

WELCOME HOME

gathering place

ASHEVILLE

The Brightest Crayon

Crafters of all skill levels are drawn to this communal workspace, where they can free their imaginations and learn to color outside the lines.



Purple Crayon owner Pam Robbins (center) created a space for women to make anything — from blankets (this one is hers) to acrylic pour paintings (below, by Deana Murchison).



HAROLD WOULD BE PROUD. The 1955 children's book *Harold and the Purple Crayon* — the timeless story of a world limited only by one's imagination — is the inspiration behind a hub for art hobbyists in Asheville. "Like Harold, I believe that we can manifest anything we want, just by imagining it," says Purple Crayon owner Pam Robbins.

Everyone is here to play, she says. (Except Harold, that is. Purple Crayon is only for women.) Members gather to pursue pastimes like stitching, quilting, needle felting, painting, illustrating, and making mosaics at creation stations in a shared space. Public workshops and Girls Nights (and Days) Out fill Purple Crayon's calendar every month.

Most hobbyists keep or gift their completed projects, but many works of art fill the shelves of the store in the lounge, where soft purple couches encourage conversations over coffee. "I wanted to create a welcoming and inspiring place, without pretense or competition, for women to be creative and build community," Robbins says. "To hear your little voice, the one that tells you what you want, you have to have the tools and the courage to listen."

— Marshéle Carter

PURPLE CRAYON

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER CALLAHAN