



BANANA FACTORY

THE FOWLER  
Arts and  
Education  
CENTER

BANANA  
FACTORY  
ARTS CENTER

# 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](mailto: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: [bananafactory.org](http://bananafactory.org). In-person tours of our exhibitions are also available through our website. Additional inquires on tours and digital exhibitions can also be sent to [visualarts@artsquest.org](mailto:visualarts@artsquest.org). Don't forget to follow us on our social media pages below!

 [@bananafactory\\_pa](https://www.instagram.com/bananafactory_pa)

 [@TheBananaFactory](https://www.facebook.com/TheBananaFactory)



# Hallway to the Arts Current Exhibition

## Tammy Kushnir, *Down the Beaten Path: A Journey Through Emotions*



### About the Artist:

**Tammy Kushnir** has been an artist her whole life. She finds her passion in her creations. She originally studied art history at Temple University with the intention of working in an auction house. Instead, she decided to stay home with her children and raise them shortly after getting married. While staying home with them, she discovered a love of mixed media art. Having only drawn her whole life, working with various objects to create keepsake boxes and book art was an amazing challenge and helped get her into many publications and write two crafts books. As her boys got older, she began going back to drawing and introducing painting to her palette as she created digital art. She began working with various licensing companies and started creating for Oopsy Daisy and ElephantStock.

In 2017, she got serious about painting after visiting Alaska. Painting mainly animals, she has now expanded that to surreal landscapes vacillating from dark to light. Working mainly in acrylics, she also enjoys going back to the roots of mixed media, incorporating ink, colored pencils, modeling paste, and other textures into some of her creations.

Her artwork has won awards and has been seen in various brick- and -mortar and online gallery shows.

She is currently represented by Graphite Gallery in New Orleans, Louisiana and City Art Gallery in Columbia, South Carolina. She resides in Chalfont, PA with her husband and two teen sons.

# Selected Works | Artist Highlights



*Caught In A Loop, Acrylic*  
24 x 36 x 1.5 inches

Kushnir's work focuses on themes around mental health and conditions such as anxiety, depression, and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). As a person and artist living with these conditions in her daily life, Kushnir states that her work helped her to confront the various emotions felt when working with her personal mental health, and hopes her images give a voice and visual comfort to others who may be suffering. She states:

*"I am a big advocate of mental health. My houses [ in Kushnir's artwork ] are a personification of emotions built on unsteady foundations such as stilts or crumbling rocks as mental illness issues often feel like. I have always been interested in awareness art. In the past when I created mixed media art, way before painting days, I dealt with issues often difficult to confront such as OCD and postpartum depression. These issues needed to be addressed even though they are difficult to acknowledge. I have been focusing on my houses for about a year now maybe , but when quarantine hit with Covid, they became the forefront of my work. I myself have been diagnosed with anxiety, depression and severe OCD. It is a lifelong battle I am going to win...The response to my art has been overwhelming. Many people have reached out*

*to me to tell their personal experiences or how they can relate to my art. They like the connection. As an artist, that means the most. I hope to make people know that they are never alone in this battle."*

There is a well-established link between the arts and mental health. The rise of art therapy has helped introduce concepts of creativity and mental health among those who may not consider themselves artists. Benefits

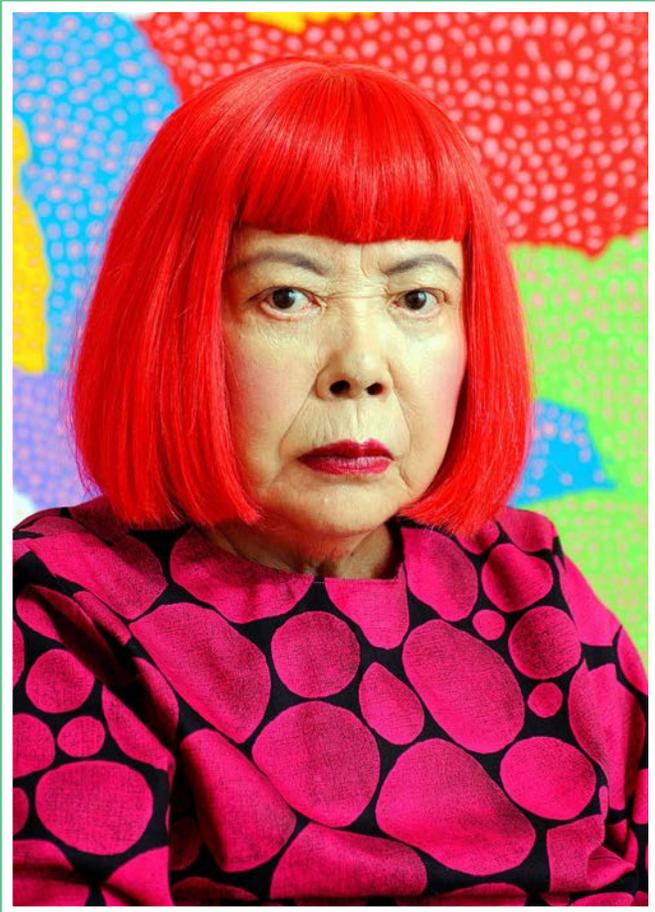


*Hope, Acrylic*  
18 x 24 x 1.5 inches\*

from engaging in any kind of art therapy or art mindfulness techniques include: a sense of self-discovery, increased self-esteem, a healthy emotional outlet, and general stress relief.<sup>1</sup> With one in five adults today living with a mental health condition, it's important to recognize healthy habits and coping strategies in all forms.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, many contemporary artists today create work around mental health themes or openly discuss how creating art helps with their own sense of emotional and mental health.

