



## STUFF

Kansas City, MO/3 employees

Owners: **S. Sloane Simmons & Casey Simmons**

"Not all talk at STUFF is serious or just about art. We want to maintain a conversation here at all times."

— S. SLOANE SIMMONS



Photo courtesy of David Riffle Photography

Casual Friday afternoon gatherings to allow artist friends to showcase and sell their work while friends gathered for snacks and drinks morphed into Stuff, a specialty shop in Brookside that still showcases art—but in a much broader setting.

The first showing happened when a friend of Casey and Sloane Simmons asked the sisters if they would host a show of her paintings. Both living in small urban digs, they decided their office in the River Market with big white walls would be ideal. They invited some friends and it was a huge success.

"We allowed the artist to place the value on the art. And it would sell—all of it. We did it four or five times and decided it could be something more," Sloane Simmons said.

Both women were ready for a change and decided it was a great idea for a store. The initial idea was that they would have one-person shows or group shows on an occasional basis. They found a space on 47th Street west of the Plaza. But after

about six months the Simmons knew they needed to rethink the idea.

"We learned there is no job you just go to occasionally," said Sloane.

Stuff moved to a location in Westport with more foot traffic. The store remained there until moving to its present larger space five years ago.

The original plan was to feature handmade items from local artists. But some Kansas City-based artists that Stuff was working with would send their friends from outside the city to sell their work at the shop, Sloane said. Today all of the merchandise is creatively made, but it is not limited to local artists.

The store is intended to be friendly to browsers.

"We didn't want to be a traditional gallery. We wanted it to feel much like it does now—colorful, bright, happy. Not all talk at Stuff is serious or just about art. We want to maintain a conversation here at all times. It's just like your home," Sloane said.