

Broad Reach

MEMShop model moves to Broad Avenue.

by [CHRIS SHAW](#)

Art won't be the only thing on display at the Broad Avenue Art Walk this Friday, as three MEMShop-sponsored pop-up storefronts will open their doors for the first time.

Five-in-One Social Club, NJ Woods Gallery and Design, and My Heavenly Creations will open their doors on Friday evening. Fitting with the overall theme of Broad Street as an arts district, each new business will sell locally made products, ranging from sculptures and paintings to bath bombs and T-shirts. The shops will remain open until September 30th.

MEMShop is the retail initiative of the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team's broader MEMFix campaign, which serves as a vehicle for revitalizing three target neighborhoods. One of those neighborhoods is the Broad Avenue/Binghampton area.

Broad Avenue actually served as a bit of inspiration for MEMFix, which was partially modeled after "New Face for an Old Broad," a two-day festival hosted by Broad business owners in 2010.

Since MEMFix kicked off last November, it has been responsible for setting the stage for the Crosstown neighborhood's revitalization and, earlier this month, promoting local business around the University of Memphis. While MEMFix helps revitalize neighborhoods, MEMShop provides consumers with a new place to shop while supporting local small business owners.

Abby Miller, program director for the Mayor's Innovation Delivery Team, said the idea of what MEMshop can do for a neighborhood has grown significantly since the first MEMShop event in Overton Square in December.

"MEMFix is more about looking at how to activate a neighborhood. We look at things like street design and what's possible as more of a one-day or one-weekend event," Miller said. "MEMShop started as pop-up retail, and now it's morphed into a retail incubator where businesses will be here [on Broad Avenue] for six months."

Miller said she was surprised that more than 30 local businesses applied for the three MEMShop spaces available on Broad, in part because it was the first long-term project that MEMShop has done.

But it's not hard to see how the perks of being a MEMShop retailer would attract local business owners. Owners sign a six-month lease, and the first three months of rent are free. Then they're only responsible for paying a portion of the rent during the last three months. Those picked for a MEMShop on Broad Avenue also receive free business advice from Alt Consulting on topics ranging from marketing training to financial projection.

"These businesses get a lot of additional customized business support services that many of them can't afford otherwise. Many small businesses can't afford to have a consultant to work one-on-one with them, but we're giving them access to all these things to hopefully make them more successful in the long run," said Cynthia Norwood, managing director for Alt Consulting. "Even if, when the six-month lease is up, they decide to move on, the property owner has an increased value of space and extra foot traffic coming by."

Historic Broad Business Association board member and T Clifton Gallery owner Tom Clifton said he's thrilled to be a part of MEMShop's latest project.

"We are very excited to have the [new] businesses on this street," Clifton said. "I've been on this street for four years, and there were people on this street for many years who have been hanging on by their nails. Things have slowly started to improve around here."

As for the new businesses on Broad Avenue, Clifton joked, "We're not letting them leave."

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Five-in-One Social Club's pop-up shop on Broad Avenue

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