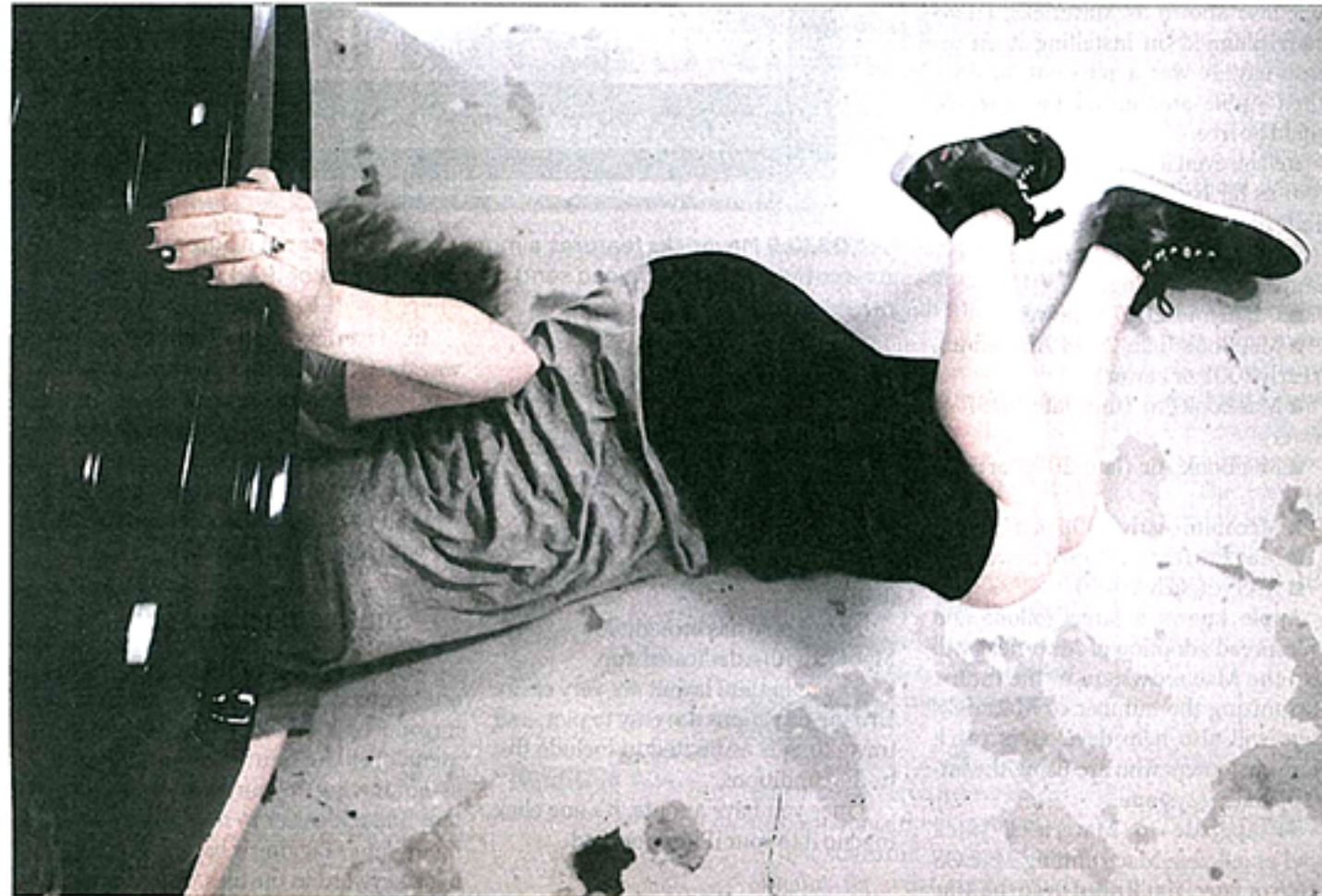


Dallas, Texas, Friday, October 25, 2013

## AUTO REPAIR

### All-female body shop crashes into stereotypes



Ariana Kalis works under a car at Colors on Parade on Atwell Street near Lemmon Avenue in Dallas. The four women in the shop specialize in quick repair of minor body damage and scratches, especially on luxury vehicles.

