* and named two cats in honor of it: Doctor Mew and Stormageddon.

Kay: I helped restore a Greek Orthodox cathedral ceiling. I'm kind of obsessed with the Knights Templar and Holy Grail stories. ■

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