

I Heart Art

by Lauren Krouse | Aug 5, 2019 | North Brunswick

Art League of Leland will hold its first Fine Arts Exhibition & Sale in September.

What began as a small gathering of artists in a Leland neighborhood has grown into a nonprofit organization with nearly 140 members across the Cape Fear region. You can get to know this organization, Art League of Leland (ALL), and peruse fine art from 60 local artists at their inaugural show — I Heart Art Fine Arts Exhibition & Sale on September 21 and 22 in Brunswick Forest.

“We’re really excited about what we’re doing and how far we’ve come in a short period of time,” says Candace Whitlock, a fused-glass artist, ALL board member and chairperson for the communications committee.

Four years ago, six artists held an art show and sale in the Brunswick Forest community. Although the exhibition was small, it was well-attended and inspired a few artists to jumpstart their own neighborhood arts group. Shortly afterwards, Art in the Forest, the precursor to ALL, was born.

“There were three of us who just jumped into this with all six feet,” Whitlock says. Along with Barbara Hubbard, a watercolorist who now serves as ALL’s president, and Claude Riley II, an acrylic painter, Whitlock helped grow their artists’ community. Over time, informal meet-ups transformed into monthly meetings featuring speakers from Leland, Wilmington and the greater southeastern North Carolina area.

As Art in the Forest began to draw in participants from outside the Brunswick Forest community, the organizers saw a future for a larger and more inclusive organization. On April 12, 2018, they held their first meeting for the Art League of Leland, with 38 artists and art enthusiasts in attendance.

A nonprofit since January 2019, ALL hopes to continue expanding its reach to develop connections with artists and art lovers in and beyond the Leland area. Anyone age 18 or older and an artist or art lover living in southeastern North Carolina is eligible to become a member.



ALL's mission is to encourage, guide, support, inform and provide learning opportunities for its members. The organization meets the second Thursday of every month (excluding breaks in July, August and December) at the Leland Cultural Arts Center at 1212 Magnolia Village Way. Each meeting includes member updates, a member spotlight and a featured speaker who shares their work and answers questions about their artistic process, career and journey. The organization's scope continues to grow, with plans for even more offerings in 2020. "We have some great speakers lined up for the rest of the year, and we're in the process of preparing for field trips and hands-on workshops for next year," Whitlock says. "We're trying to get more people involved, not only in Leland, but also in the surrounding vicinity. We want to share ideas, help artists develop their skills and welcome art lovers to learn about art and enliven the arts culture here."

Elaine Cooper, a member of Wilmington Art Association and Art League of Leland, says ALL has grown into another lovely art association. "When the Art League of Leland started, there were

so many people who crossed between the two areas and joined,” she says. “The Art League of Leland and the Wilmington Art Association are basically next-door art associations. Everyone works together so well, and each of us is so happy when our fellow artists have success.” Cooper, a watercolorist and acrylic painter, will be displaying her work at the I Heart Art Exhibition & Sale. Many acrylic, watercolor, oil and pastel paintings will be shown, as well as photography, mixed-media art, hand-thrown ceramics and pottery, fiber, wood and glass artwork.

Jeffrey Meuwissen, a wood and glass artist, will be showing a number of unique pieces that combine stained glass and intarsia, a woodworking technique that uses varied shapes and species of wood fitted together for a mosaic-like result.

At the exhibition and sale, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a number of raffles for themed baskets, proceeds of which will support scholarships for local youth at Leland Cultural Arts Center. The event is free, and all are welcome.

Want to See Some Amazing Art?

Art League of Leland’s I Heart Art Fine Arts Exhibition & Sale

Brunswick Forest Fitness & Wellness Center, 2701 Brunswick Forest Parkway, Leland

Saturday, September 21, 9:30 am to 3 pm and Sunday, September 22, 11 am to 3 pm

www.ArtLeagueofLeland.org