Exhibition Guide
Welcome to the Banana Factory Arts Center!

We are home to ArtsQuest’s Visual Arts and Education programs, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing access to art, culture and educational programs for the diverse residents of the Lehigh Valley and others who seek access to our community. The Banana Factory Art Center was founded in 1998, in efforts to mold, encourage, and support the artist via the cultural spirit of the Lehigh Valley.

What’s Inside:
- 30 Resident Artist Studios
- 5 Art Classrooms
- 3 Galleries
- 3 Resident Organizations
- ArtsQuest Glass Studio

Our Galleries

The Banana Factory has three gallery spaces within the building: The Crayola Gallery, the Banko Gallery, and the Corridor to the Arts. Each gallery space features approximately five to six exhibitions per year, with a mix of group, juried and solo exhibitions. Annual exhibitions include our Resident Artist Exhibition, Compendium Juried Exhibition, ArtsQuest Staff and Teaching Artist Exhibition, and the InVision Photo-Based Art Juried Exhibition. Every November, all our galleries feature artists who work in photography and/or photo-based art to celebrate photography month in the Lehigh Valley and our InVision programs.

We also have a permanent selection of artwork by our current Resident Artists on display on the second and third floors of the building.

Banana Factory Arts Center Gallery Guidelines

Please help us protect our artworks by respecting the following guidelines:

- Please do not touch the artworks on display in the galleries and throughout the building; the salts and oils naturally produced on your hands are damaging to artworks
- No running, shoving, or horseplay, as they endanger the safety of both the artworks and other visitors. Children should be supervised at all times.
- Keep a safe distance between you and each work of art. This helps to avoid accidental touching or bumping.
- Do not lean on walls or cases (either to write or for physical support) or place any objects on pedestals or cases. This helps keep works of art hung on the walls or displayed in cases safe. Feel free to sit on the benches or the floor as you talk, write, or draw.
- Use only pencils when sketching or completing activities in the galleries. If an accident should occur, a pencil mark is easier to remove than a pen mark. Be careful not to point with your pencil or other objects; this can endanger works of art.
- Handheld photography for personal use is permitted throughout the building and galleries. If you are photographing for use in publications or promotional materials, please first get in contact with the ArtsQuest Public Relations team by emailing pr@artsquest.org

We appreciate your help keeping the art safe so that it may be enjoyed by all of our community!

For More Information

All of our exhibitions are currently available digitally online through the Banana Factory website: bananasfactory.org. In-person tours of our exhibitions are also available through our website. Additional inquiries on tours and digital exhibitions can also be sent to visualarts@artsquest.org. Don’t forget to follow us on our social media pages below!
About the 5x5 Artist Group

Regionally, The 5 X 5 Artist Group has presented annual art exhibits entitled The 5 X 5 Show in different art spaces throughout the Lehigh Valley. This small coalition of artists celebrates and shares their artistic visions within our cultural area.

The concept for these exhibitions always highlights five artists and their five defining media. The Group’s primary mission is to showcase these artists’ vast array of imagery and individual styles. Their curated shows cover a wide range of subjects for the entire community to view and serve to further educate a younger generation of future art lovers by exposing them to the distinct mediums on display.

The history of this venture started in 2015. Some artists and friends realized that some media were being overlooked in various art exhibits and competitions and that omission became a driving force to promote their respective mediums on an equal basis. Calling themselves The 5 x 5 Artist Group were: Richard Begbie (photography), James A. DePietro (oil/acrylic painting), Barbara Kozero (mosaics/sculpture), Jacqueline Meyerson (pastels), and Patricia Delluva (printmaking/drawing) joined this artistic family of five. Each year they present new work at various galleries or museums. Although their styles and subject matter vary, the overall effect is a strong collection of individual voices speaking as one.

Having previously shown at Gallery 514 in Allentown, The Nurture Nature Center in Easton, The Baum School of Art, The Nazareth Center for the Arts, and The Kemerer Museum of Decorative Arts in Bethlehem, this current exhibition at the Banana Factory from January 23 to March 21, 2021 marks the 6th edition in their exhibition schedule.
Series: Towpath Meanderings

Artist Patricia Delluva uses charcoal to create this series of drawings inspired by her walks during the pandemic. She states:

“For me, I think among other things, it represents my need to express a storyline that has a reference to nature and history through a prevailing mood. My use of the medium of charcoal strikes a somewhat mysterious and more somber tone. Maybe reflecting our pandemic times.”

