

Paint and sip your heart out

Anyone can paint. Creation has no rules and no limits, which is why it is possible for anyone to create art. More often than not it just takes confidence in oneself to do so. This confidence can be found at Not Your Average Paint and Sip located here in Cincinnati.

A space to create, drink, dance and enjoy time with others is found at Not Your Average Paint and Sip in OTR at the Pendleton Art Center. This building has been standing since 1909 and is home to the largest amount of artists under one roof. James Reynolds, owner and instructor of Not Your Average Paint and Sip has a studio on the fourth floor of this art center where he conducts his classes.

In studio 400a, beautiful things happen. Painting classes are held where people can come together to drink and create art that they never imagined themselves creating. There are a number of different types of classes offered here. This includes private classes, party and group classes, special events, corporate offerings and sponsored events. Prices vary depending on the type of class one would like to take.

Reynolds instructs these classes on his own with knowledge he has gained from his previous years as an art teacher. However, if the party or group size reaches larger than 20, Reynolds has a helping hand to ensure the class runs smoother.

A wide range of celebrations take place at Not Your Average Paint and Sip. Date nights, girls night out and bachelorette parties are the most popular attendees.

One aspect that changes the whole vibe includes the ability to hire a drag queen for the parties. This adds a whole new level of fun as the night of painting and sipping can turn into a fun party with special performances and great ambiance.

These classes are instructed by Reynolds himself, "I approach it as though no one has an understanding of anything," Reynolds said.

The class starts with an educational approach where Reynolds teaches the patrons about what the class will entail. For group classes, this includes background information on the artist of the month as each month features a new artist.

The first round of drinks is served almost immediately after entering the studio. There is a delightful selection of wines from Market Wines located at Findlay Market. Reynolds said that here is, "arguably the best manhattan you will ever get in your life." Newcomers should expect a full bar and any drink of their choice.

As people begin to drink and education starts to flow, time passes and the time to create has arrived. Everyone is advised to find a work space within the studio which are already set up with

a canvas, an artist palette, water for brushes and practice paper. All other supplies needed are common ground and are located in this middle of the studio.

As Reynolds puts it this is “more of a one on one exploration.” Those who need assistance on a certain technique they are trying out will receive one on one help. Reynolds will scope the room and lend a helping hand when needed with expert advice to make the art piece the best it can be.

For many adults, it can be intimidating to try something new. We decide what we are good at and what we cannot do and stick to doing the things we are good at. Not Your Average Paint and Sip challenges people to step out of their comfort zone.

Based on my personal experience, I felt what it was like to step out of my comfort zone and try something new. I attended Not Your Average Paint and Sip by myself one Friday evening. I participated in the group class where several other patrons joined me for a night of creation.

I was immediately taken back by the beautiful aesthetic in the studio and knew right away that the vibes were going to be good. Before the education began Reynolds served me my cocktail of choice, Vodka Cranberry, and served the rest of the crowd too.

How enticing it is to learn something with a drink in your hand. That week we focused on Gustav Klimt's work and studied his technique. Ideas began to flow as the educational slideshow was in the works.

As the beginning portion of the class came to an end, we were instructed to find a workspace that as previously mentioned, was completely ready for us with the supplies that we needed.

Reynolds gave us time to trace our photos, fill in the background and time to paint. This structure helped everyone stay on task and not fall behind as the class is limited to three hours and a portion of that is spent learning. Wonderful tunes were playing the entire time and the energy was fulfilling.

Our class had the pleasure of being in the presence of guns, Reynolds chihuahua. Guns was a wonderful addition to the class and sat on my lap as I finished my art piece. I was pleased with my art piece that I created. I did surprise myself for my painting came out better than I had expected.

I would recommend Not Your Average Paint and Sip to anyone especially those who believe they cannot paint because this space allows yourself to surprise yourself and I think that is the best part of it all.