

# Doing business

Despite opposition from pro-life groups, Ringling College is building the Rosemary District's new Planned Parenthood facility.



**GOT IT MADE:** The future home of madeby, Ringling College's new gallery

After months of waiting and speculation, construction is finally underway on the ground floor retail space at the new Planned Parenthood headquarters on north Central Avenue. The vacant storefront will soon be transformed into madeby, a gallery featuring an eclectic assortment of one-of-a-kind and limited-edition works created by students and alumni of Ringling College of Art and Design. Although merchants in the Rosemary District welcome the gallery, not everyone is happy about it. Members of a local right-to-life group have recently been picketing Planned Parenthood, in part protesting the association of the Ringling name with a facility that performs abortions.

Jim Sedlak — director of the national STOPP project (Stop Planned Parenthood) and vice president of the American Life League (ALL) — is among those who are opposed to the gallery. “Can you imagine a college bearing the prestigious Ringling name not caring about the killing of children?” says Sedlak. “Planned Parenthood has tried to create something respectable to generate acceptance in the community.”

But the idea for a store did not originate with Planned Parenthood. Sarasota's downtown master plan requires retail at the street level of any development on north Central in order to encourage local shopping and pedestrian traffic. Upon learning of the requirement, Planned Parenthood solicited the assistance of the Rosemary Neighborhood

Association to determine the best use for the space. “We learned that Ringling students had for years shown their works at the Brownstone,” says Planned Parenthood representative Wendy Grassy, referring to a now-defunct and much-missed neighborhood hangout. “That’s when we had the idea for a Ringling gallery. We turned the space over — gave it to them.” The organization leased the 1,000-square-foot store to Ringling for \$1 per year and gave the college a 99-year lease.

The offer was timely. In 2005, Ann and Alfred Goldstein made a seven-figure donation to the school, with the stipulation that the funds be used to enhance students' business skills. The integration of business courses into the existing arts curriculum was an idea that Dr. Larry Thompson, Ringling



**LOGO, GIRL!** madeby's logo



# ge will open a gallery in y. ■ By Barbara Ann Weibel

College president, had long been contemplating. Thompson, who readily admits to being a left-brainer in a sea of right-brainers, was inspired by the work of Daniel H. Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. Pink insists that design is becoming a major element in how business is conducted.

At the same time, the school was hearing a recurring message from recruiters. "Companies like DreamWorks and Pixar were telling us our students had a great work ethic, that they were very creative, but that they didn't know much about business," says Christine Meeker Lange, Ringling's special assistant to the president for media and community relations.

Pink's message that design schools need to incorporate more business and business schools need to incorporate more creativity, along with the concerns of recruiters, prompted the college to develop a new major: The Business of Art and Design. Unlike pure art majors, this degree incorporates accounting, organization, management, human resources and marketing into the normal lineup of creative courses. The only missing component was a way for students to obtain hands-on business experience. Enter madeby. Not only will the gallery be a venue from which students and alumni can display and sell their work, it will also allow students to experience everything from working on the floor to developing a marketing plan. "There's no other program like this anywhere in the country," says Lange.

Ringling does not yet have an opening date for madeby — or a website, or a phone number. But construction is expected to be complete by the end of March. In the meantime, Sedlak has not given up on his efforts to stop the gallery. When asked what type of retail operation he would prefer to see in the facility, Sedlak has a ready answer: "A memorial chapel for people to pray for the babies that are dying in that building."

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