Artist’s representations of the landscape around them do more than just faithfully recreate the scenes in front of them, artists help to actively create a community’s perspective and view on the surrounding environment. Delluva’s quiet and moody drawings of the landscape around her walks recalls a tradition of landscape painting popular during the 18th century era artists in Europe. One such style of landscape painting was called “the Sublime” or “the sensation we experience when confronted with the boundlessness of nature, or the immeasurable power of natural forces.”

About the Artist

Patricia Delluva spent ten years as a high school art and photography teacher, before changing careers to the Allen-town Art Museum as Registrar. Experiencing first hand the outstanding works by artists and artisans from different eras and cultures further broadened her understanding of the creative process and deepened her appreciation of historical innovation in the visual arts. Delluva’s multidisciplinary teaching approach and museum work still inform her artistic direction. Delluva is a life-long resident of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and lives in the downtown area with her two cats, Keppie and Orangey.

Activity

Take your sketchbook, or some paper and drawing materials (could be pen & ink, charcoal, graphite pencils, watercolors, etc.) and find a place outdoors** to observe. Sit or walk quietly and take in your surroundings, maybe make some notes on what you see. Then, start drawing. What moods are you feeling as you observe the world around you? How do these show through in your drawings? Did you notice more around you as you sat sketching?

**when outside your house, it is important to follow all CDC recommended guidelines, such as mask wearing and social distancing. If possible, find locations in your yard, or if that is not possible, try looking through a window in your house to start. A full list of CDC guidelines and recommendations can be found here: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention
James A. DePietro
Artist Highlights

Jacqueline Meyerson and James A. DePietro have a photorealism style to their work, and both have found inspiration in food/snacks for subject matter in their works. Before the days of snapping a photo on Instagram, artists depicting elaborate still lifes of foods of all kinds were popular throughout history. Many times, these images were used to either create allegories from the collection of objects, food, and plant life (such as Vanitas), served to show off the wealth and materials possessions of the merchant class, and/or demonstrate the skill of the artist in depicting the complicated scene, full of realistic textures and patterns.2

Meyerson states about her work:

“My work depicts a photorealistic approach in my subjects. A lot of work falls into a category I like to call, “Organized Chaos.” This would be multiple items strategically composed to take your eye on a journey. These items are usually, food, discarded and forgotten memorabilia, rusted antique items, etc. I like to take the viewer on a nostalgic trip back to their childhood, or evoke an old memory that is relatable in my work.”

DePietro’s work from the Objets d’art Series tends to focus on a visual narrative or story with the collection of objects depicted.

“My paintings are primarily acrylic and oil paint, although I do tend to mix in other media such as spray paint or sculptural objects depending upon the artwork and my message. Before I actually start creating, I must make sure my concept is solid, so I mull over my idea for a few days. It is important to me as a visual storyteller to decide on my specific images that convey my visual narrative and meticulously draw those images on paper before transferring them to gessoboard. After the drawing is finished and transferred, I tend to mask out areas of the canvas and apply random colors within the exposed spaces. Once I have the desired effect, I begin layering paint in thin strata and complete that application with a varnish to help pop the color. Afterwards, I spend hours by detailing the realistic images one brushstroke at a time. Each work has its own theme, color palette, and message.”

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About the Artists

James A. DePietro is an award-winning educator and artist, born in Bethlehem, PA. James embarked on his teaching career earning degrees from Kutztown University and Wilkes University. He taught in the Bethlehem Area School District as an art educator and classroom teacher for 35 years. Nominated three times for the Bethlehem Educational Scholastic Trust’s (B.E.S.T) Award for Excellence in Teaching, he won the honor in 2008. That same year, he was one of the recipients of The Top Educators in the Lehigh Valley Award.

After retiring from 35 years of teaching, he now devotes his time to creating detailed figurative oil / acrylic paintings inspired by nature or issues that affect our society. His paintings are in many private collections and are shown extensively throughout the United States. He is an active member in art organizations of the Lehigh Valley, including ACE (Art Community of Easton), The Lehigh Art Alliance (in which he also serves on the board), Allied Artists of New York, the American Artists Professional League, and serves on the Bethlehem Fine Art Commission.

