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## Home and Garden Show builds in local artwork

Written By: Chelsey Ewen      Feb 18th 2019 - 8am.



Choice Bank previously worked with Moorhead artist Ashley Kunz when launching its #SupportLocalArt debit cards last year. The bank is teaming up with Kunz again by displaying her artwork during the Red River Valley Home and Garden Show. Choice Bank / Special to The Forum

FARGO — When designing your dream home, there's a long laundry list of items to shop for like countertops,

cabinets, flooring and furniture. The options can be overwhelming, but every decision made along the way brings you one step closer to creating a home that reflects you as an individual, a couple or a family.

An integral part of the design process is choosing which artwork to display. Often these decisions are made well after the home's infrastructure is complete, but what if you could shop for original art at the same time you shop for doorknobs and light fixtures? The Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead explores this idea at the 58th annual Red River Valley Home and Garden Show, set for this weekend at the Fargodome, by incorporating local art in its exhibits.

Founded in 1956, the HBA represents 940 businesses in the industry. The show is an annual event for these professionals to showcase their products and services for consumers under one roof. Bryce Johnson, CEO of the HBA, says the organization has wanted to include local art in the show for a long time and is excited to get the initiative off the ground this year.

"For the Home and Garden Show, we want to make sure we offer a comprehensive palette of options for what goes into a home," Johnson says. "Having local art there adds to the warmth and the local connection. It's a natural fit."

The association sent out a call for artists through The Arts Partnership and connected 10 artists who responded to vendors interested in displaying art. Choice Bank and Skapa Design embraced the opportunity in its inaugural year.

Choice Bank chose Ashley Kunz, a Moorhead artist who specializes in bright, abstract paintings. The bank collaborated with Kunz when it launched its limited edition series of #SupportLocalArt debit cards last year. Kunz is one of three North Dakota artists with art featured on the cards.

"Choice Bank is a proud supporter of the local arts in our community," says Amy Linstaedt, mortgage loan originator at the bank. "When the Home and Garden Show presented the idea of promoting local artists' work, we knew it was a great fit for us."

Kunz adds that incorporating local art in events like the Home and Garden Show “gives people who might not ever step foot in a gallery a chance to see the amazing work our local artists are creating in a less formal setting than a gallery.” “(It) also helps people realize that having original artwork is something that is attainable to everyone,” says Kunz.



Skapa Design's booth at the Home and Garden Show features a neutral abstract piece by Fargo artist Nancy Ness. Nancy Ness / Special to The Forum

Skapa Design is exhibiting artwork by Nancy Ness, a local artist who also specializes in abstract work using heavy acrylic paints and a palette knife. Sara Bekkerus, principal designer of Skapa Design, says she loves to work with local artists “whenever possible” and knew her booth “could benefit from the addition of an art piece,” which is why the company jumped at the chance.

“I immediately thought of (Nancy) because she is a friend, (but) also because she generally paints in a more modern and abstract style which fits very well with my personal design aesthetic,” Bekkerus adds.

Although she usually paints with bright colors, Ness is creating a piece specifically for the Home and Garden Show with “neutral colors with metallic gold,” she says. The artist adds that the opportunity is “great exposure,” as she has only been painting seriously for two years.

All artwork will be for sale at the Home and Garden Show. After this year, the HBA hopes the partnership between local artists and the community of homebuilders continues to grow, Johnson says.

“I’m excited to see this happen,” she says. “It’s one more thing to help us complete what will be a total package for the consumer.”



Skapa Design will be one of dozens of industry professionals at the Red River Valley Home and Garden Show this weekend. Skapa Design / Special to The Forum

## If you go

**What:** 58th annual Red River Valley Home and Garden Show

**When:** 3 to 9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24

**Where:** Fargodome, 1800 N. University Drive

**Info:** \$6 in advance or \$10 at the door; [www.hbafm.com](http://www.hbafm.com)

*This article is part of a content partnership with The Arts Partnership, a nonprofit organization cultivating the arts in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo. For more information, visit <http://theartspartnership.net>.*



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