Photos by Sarah Hoffman/Staff Photographer

## A woman's touch-up

By TERRY BOX  
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Don't ask about the skills of the guys in the back shop at Colors on Parade, a Dallas collision repair business.

As owner Tim Jordan quickly points out, there are none.

Three young women in gray T-shirts and long black shorts — Stephanie Milne, Ariana Kalis and Danielle Webb — moved among five cars in the shop recently, sanding the bumper of a Lexus GS350 and preparing a Jaguar XF's fender for painting.

A fourth woman, Thy Dam, manages operations.

Together, they comprise the entire workforce at the 2,800-square-foot shop on Atwell Street, just east of Lemmon Avenue, as they take care of business in a male-dominated trade.

Before coming to Colors on Parade, Milne, the shop's painter, had never worked with another woman in a body shop.



Shop manager Thy Dam (left) and Stephanie Milne attend to details on a repair. Owner Tim Jordan said he didn't set out to have an all-female staff.

"It's very different here," said Milne, 25, of Farmers Branch, who attended Universal Technical Institute in Houston to learn collision repair and is certified by multiple industry associations.

"We have good eyes and see things differently than men."

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Stephanie Milne, shop worker

The Dallas Morning News

12D Friday, October 25, 2013

## Female staff crashes stereotypes

Continued from Page 1D

"But it's nice. We have good eyes and see things differently than men."

As far as Jordan knows, his shop — one of about 190 franchised operations in the United States — is the only Colors on Parade with an all-female staff.

It wasn't by design, though Jordan said he would be inclined to continue hiring women for the shop jobs, which pay \$10 to \$20 an hour.

"We've had several guys working here, and it just kind of evolved," said Jordan, 36. "As the guys left, I just happened to have women applicants and hired them."

The staff — all well under 40 — is well-suited to the fast-paced niche the shop pursues, he said.

Colors on Parade specializes in quick repairs of minor body damage, mostly for car dealerships. It generates about \$300,000 a year in revenue, Jordan said.

Seventy percent of its customers are dealerships or retail auto businesses that typically need dents or scratches repaired on vehicles that have been traded in or bought at auction.

"We can usually do the work quicker and at half the price that a big body shop can," he said.

