
LAS VEGAS SUN

PEOPLE IN THE ARTS:

No regrets when surrounded by art



Sam Morris

Beate Kirmse, who came to Las Vegas from New York, is credited with reestablishing the reputation of the Contemporary Arts Center in only a year.

By [Kristen Peterson](#)

Mon, Dec 15, 2008 (2 a.m.)

Name: Beate Kirmse

Age: 44

Title: Executive director of the Contemporary Arts Center. Creator of the online gallery, Beate Kirmse Fine Art Projects

Education: University of Stuttgart, business and computer major; New York University, certificate in arts administration

Why Vegas? Kirmse's move to Vegas was part of a leap into the art world after a successful career as a business consultant in New York City. Born in a small town outside of Stuttgart, Germany, she took interest in the arts at an early age, but mainly as a patron, visiting museums from time to time. She moved to the United States in 1998 and eventually landed in New York City, where she spent a lot of time discussing business strategies, software implementation, cost competitiveness.

Eventually, Kirmse enrolled in New York University to get a certificate in arts administration. She gradually tapped into the very competitive New York art world, working with New York Arts magazine and a small gallery.

She quit her corporate job, gave up her Upper West Side apartment (a block from Central Park) and began the almost impossible quest for a cheap apartment in Manhattan. A friend in Vegas offered her a place to stay if she felt like moving West. Kirmse arrived in August 2007. By September, she was working at the nonprofit Contemporary Arts Center and faced with the task of piecing back together the nearly 20-year-old organization, which had become slightly tarnished because of lack of professionalism. Kirmse is credited with building the center back to its original state in just one year. The center has been opened to a broader audience, offers artist lectures and mixes work by local artists with that of out-of-town artists.

Concerned that Las Vegas artists were having a hard time getting noticed, she decided to start a Web gallery, Beate Kirmse Fine Art Projects, which will launch in January and feature artists Aaron Sheppard, Barret Thomson, Erik Gecas, Grayson Ronk and Zak Ostrowski.

She also curates the common space at the Arts Factory and recently partnered with UNLV-based Vagus Nerve magazine to feature works by students in the Arts Factory's common area.

Regrets? "No regrets. I hardly make any money, but I love what I do. I'm surrounded by artists and art."

Arts in Vegas: "The city grew really, really fast. It still has, in many senses, a small-town feel. The culture and curiosity has not caught up with growth. It's a shame it's not all there. I'm concerned that there are good artists here that don't get the recognition from people in this community."

Favorite medium: Mixed media collage

Favorite artists: Richard Prince, Cy Twombly

Interests: Travel. People's stories, particularly on their move to Vegas. "Everybody here has such a different story on how they ended up here."

Sticking around? "I don't think this will be my final destination. I still haven't found my final destination. Maybe I'll go back to the East Coast."

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By [LVPaco](#)

12/15/08 at 9 a.m.

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Beate is one of the finest people I know and she has brought great stability and leadership to the Contemporary Arts Center. We love Beate and no we are never going to let you go!

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