Jacqueline Meyerson grew up in New York and spent her early years honing her creativity. She attended Kingsborough Community College, Brooklyn, 1970 and Brooklyn College, 1974, where she took several art classes, but not until later in life did she realize her potential as an artist. Meyerson eventually left her position as a comptroller of an electronics firm in New Jersey to pursue her career as a self-taught pastel artist. Meyerson has since been voted one of top 100 pastel artists in the world by the Pastel journal, frequently exhibiting in exhibitions and appearing in publications.

Activity

We have all been spending a lot of time inside our houses lately! Create your own still life of objects that have a significance to life inside your space these days, or maybe curate a selection of your favorite snacks lately. You can capture these objects in any medium you would like, maybe it’s a drawing, a photograph, a painting.

Consider if the collection and depiction of these items tells a story. What is the significance of why you selected each one?
Artist Barbara Kozero describes her style and subject matter in her work as whimsical, and frequently uses discarded objects, such as window frames, broken toys and dishes. She states:

The sculptures are often “opportunistic”, inspired by and including found objects or materials. I will use old window frames, toys and broken dishes or cast off dime store “knick knacks.” These sculptures, as well as the mosaics, evidence a love of rich and varied surfaces. I admit to being a bit of a scrounger. If I can’t find a glass or clay color, pattern, or shape that I want, I will use earthenware clay and underglaze to achieve that effect. Recent subject matter has included landscapes with plants and animals, many of which are framed as windows.

Her mosaic work in the exhibition that features window frames covered in gold leaf is reminiscent of the opulent mosaic of Byzantine art, which frequently used the medium of mosaic and glimmering golden backgrounds in works adorning buildings and portable icons.³

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About the Artist

Barbara Kozero is an artist/educator, having taught kindergarten through college level art courses as well as learning support and academically gifted.

Kozero’s areas of focus are ceramic sculpture and mixed media mosaics.

Locally, her work can be seen in many of the BASD schools as well as LVHN Hospitals. She is included in the collections of Lehigh Univ., Moravian College, Victaulic Corp. and the South Side Public Library.
Begbie’s photographs are combinations of both realistic images and abstracted elements of line, shape, and color. He has always used software to edit his photographs (Photoshop, Lightroom and application plug-ins), but the pandemic has caused him to spend more time with this process, refine his skills, and reviewing previous photos for potential. While the finished photos are carefully constructed for the final effect, many of the photo shoots are not planned, and come about by chance of traveling around and seeing what interests or challenges the artist.

About the Artist

Richard Begbie is a native of New York City. He has a degree in Graphic Arts and Photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology and additional academic degrees from Indiana University (Bloomington) and Cedar Crest College. Upon completion of his master’s degree and for the next 40 plus years, Richard held various management positions at a number of colleges and universities. Anticipating his retirement over 8 years ago, Richard returned to photography and has been working on his art and volunteering with arts organizations. Richard is a member of the Lehigh Valley Photography Club, and the Arts Community of Easton (PA).

For several years he was a member and exhibition chair for the Hillcrest Camera Club (NJ). He is a member of the Bethlehem Fine Arts Commission and serves on the Rotunda Gallery and City Collection committees.

Abstract Photo Challenge!

Using your camera or smartphone, challenge yourself to take abstract photos of everyday objects. Try to focus less on what the object is in the composition of the photo, like a window or couch, and focus on elements that are present within that object, such as color, line, and shape.
Questions to Consider

Spending time just observing the artwork in our galleries is fun and important, but art is more than just looking at an image! To really enhance your experience of this exhibition, use these questions below as a start. Feel free to use the space provided to write down any additional thoughts or questions that come to mind as you walk through the exhibition.

1. How does each artist use their medium of choice to express a distinct artistic style?

2. Consider how each artist uses, or doesn’t use color. How does color, or lack of color, contribute to the mood of the artwork?

3. Storytelling is an important aspect to many of these artists and their work. How do the pieces in this exhibition tell a story, or depict an existing narrative? Some good pieces to start with would be: Remembrance, Stream of Consciousness Series and A History of American Racism: Sign O’ The Times by James A. DePietro, Back Porch Repeats by Patricia Delluva, and Noah’s Ark by Barbara Kozero.

