



HCAA Newsletter

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from Eileen Cave	1
PG Arts Council	2-3
Hyattsville Mayor	3
Kent Island	4
HCAA Current Exhibits	5
Art as Merchandise	6-7
HCAA Calendar	7
Sponsor Addresses & Contact Information	8

A Message from HCAA President-Elect Eileen Cave:

“Artivism” Redefines Artists as Empowering Change Agents

As I am making the rounds at professional conferences resuming in-person venues this spring and summer, the new buzz word that has caught my attention is “artivism.” It is defined as: “The practice of promoting a political agenda through acts considered to be art.”

Source: my alma mater Dartmouth College offers a comprehensive overview of this contemporary movement.

(See www.artivism.dartmouth.edu.)

As I researched this movement, I explored how my own role as an arts advocate and social justice arts integration practices can contribute to this movement. Most often, Artivism is associated with very “disruptive images” meant to change or influence the viewer or reflect contemporary issues in society.

In April, I exhibited three of my collages from my Thought Medallion Series at the Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council Arts’ tination Gallery at National Harbor in Oxon Hill, MD. These works contain more-complex scenes of social issues or focus on nature, prompted by my concern about climate change and the intersectionality of man’s survival at the expense of a healthy planet. During the reception, I was asked to explain the complexity of ideas in



Eileen Cave, HCAA President-Elect

my works, section by section. My marketing conclusion? An artist’s statement is invaluable to a work of art, and essential in the Artivism movement!

As a retiring art educator, I believe there is also a knowledgeable aspect of artivism derived from the intent when a work is created. The long-standing debated question: Can the artist be separated from his or her art? Should the separation be made so that the aesthetics of a work of art are not impacted by the politics or values of the artist? Does awareness of the artist’s intent, societal norms of the period, and the character of the artist provide a more accurate understanding of creative intent? What do you think?

Editor’s Note

We’re looking outward in this edition, at social issues, other organizations, and outside opportunities. We’d love to hear your response and your related ideas and experiences. You can email me at dmelliott7@comcast.net. Read on!

PG Arts Council Offers Support, Opportunities for Local Artists

by Pete Pichaske

Art can be a lonely business, as any artist—and anyone who has googled “art is a lonely business” and gotten the 49 million-plus hits that pop up—knows.

That reality is a big part of why organizations like the Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council (PGAHC; not to mention the Hyattsville Community Arts Alliance) exist: to offer support and succor for artists.



Launched in 1981 as a non-profit corporation by a group of arts professionals and enthusiasts, the PGAHC’s purpose, according to its web site, is “to promote, foster, encourage, coordinate, and exchange information and activities concerning culture and arts.”

“The mission of the organization is to make sure that the arts are essential, in every aspect, within the county,” said Rhonda Dallas, PGAHC’s executive director since 2011. “We are the advocate and the resource for building sustainability of our arts organizations and our artists.”

Yvette Caldwell, chairman of the organization’s board of directors, put it this way: “Our main role is to make sure we, as a county, are promoting art. It’s important that we expand opportunities in the county, and ensure that art will not be ignored in Prince George’s County—that it will be a vital element in the economic development of the county.”

The past 10 years have been a decade of expansion for PGAHC. Its budget has soared from \$165,000 a year to nearly \$2 million, and the size of the staff has grown from two employees to seven, six full-time and one part-time.

In addition, the arts council has led the way in starting several new initiatives. These include creation of a county poet laureate and, to give local filmmakers a boost, the Prince George’s Film Office. The first annual Prince George’s County Film Festival, scheduled at various venues, will be held this September.

Moreover, Dallas said, the PGAHC has made sure that advocates for the arts have more of a voice in county decisions on a range of issues and policies. “We have a seat at the table now with every economic development strategy happening in the county, and having that seat amplifies the voice of the creative community,” Dallas said.

As an example, she said, arts will play a vital role in development along the Metrorail Blue Line corridor, with spaces set aside for public art. Elsewhere, she said, redevelopment will include repurposing vacant properties as artists’ studios.

Getting this sort of commitment and inclusion has been an educational process, Dallas said, as few county decision makers took such issues into account a decade ago. “When I started ten years ago, the (county) leadership did not understand the value of the arts in revitalization, in creating a vibrant, prosperous county,” she added. “But it’s a very exciting time for the arts right now.”

Still, not all is peaches and cream in Prince George’s County when it comes to supporting the arts.

Public funding for the arts historically has lagged behind more-affluent jurisdictions in the area, PGAHC executives agree, and the pandemic has made matters worse. County revenues have taken a hit the past couple of years, and, at the same time, more residents have needed financial assistance. As a result, the county has cut funding for the arts.

While pleased with the progress over the past decade, PGAHC leaders say more is needed. Their wish lists include such things as creating more spaces for public art in both public and private developments (plans for this, in bus shelters, for example, are already in the works) and innovative efforts to help artists own their studio space.

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(PG Arts Council *continued from page 2*)

Whatever the future holds, PGAHC leaders say their mission will remain the same: Helping local artists. It's a mission in which they firmly believe. "A good arts community is transformational," said Sherri Bryant-Moore, the council's director of development and community grants. "Community engagement, mental and behavioral health—all of those issues become better where you have a vibrant arts community."