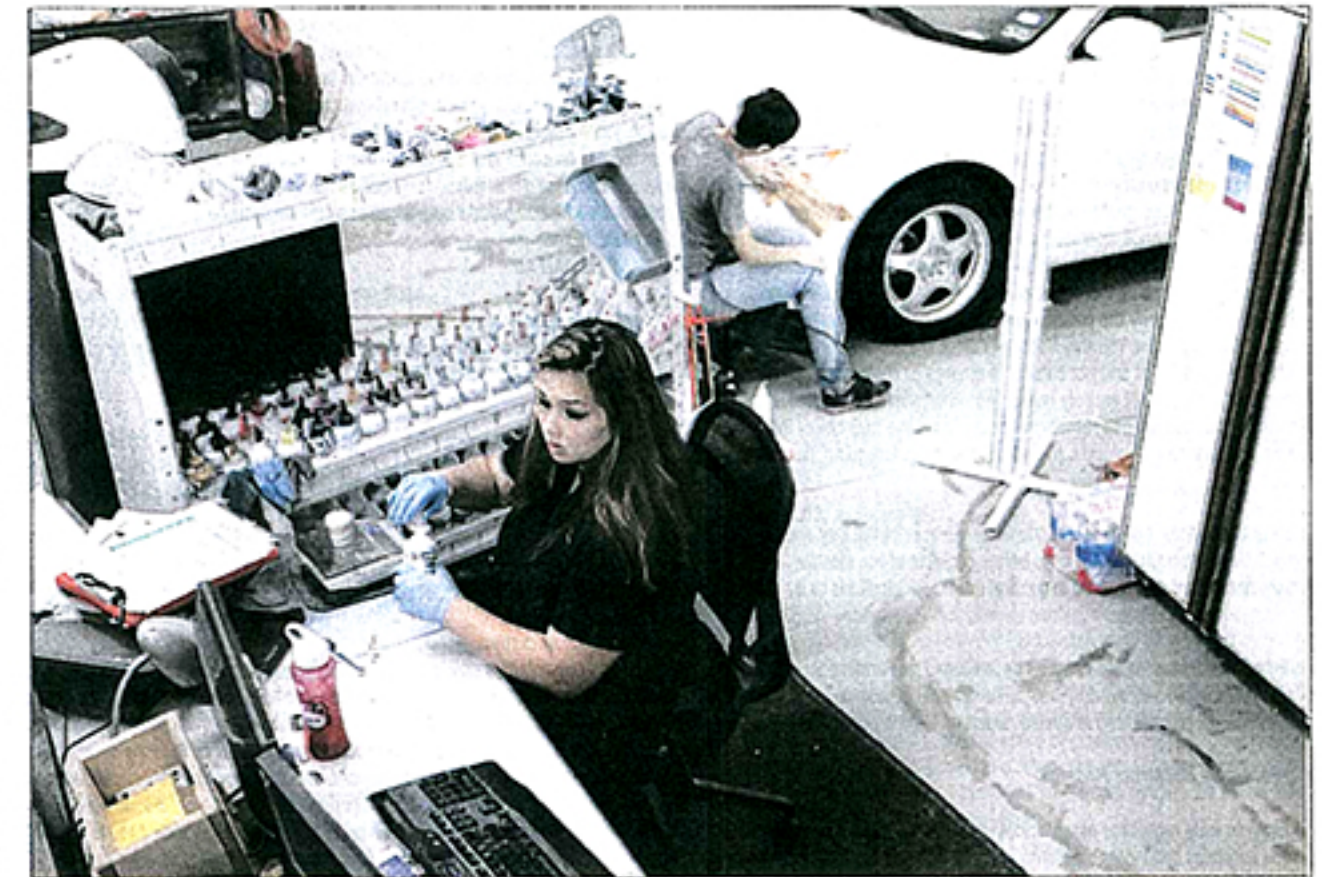
### Quality work

Many of the dealerships he works with have their own body shops, but Jordan said his small, lean operation can do jobs faster and cheaper.

The shop slices its niche even thinner by focusing only on high-end vehicles such as Lexus, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Porsche and Jaguar.

"You've got to have quality if you're dealing with those customers," Jordan said. "They are very demanding."

On a recent weekday, all of the women were moving constantly from job to job.



Sarah Hoffman/Staff Photographer

Thy Dam selects just the right paint color at her desk, while Dani Webb works on a car. The Colors on Parade staffers are known for a strong eye for matching colors.

"We typically have about 10 cars in the queue at any given time," Jordan said. "We do between 70 and 90 a month."

Like most of the franchisees at Colors on Parade, Jordan got his start as a mobile repair guy, traveling to dealerships that needed quick body work.

Often, he would set up a temporary tent on the dealer's property for paint jobs.

Two years ago, he decided to take his work inside and opened one of Color on Parade's first fixed operations.

His shop is near many of the luxury car dealerships that dominate Lemmon Avenue.

It puts a priority on being able to closely match the paint of the vehicles it repairs — a challenge with all body work but especially important in luxury cars that cost \$30,000 or more.

"We have spent a lot of years

learning to blend paint," Jordan said.

And women are often particularly good at it, he said.

"They have better attention to detail, and their sense of color is better so they can match colors better," he said. "I think there are a lot of advantages."

### Quick pace

Occasionally, Jordan said, a male customer will object to his car being repaired by an all-woman shop.

"I get mostly positive feedback from customers," he said. "But if someone says something, I'll explain the quality of my staff's work. If the customer still objects, I'll suggest they take their car somewhere else."

He also appreciates his staff's youth. When asked about their ages, he said all were "ageless and

beautiful."

"Most of our clients want to see pleasant young faces," Jordan said. "In this business, when you get old, you start to slow down, and we need a fast pace."

Although at least two of the vehicles in Jordan's shop wore paper plates from Park Place Dealerships, the dealership group declined to comment on Colors on Parade. Like many big dealerships, Park Place has its own collision repair centers that its general managers typically use.

John Witt, service director at BMW of Dallas, said he has used Jordan's company for years, mainly for quick minor repairs.

"They can do some work so much cheaper and quicker than we can," Witt said. "The customer's happy, and we're happy. I still send him jobs where the customer is kind of particular because I know they will do a great job."