

# [Student Financial Review](#)

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Campus Celebrity »](#)
- [Career Chat »](#)
- [Job Postings](#)
- [Local Business »](#)
- [Student Leader Feed »](#)
- [Opinions »](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

## **Alfa Art**

*Student Financial Review* reporter Bart V. Gallo sat down with Hristiyan Kourtev, treasurer and Assistant director for Alfa Art Gallery.

Alfa Art Gallery in downtown New Brunswick first opened its doors in 2008 as a simple way to meet the needs of the local artistic culture. With generous grants and increasing support from students and passionate art enthusiasts, the gallery now hosts events, exhibitions, concerts and various educational art programs.

Art exhibitions are the primary focus but Alfa Art Gallery serves the artistic community in other ways as well.

“We have comedy shows every other week,” said Kourtev, whose father Vesselin and mother Galina own the gallery.

Alfa Art functions as not only a gallery for visual art exhibition, but also a venue for other forms of artistic expression.

Kourtev explained that the gallery’s services include but are not limited to holding exhibitions for photography, sculpture and painting and holding musical performances. Additionally, many artists and corporate employees rent gallery space to hold corporate meetings or shoot video scenes (in the case of artists).

Alfa Art also offers classes taught by Vesselin Kourtev, Gallery Director and practicing visual artist.

Although the Kourtev family directs the company mission, Alfa Art has also hired a managing curator.

“[The curator] writes exhibition press releases, communicates with featured artists and collects necessary documentation such as portfolios and artistic statements, and introduces artists at exhibitions,” Hristiyan Kourtev said.

In addition to the curator, Alfa Art Gallery has three interns who aid in the daily tasks that come with running an art gallery.

“Interns are a very important part of our business,” he said.

Much of the interns' work focuses on promoting the company image. Associated tasks range from public relations to advertisement and marketing. One of the most important jobs assigned to an intern is to draft grant proposals so that the gallery can receive funding for new programs.

Alfa Art Gallery held its 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition in early March, featuring an eclectic mix of abstract artists. Jeffrey Wexler, a retired curator for the Zimmerli Art Museum hosted the event where frequent musical guest New World Order performed.

The gallery, on April 13, began a solo exhibition featuring the multi-media work of Gallery Director Vesselin Kourtev. Mid-April marked the submission deadline for the gallery's *Call for Artists*, a multi-categorized judged art competition which their website describes as "a juried show for emerging and professional artists."

Kourtev describes the gallery as "happening," but says that any promotion of the gallery is key to gaining new sponsors for grants and funding. He describes a new program called "The News" which consists of interns promoting local art and cultural events. This provides information for the community and gives the interns public speaking and marketing experience at the same time.

He also said that creating excitement is another important goal of running a successful art gallery.

"We want to have live art performances, such as building a very long canvas and having multiple artists work on it in person," said Kourtev.

The Kourtev family is working to increase grant funding in order to maintain a dynamic exhibition and fill its annual calendar with more artistic and cultural events. In the future, Alfa Art Gallery hopes to branch off into more services for its customers, hold new and exciting events and establish a larger group of frequent visitors by synchronizing itself with the local artistic culture.

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« Previous events | Next events »

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M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<a href="#">22</a>	23	24	<a href="#">25</a>	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

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