

HED: Strawberry Hill Rising as a New Art Hub on the West Side of State Line

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We know the tagline: “I’m from Kansas City — the Missouri side.” It’s like somehow we had the universal agreement that the Missouri side is the cooler side: when the Kansas side has just as much to offer if you know where to look.

For example: have you been to Strawberry Hill lately?

Not so far from the beloved West Bottoms, the Strawberry Hill neighborhood has been a hidden gem known to locals for decades. Overlooking the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers from the bluffs, Strawberry Hill offers plenty of things to do. Get your hands muddy with a pottery class at [Epic Clay](#) or sip on some coffee at Kinship Cafe; stop by Flagship and grab the first book that catches your eye, or head to the Easy Inn for a live performance. Diverse and vibrant at its core, Strawberry Hill’s well-developed ecosystem makes it a natural incubator for development and evolution.

Therefore, it’s no surprise to see Strawberry Hill rising the creative tides on the west side of the state line, quickly emerging into an art hub attracting local, regional, and national artists and art projects.

Pioneering the neighborhood’s developing artistic identity are the many creative spaces, constantly thinking of new ways to engage with the community. From exhibitions to pop-up markets, book signings, open mic, and live music, these establishments look beyond mere transactional values and focus on exposing residents and visitors to various art forms while continually educating and developing themselves.

“Now that we are in a bigger space, I’m planning to do poetry workshops. I want to keep doing the craft nights, but maybe some sort of painting/poetry night where

people can play with art while listening to poetry. I want to keep doing creative things with our space,” says Joel Melgren, owner of [Flagship Bookstore](#).

In the meantime, the creative spaces also create opportunities for various artists at different career stages and backgrounds, exposing the community to forwarding ideas and fresh perspectives. Therefore, if you thought Strawberry Hill would just be another arts & crafts scene, think twice because the neighborhood and its artists are ambitious and committed to pushing the local art scene to a higher level of maturity and professionalism.

For the first time on the west side of State Line after the pandemic, we see a strong dedication to curatorship. Instead of simply putting art on the wall, more thoughts are invested in the conceptualization process, creating the narrative behind each exhibition. Furthermore, knowing the community is still in its early stage of developing an artistic identity, these organizations do not hesitate when external expertise is needed for inspiration.

“We went to Midway Art Fair in Chicago, and many were excited to hear what we had to say about Kansas City’s art scene. So we decided to create this Curator in Resident program to bring in outside voices to promote the art scene already happening in Kansas City,” says Sam Haan, co-curator at [Curiouser KC](#).

In addition, Strawberry Hill’s community-centric culture also makes it the perfect cultivating ground for a potentially groundbreaking art scene in the Midwest.

Simply look at the Third Friday Art Walk as an example. Started in 2022 as a way to rebuild the community after the pandemic’s financial impact, the Art Walk has since been one of the most popular events in the neighborhood. Attracting artists, performers, businesses, and food vendors, Strawberry Hill knows how to leverage art to rebuild connections after the pandemic.

“When the Art Walk started, it was the first time I felt like I really lived in the community. It makes me feel connected with the people and also the