

[ABOUT TOWN] GALLERY



NOW SHOWING

Far out!

On the walls of the **PSYCHEDELIC ART EXCHANGE** in Hampden hang framed posters in lime green, neon pink and electric blue bearing trippy images of faces, fingerprints, eyes and skulls.

These are advertisements for iconic '60s bands such as The Doors, the Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix— but they're also art. One poster promoting Big Brother and the Holding Co. (Janis Joplin's backing band) features a tree bubbling with eyes. Another poster featuring a mauve-skinned woman with electric green hair advertises a concert featuring the Jim Kweskin Jug Band and Big Brother and the Holding Co. Some of the posters don't appear at first glance to be advertisements at all. A pen and ink sketch of military medals actually contains information for a concert featuring Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead and Fleetwood Mac as text on the medals.

"The whole point of the gallery is that you really need to view this art to appreciate it," said Glen Trosch, co-owner of the gallery, which opened in November. Trosch has been a collector for as long as he can remember, collecting comics and, later, memorabilia. He discovered '60s rock posters as a result of his musical interests— as a huge Grateful Dead fan, he saw the artist that went into the ads and was instantly hooked.

Trosch teamed up with Scott Tilson, whom he'd met originally in third grade but only recently reconnected with, to cre-

ate the Art Exchange. Tilson owns one of the world's largest collectible postage stamp companies, and has built a renowned rare coin collection (worth more than \$10 million), as well. Now Tilson, who lives in Park City, Utah, has joined Trosch in collecting '60s rock posters. "It's a compelling body of work," Trosch says. Most of the posters were produced in relatively small quantities, which increases their value.

The Art Exchange began as an online store, offering posters for sale, as well as certified authentication and grading. "The grading and certification process is a real focus of ours," says Trosch, who runs the day-to-day operation of the gallery. "With every other collectibles market, there is already a set grading scale. The absence of that in the psychedelic poster market offered us the ability to build from the ground up.

"The gallery idea itself developed very organically," he adds. Though the site was originally intended as an office, Trosch noticed the high ceilings provided ample wall space, proposed the idea of the gallery and, with the landlord's blessing, it was born.

"We really want to bring this market out of the shadows," says Trosch. "These posters are not only aesthetically beautiful, but are immensely historically important, as well. The '60s were a brilliant creative period. They left a massive footprint."

—Rachael Mueller
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