

# New arts group on the scene

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STAFF WRITER

The people behind The Layman Group, the newest arts association in Auburn-Opelika, do not plan on competing with existing arts organizations, such as the East Alabama Arts Association and the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center.

"You can never have too many. There's room for one more," said Doc Waller Friday during an open house for the group. "We're not here to compete with them, but (to) champion and collaborate on the arts."

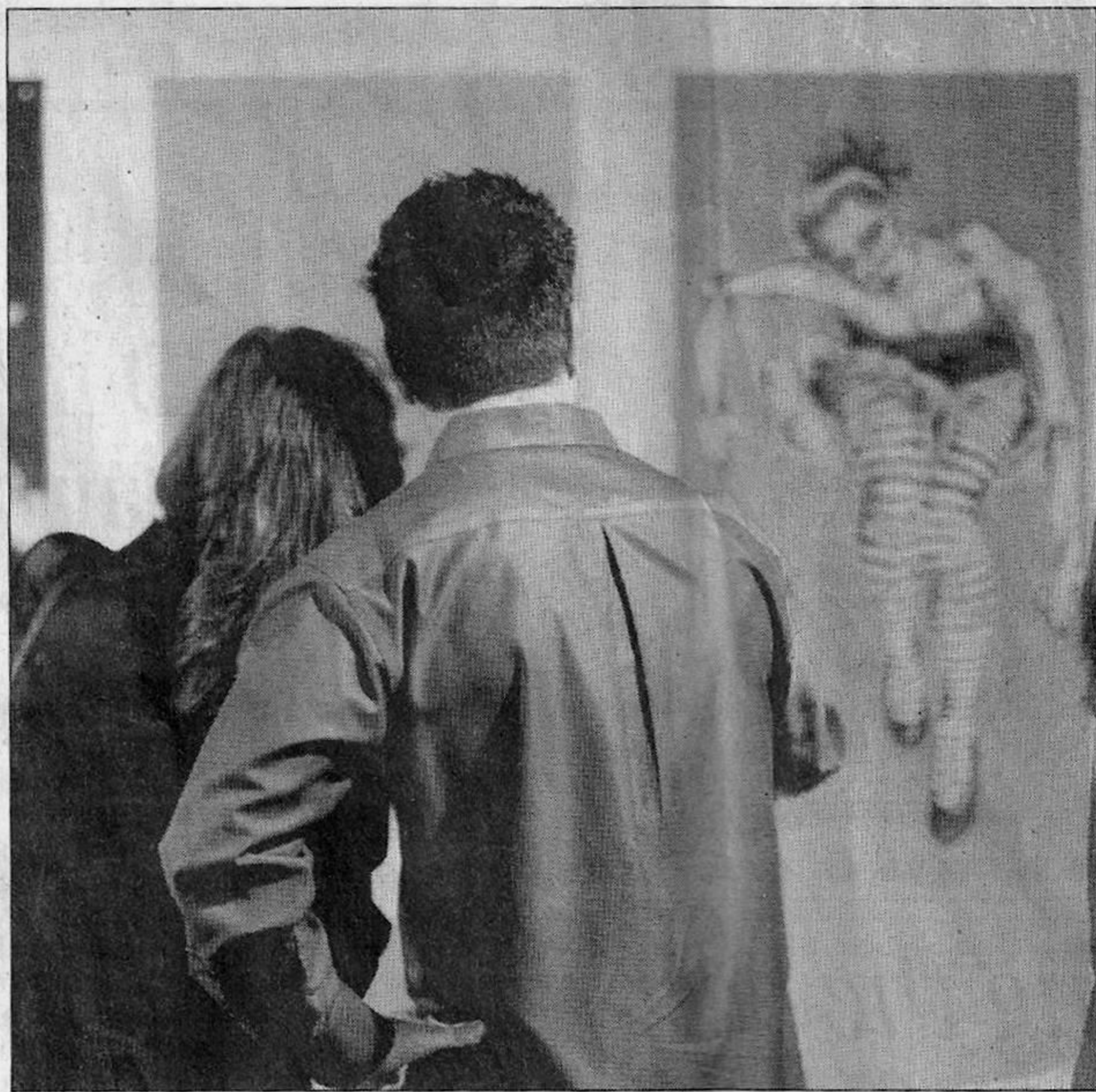
Waller, who serves as executive artistic director of the group, said it's been a dream of his since 2000 to start a group whose purpose is encouraging art in all forms.

He said he picked the Auburn-Opelika area because of its potential to be a major arts scene.

"You don't have to go away to experience art," said Vicky Anton, associate artistic director. "Auburn-Opelika can be that place."

Anyone with an idea — for music, dance, theater, poetry or film — is not only welcome, but encouraged to visit Waller and Anton at Layman Group headquarters, 168 E. Magnolia Ave., in downtown Auburn.

The working office space can be reached by entering Behind the



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Visitors Lyndsay Fukai and Stephen Prestridge take in artist Sarah Scott's "Watercolor and Acrylic" in the Layman Group's exhibit space in Auburn.

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**Vicky Anton**

Associate artistic director

Glass and going upstairs above Hamilton's restaurant.

Waller, who graduated

from Opelika High School and attended Auburn University before pursuing a stage ca-

reer in New York, told visitors at the open house that they won't say no to any idea presented to them. "Unless you're crazy," he joked.

"We want to be an outlet for everybody," said Anton, an AU graduate. "We want to give people what they need so they can express themselves."

To see a list of current and upcoming projects, go to [www.thelaymangroup.org](http://www.thelaymangroup.org).