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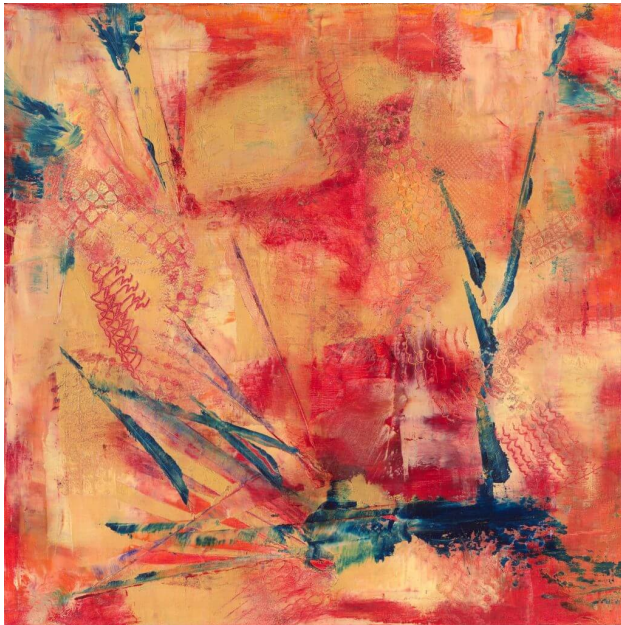
A NEW LEAGUE: ALL debuts art exhibit at Leland Cultural Arts Center

The opening reception for “It’s ALL Art” will welcome participating artists, their friends and family, and the community at large to celebrate the collective’s debut.

By [Shea Carver](#)

April 30, 2019

Wilmington always has been an arts city, wherein creatives flock and find inspiration at all corners of southeastern NC. With the population influx, it only makes sense Leland is now feeling the growth spill over into their border town of downtown ILM. The Art League of Leland (ALL) became an official 501(c)(3) in January 2019, founded by Barbara Hubbard, Claude Riley and Candace Whitlock. They’ll host their first exhibit at Leland Cultural Arts Center on May 9. On display will be 40 to 50 pieces featuring a plethora of media, from watercolors and acrylics, to pastels and photography, ceramic, fiber art and glasswork.



AURORA RISING: *Maryanne Ruscio French lets her inner spirit reign free in her abstract piece, on display at debut ALL exhibit. Courtesy photo*

“The artwork represents a cross-section of over 40 individual artists (around one-third of our 120-plus members) and includes work from long-practicing artists as well as new artists,” according to Whitlock. “An inclusive group, ALL welcomes both artists and art enthusiasts living throughout southeastern North Carolina, not just in Leland.”

Works are priced \$100 and up, and artists will keep all sales. When the show closes on May 30, many of the pieces will move to the Leland Town Hall to remain on display through June.

Represented will be artist Maryanne Ruscio French, who claims to have been painting with lipstick since childhood but just began working in cold wax, oils and acrylics over last five years. “Aurora Rising” (\$350) is mixed-media, measuring 16-inch-by-16-inches on wood-cradled panel. “It gives my inner spirit free reign,” she excites.

Normally the artist creates one or two panels at a time, but during an art class, she found herself stumped. “I left one and reached for another,” she says. “The color red screamed to play. Then golds flashed to join, and later teals came to life. Frustration gone! Perhaps, I had let that joyful toddler with the red lipstick free!”

French paints from intuition, letting memories and her sense of wonder emotively come through her work.

Fellow mixed-media artist Marlowe started pursuing his passion in 2016 after 40 years in the commercial advertising business. “Fig. 12” is a 24-inch-by-48-inch mixed-media, created with latex paint, watercolor, paper, foam core and spray paint. His works focus on nature but in a nontraditional way.

“I create collages of land or ocean scenes, cut them out and arrange them with a silhouette of an animal or fish in the center,” he says, “creating a negative-space image.”

Working on large canvases means having a lot of space to cover. By hand-cutting paper, it can be a tedious job. Yet, it’s not without reward: Marlowe just closed a show in Raleigh and after the ALL exhibit, he will begin preparing his solo show at New Elements Gallery in 2020.

Also showcasing works across Wilmington is Mari Yamashita de Moya, whose “Transplants” welcomes visitors at the Wilmington International Airport. She also will showcase large, intricate pieces at the Burgwin-Wright House in August 2020.

“I’ve been drawing since early childhood,” de Moya notes, “and won my first award (a set of pastels) from Time magazine when I was in second grade.” She took a picture of her father reading the magazine while lounging on the couch. “I think the guidelines were to depict him at work!” she remembers.

De Moya continued practicing as an artist—even if as a “nighttime artist,” as she calls it—despite having a different career. When she retired, she began painting full time, and in 2017 she finished a certification in Botanical Illustration at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill.

While she’s enjoying watercolors at the moment, it doesn’t stifle her love for acrylics, clay, fiber and recyclables. Her ALL piece, “Strawberry Bush: Hanging On” (\$115), was created in watercolor, brown ink and colored pencil. De Moya looked no further than her garden for inspiration.

“I’ve been working on a series of North Carolina native plant illustrations” she tells. “I purchased a potted nursery grown ‘strawberry bush’ or *Euonymus americanus* last August and was patiently waiting for it to produce seed pods before Hurricane Florence blew in. I quickly planted it before the storm, and although it had been blown flat, one branch still had a few beautiful pods intact.”

De Moya illustrates live plants, but sometimes may cut a sprig or branch and place it in water. “The most challenging part of botanical illustration is capturing elements of the plant quickly,” she says. “Most flower blossoms in particular, change rapidly. In this case, the orange seeds lose their shine and dry and detach from the pod.”

Susan Fishbein’s piece came from realizing the smallest things in life shouldn’t be taken for granted, even if it means taking pleasure in tangerine toes as seen in her piece “Guilty Pleasure #5” (\$550). Her bare feet in the sun became a small inspiration after a breast cancer diagnosis last year.

“My world kind of stopped for a minute,” she details. “But I was so fortunate it was caught early. I guess that gave me a new outlook on life. The little things that I didn’t notice before became important to me, even nail polish.”

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Details:

It’s ALL Art

Featuring 40 artists from Art League of Leland

May 9, 6 – 9 p.m.

- Free

Leland Cultural Arts Center

1212 Magnolia Village Way