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Cultural Council to start art tours to spotlight locals



Jurgen Grauer is soldering a stained glass dome at McMow Art Glass, one of the tour stops Nov. 7 in Lake Worth.

By [Jan Sjostrom](#)

Daily News Arts Editor

The Cultural Council of Palm Beach County is stepping up its promotion of local artists with a new series of tours to artists' studios, galleries and arts-related businesses.

"It fits our mission of encouraging people who live in Palm Beach County to buy art here," said Rena Blades, president and chief executive officer. "There's great art here that is being created and shown by local people."

Three morning tours are scheduled: Nov. 7 in Lake Worth, Dec. 4 in West Palm Beach and Jan. 23 in Palm Beach.

Guests will travel by bus and spend a half-hour to 45 minutes at each stop, said Nichole Hickey, manager of artist services. "We want to show them funky things that the average person can't go in and see," she said.

McMow Art Glass, a 30-year-old family business in Lake Worth, is one of the stops on the first tour. The firm has supplied art glass and stained glass for clients such as Cucina Dell' Arte, E.R. Bradley's Saloon, the Palm Beach Synagogue and the DeSantis Family Chapel at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Visitors will see how designs are made and watch craftsmen at work. Glass-crafting techniques, such as copper foil, coming and hot glass fusing, will be demonstrated and the pieces made will be given away to tour participants.

“This is a dying art form,” said Taylor Materio, whose parents founded the business. “We want to pass it on from generation to generation.”

Artist Claudia Jane Klein, whose commissions include works for the Lake Worth pier and Boynton Beach City Library, won’t demonstrate how she makes her large-scale aluminum and fiberglass sculptures. It’s dangerous work, and she doubts visitors would want to don the protective gear they’d need to get a close look. But she will talk about her process, using a big abstract figurative sculpture dangling from her studio ceiling and other pieces as examples.

Klein doesn’t often invite guests to her studio, in an industrial area in Lake Worth where neighbors don’t mind the noise she makes while welding. “In the almost 20 years I’ve had this studio, very few people have been here,” she said.

The Dec. 4 tour will include visits to Habatat Galleries and Studio 1608 in West Palm Beach. A stop at Luis Montoya Sculpture Studio is also tentatively scheduled.

Painter and framer Steve Johnson’s Studio 1608 complex includes second-floor studios for himself and painters Sam Perry, Ellen Liman, Dora Frost, Clemente Mimun and Jefro Williams, and photographers C.J. Walker and Montana Pritchard. Many of the artists will be present.

The trip will coincide with the complex’s big exhibition of the season, “Architecture of the Spirit,” which will feature as many as 100 artists in the downstairs space. Curator Jenny Cook will lead guests through the exhibition.

Johnson, a third-generation West Palm Beach resident, is thrilled about the tours. “I’m such a huge advocate of the arts and so in love with South Florida,” he said. “To see the growth there’s been in the arts community year after year is energizing.”

The Palm Beach tour will include stops at Holden Luntz Gallery, Gavlak Gallery and a private collector’s home. Deepening visitors’ appreciation of photography is part of Luntz’s job.

“It’s what we’re here for,” he said. “People can walk into a gallery and see what’s on the walls, but sometimes their access to the work might end there.”

If the tours are well attended, the council might expand them to include visits to Delray Beach, Jupiter and other art hot spots in the county.

Each tour costs \$40 for members and \$50 for nonmembers. There’s a \$15 discount for buying all three. For information, call 472-3342.