

## Art Gone Viral uses smartphone technology to overcome limited gallery space

Matthew Caprioli | Posted: Thursday, September 6, 2012 12:11 pm



Denso Wave Incorporated invented the Quick Response Code back in 1994 to help the auto industry make cars even faster. By collapsing the traditional barcode into squares and dots, QR codes can convey a gargantuan amount of detailed information. It's incredibly easy to use them as well. All you need is a smartphone and a free app that processes the codes.

With its roots in industry and its expansive reach, it comes as no surprise that advertisers have leapt on the technology to promote their product. But a duo of Anchorage artists are now using the technology for something it was not intended for: to promote art with no thought for profit.

Art Gone Viral is the brainchild of local artists Christina Barber and Indra Arriaga. The "ah-ha" moment came over hot chocolate at Modern Dwellers, when they noticed a QR code on a coffee sleeve. The two had just returned

from a Cindy Sherman show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, where curators used QR codes to lead viewers to a website where they could purchase a print or hear the backstory of a piece. Barber and Arriaga wanted to bring the technology to the art world here.

"We envision Art Gone Viral to be this space the artist can experiment and play in, and at the same time showcase them to a wider audience," Barber said. "The problem with Anchorage, for artists at least, is that there is no experimental arts space. If you look at *Art in America* [the international art magazine] there are only two galleries [recognized]: the Anchorage Museum and the International Gallery of Contemporary Art." Barber said displaying at either of those "is pretty high up there." It can also be pricey, with the back room of

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the IGCA renting for \$300 dollars (after your application is accepted).

“It’s very difficult to maintain a gallery, especially one with a focus on experimental art,” Arriaga said.

Arriaga first opened a gallery when she moved to Anchorage, a 100-square-foot space that “was like a big closet.”

“Even back then the demand was huge. There was MTS, there was the Battery... and now as an artist, if we’re looking for show space there are very few places we can go,” Arriaga said. Many of the “satellite” galleries have restrictions on content (no nips) or medium. As Barber pointed out, you can’t really place a multi-media installation in a restaurant or clothing store.

Unlike most galleries, when an artist sells something through AGV, the venue does not collect a commission, which can often be 50 to 60 percent of the sale price. “We don’t want to be in the middle. That’s not what the project is about,” Arriaga said.



**“Rollin’ Pimas”, an oil painting by Cloud Medicine Crow is also part of the virtual exhibit**

[www.artgoneviral.com](http://www.artgoneviral.com)