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[Spotlight]

Trish Biddle

[Official Artist
of the 2008
Kentucky Derby]

When Westlake resident and local artist Trish Biddle received a request asking her to be the official artist for the 2008 Kentucky Derby, she thought it was a joke. "I get some weird e-mails sometimes," said Biddle, who is an internationally-published contemporary artist. "It didn't sink in."

It didn't sink in until she began researching the annual horse-racing competition in Louisville and the artists who had worked with the Derby before her. There was the artist who painted the Einstein Bros. Bagels and Barnes & Noble murals, a Russian painter and the artist in charge of prints and artistic development for the upcoming Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington.

Biddle began her artistic career as a side job to her position as a textile designer. She began painting vintage photographs and family portraits and decided to pursue a professional career. After hundreds of rejection letters, she was finally signed by a publisher in Vancouver.

"I would get (a rejection) every other week and cry," she said. "Then the Kentucky Derby came, and I haven't returned to the textile world since."

Her paintings for the Derby, which will consist of the historic Churchill Downs and Biddle's trademark figures of vintage women in gaudy hats, will be plastered everywhere—from posters, to tickets, to programs and t-shirts.

Biddle said the most interesting part about the Derby is the fashion: "The whole hat thing—it's all about the hats."