Slow Art Challenge

On average, a person only spends about 15-30 seconds looking at a work of art! While considering these questions, we challenge our guests to spend a longer time looking at one or pieces that speak to you in this exhibition. Try setting a timer or stopwatch for one minute to start, and really focus in on one piece for a whole minute. Challenge yourself to try for two minutes, or even up to five minutes!
Charcoal | Artists’ charcoal is a form of a dry art medium made of finely ground organic materials that are held together by a gum or wax binder or produced without the use of binders by eliminating the oxygen inside the material during the production process. Charcoal can produce lines that are very light or intensely black, while being hard to remove completely. The dry medium can be applied to almost any surface from smooth to very coarse. Fixatives are often used with charcoal drawings to solidify the position to prevent erasing or rubbing off of charcoal dusts.  

Landscape | The depiction of natural scenery in art. Landscape art may capture mountains, valleys, bodies of water, fields, forests, and coasts and may or may not include man-made structures as well as people. Although artwork from the earliest ancient and Classical periods included natural scenic elements, landscape as an independent genre did not emerge in the Western tradition until the Renaissance in the 16th century. In the Eastern tradition, the genre can be traced back to 4th-century-CE China.  

“the Sublime” | The theory of sublime art was put forward by Edmund Burke in A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful published in 1757. He defined the sublime as an artistic effect productive of the strongest emotion the mind is capable of feeling.  

Photorealism | Photorealism is a painting style that emerged in Europe and the USA in the late 1960s, characterised by its painstaking detail and precision. The early 1990s saw a renewed interest in photorealism, thanks to new technology in the form of cameras and digital equipment which offered more precision.  

Still Lifes | One of the principal genres (subject types) of Western art – essentially, the subject matter of a still life painting or sculpture is anything that does not move or is dead. Still life includes all kinds of man-made or natural objects, cut flowers, fruit, vegetables, fish, game, wine and so on. Still life can be a celebration of material pleasures such as food and wine, or often a warning of the ephemerality of these pleasures and of the brevity of human life.  

Vanitas | A still life artwork which includes various symbolic objects designed to remind the viewer of their mortality and of the worthlessness of worldly goods and pleasures.  

Pastel | Pastel is fabricated from one or several finely ground pigments, a pulverized inert white filler such as ground calcium carbonate or kaolin, and a minuscule amount of binder such as gum tragacanth. The powdered ingredients are combined and rolled into sticks of colored powder, the consistency of which must be sufficiently cohesive to allow them to be grasped between the fingers, yet crumble when stroked across a support. Pastel is usually drawn on paper, which must have a slight texture or “tooth” to grab and hold the medium on its surface.  

Prized for its brilliant color, pastel was first used in the sixteenth century, notably by Leonardo da Vinci. It flourished in the eighteenth century, again in the late nineteenth century, and remains popular today.  

Byzantine art | Byzantine art, architecture, paintings, and other visual arts produced in the Middle Ages in the Byzantine Empire (centred at Constantinople, an area now known in modern-day Turkey as Istanbul) and in various areas that came under its influence.  

Abstract Art | Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect. The term can be applied to art that is based on an object, figure or landscape, where forms have been simplified or schematised. Since the early 1900s, abstract art has formed a central stream of modern art.  

Photography | Photography refers to the process or practice of creating a photograph – an image produced by the action of light on a light-sensitive material. The advent of digital photography has led to the rise of digital prints. These prints are created from stored graphic formats such as JPEG, TIFF, and RAW. These can then be printed out using printers including inkjet printers, dye-sublimation printers, laser printers, and thermal printers.  

Acrylic Paint | Acrylic paint is water-based fast-drying paint widely used by artists since the 1960s. It can be used thickly or thinly depending how much water is added to it. First made in the 1950s acrylic paint uses a synthetic resin to bind pigments. As it can be diluted with water and used thinly or thickly depending on how much water is added to it, it can resemble a watercolor or an oil painting, or have its own unique characteristics not attainable with other media. Acrylic paint is waterproof once it has dried. Because of its versatility and the fact it dries quickly it has become a popular painting medium and is widely used by artists today.  

Oil Paint | Oil paint is form of a slow-drying paint that consists of particles of pigment suspended in a drying oil that forms a tough, coloured film on exposure to air. The drying oil is a vegetable oil, often made by crushing nuts or seeds. For paints, linseed oil is most commonly used, but poppy, sunflower, safflower, soya bean and walnut oils can also be used. The advantage of the slow-drying quality of oil paint is that an artist can develop a painting gradually, making changes or corrections if necessary.