One can see this in the world of artist Yayoi Kusama, a contemporary Japanese artist famous for her immersive installation artworks and her use of dots. While Kusama was active in the art scene in New York during her early years, she eventually returned to Japan to reside full time in a mental health facility and continue her art career.<sup>3</sup> Kusama's work deals with mental health issues and trauma. As a child, the artist experienced anxiety and hallucinations, causing her to see dots everywhere, which she eventually translated into her art. The repetitive and "infinite" nature of her work also comes from connections again with her anxiety and struggling with obsessive thoughts.



Yayoi Kusama



Yellow Pumpkin, Yayoi Kusama

While Kusama is an internationally known artist, many artists around the world and within local artistic communities create art around mental health, helping to bring awareness in their communities through art and creativity.

Kushnir's work and inspiration draws a lot from a surrealist art style. As an art form, a surrealist style aims to depict the inner working of a mind or imagination, often time verging into darker territory of the strange and uncanny.<sup>4</sup> While this movement was started in Europe in the 1900's, and made popular by artists such as Salvador Dali, surrealist art has grown into a national art movement.<sup>5</sup> Kushnir's work evolves feelings of surrealist and uncanny art with her atmospheric backgrounds and the precariously balanced personified houses, which she uses to symbolize intangible feelings around anxiety and depression.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rtor.org/2018/07/10/benefits-of-art-therapy>, Mary Ann Cohen

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions>

<sup>3</sup> <https://observer.com/2015/04/the-stunning-story-of-the-woman-who-is-the-worlds-most-popular-artist/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/surrealism>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/surrealism>

## Activity

# CADAVRE EXQUIS (EXQUISITE CORPSE) Drawings

Try your hand at this favored drawing technique among the surrealist artists during the 1900's! First used in 1925 in Paris by surrealist artists Yves Tanguy, Jacques Prévert, André Breton and Marcel Duchamp, this technique creates fun and bizarre drawings and is a technique still popular among artists and arts education programs today.<sup>6</sup> Start with a blank piece of paper, and fold into three sections. This will divide up the drawing so that each section becomes the three main parts of a body; head, torso, and legs/feet. One person will draw in each section, starting with the head, and keep what they drew folded up before passing along to the next person. At the end, you have a completely unique collaborative drawing! Feel free to experiment, maybe one drawing is a landscape, one is a person, and one is a collection of objects.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/cadavre-exquis-exquisite-corpse>

<sup>7</sup> More resources on Exquisite corpse: <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/457>, Author: Alethea

# 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 the personified house interact with the various environments it's placed in? What are some of the different emotions or feelings expressed in these different situations?
2. Many of the images are created using dark backgrounds, with small scenes "lit up" by patches of color. How is the artist using color to create a narrative? Does a limited color palette help to create this narrative or a particular mood?
3. Artists creating works around mental health has helped to contribute to contemporary movements around breaking the silence and stigma often found around these issues. After considering the images in this exhibition, does this artwork help with gaining additional perspective on these issues? Did it have a personal connection, either with yourself or maybe other's close to you?



## 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!



# Vocabulary Terms for Down the Beaten Path: A Journey Through Emotions

**Surrealism** | A twentieth-century literary, philosophical and artistic movement that explored the workings of the mind, championing the irrational, the poetic and the revolutionary.<sup>9</sup>

**The Uncanny** | A concept in art associated with psychologist Sigmund Freud which describes a strange and anxious feeling sometimes created by familiar objects in unfamiliar contexts. A closely related term, the 'uncanny valley', is also applied to artworks and animation or video games that reproduce places and people so closely that they create a similar eerie feeling.<sup>10</sup>

**Personification** | Personification is an act of giving human characteristics to animals or objects to create imagery, while Anthropomorphism aims to make an animal or object behave and appear like it is a human being.

**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.<sup>11</sup>

**Mental Health** | Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.<sup>12</sup>

**Art Therapy** | Art therapy is an integrative mental health and human

services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship. Art therapy, facilitated by a professional art therapist, effectively supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as community concerns. Art therapy is used to improve cognitive and sensorimotor functions, foster self-esteem and self-awareness, cultivate emotional resilience, promote insight, enhance social skills, reduce and resolve conflicts and distress, and advance societal and ecological change.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/surrealism>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/t/uncanny>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/acrylic-paint>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>

<sup>13</sup> <https://arttherapy.org/about-art-therapy/>

## Mental Health Resources

Mental Health is important for all, especially during stressful times as we all continue adjusting to "new normals" and other stressors brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below are resources available for those residing in the Lehigh Valley.

- The United Way, Lehigh Valley <https://www.unitedwayglv.org/take-action/covid-19-resources/get-help/mental-and-emotional-wellness-resources>. Also includes a list of 24/7 hotlines available for mental health crisis
- For daily mental and emotional wellness tips and resources, follow Resilient Lehigh Valley on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, Lehigh Valley <http://www.nami-lv.org/>
- Northampton County- Department of Human Services, Mental Health <https://www.northamptoncounty.org/HS/MENHEALTH/Pages/default.aspx>
- Lehigh County- Department of Human Services, Mental Health <https://www.lehighcounty.org/departments/human-services/mental-health>
- Haven House <https://www.haven-house.com/>
- Compeer of the Lehigh Valley <https://pbfalv.org/programs/compeer-of-lehigh-valley/>

## Art Therapy Resources

- American Art Therapy Association <https://arttherapy.org/>



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