"That is why we exist," she added. "To amplify, elevate, promote and support our arts organizations and artists to help them fulfill their mission."

The pandemic has been a difficult time for artists around the world, Dallas said, but the arts remain vibrant. "Artists try hard," she said. "They don't stop producing during a pandemic. That's what we do in the creative arts. We do not fold in the face of challenges."

HCAA Founding Member Robert Croslin Steps Up

by Eileen Cave

On June 24, 2022, Robert Croslin, who had been serving as the interim mayor of the City of Hyattsville, was sworn into office after winning the special election. Robert, also a jeweler and wood sculptor, is one of the founding members of HCAA, and helped organize the numerous HCAA Art Spins that have been held at City Hall.



Swearing-in ceremony for Hyattsville Mayor Robert Croslin.



Croslin with his artwork at Art Spin in 2017.

Obstacles do not block the path, they are the path.

Zen Proverb

Kent Island—Art Island

by Delia Mychajluk and Maureen Wheatley

Kent Island Federation of Arts (KIFA) started out 60 years ago in Stevensville, MD, as a group of painters who wanted to paint together and show their work. Their first studio was a chicken coop, and they showed on the sidewalk in front of the local Acme Food store.

They eventually rented a house, and, in 1985, purchased a nearby 1890 Victorian house from the neighbors who held its mortgage. They have since added more space.

In 1995, after 10 years of ownership, they paid off the mortgage. Studio space on the top floor yields rents that contribute toward costs, and the organization has two or three fundraisers each year. KIFA also relies on membership dues—regular membership is \$40/year, youth membership \$15/year and seniors \$35 a year—and a few sustaining members, as well as grants from MD State Arts Council, Queen Annes's County Government (for building repairs), Queen Anne's County Arts Council, QAC United Way, Elks Club, and American Legion.

The group has received two endowments from members who have passed away. One endowment will be used for a clay center to be built on the property; kilns and other clay-related supplies are part of the endowment. A recent bequest from a former long-time member's trust is to be used for building maintenance.

Most of the grant money KIFA receives goes toward their educational programs. They conduct classes for both children and adults, and provide some merit scholarship support for two graduating high school seniors pursuing art education, and for individuals with special challenges who take classes conducted at My Little Studio, owned by Joan McWilliams, also located in Stevensville. Some members of KIFA are involved in classes at My Little Studio or rent space there to sell their art.

Members can exhibit their art on a continuous basis. The gallery is open and free to the public. KIFA sponsors various judged shows throughout the year where prizes are awarded. The shows are generally held monthly and are open to both members and non-members.

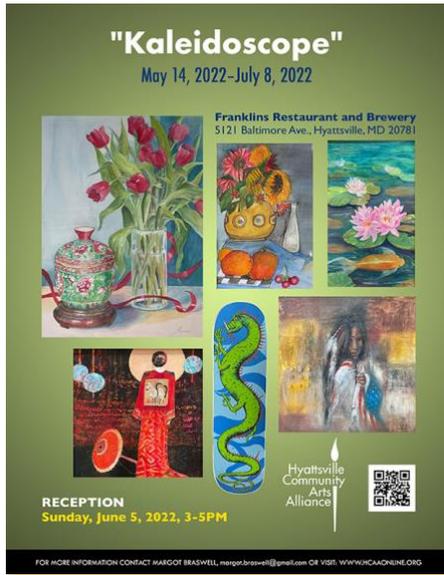
KIFA incorporates music into many of their receptions, and has also incorporated literary arts during various shows, including those held at a local library. KIFA continues to look for and take advantage of other opportunities to expand their presence in the local community and throughout the Eastern Shore, collaborating with other non-profits and non-profit art groups. KIFA is dependent on volunteers from the community to keep their doors open.

Over the years, KIFA has had a couple of part-time paid gallery directors and part-time office help. At present, they have a paid webmaster, who helps with the website and Facebook, and a part-time paid bookkeeper. The group also hopes to hire a part-time office person to focus on boosting membership and improving communications.

KIFA is currently open Thursdays through Sundays, and, per their website, it is best to call ahead to ensure that they are open.



KIFA's home at 405 Main Street, in Stevensville, MD on Kent Island. Photo by Maureen Wheatley.



You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

Maya Angelou

Selling Your Art as Merchandise

by Aimee Doyle

You may have seen famous artists' paintings reproduced on T-shirts, notecards, calendars, and tote bags. Museums have been doing that for a long time. But art doesn't have to be famous to get that kind of exposure—or those kinds of sales. There are websites that will help you turn your artistic paintings or designs into merchandise. This business model works because these companies don't actually make the product with your image until someone orders it. So the company doesn't need to keep a huge inventory of printed products—and neither do you.

Here are two well-known companies for you to take a look at. Although getting started with each of these companies is free, these sites also offer premium plans (at fairly reasonable prices) so artwork and art products get greater exposure and additional sales opportunities.

CafePress
www.cafepress.com

CafePress was one of the first companies to use this business model and was founded in 1999. You can create customized gifts for friends or family, or you can sell items like coffee mugs with your art reproduced on the mugs. Go to the website and scroll down to “Start Here. Become a Seller.” Here's, generally, how it works. Create a free account. Choose the base products that will go best with your artistic image. Upload your image; the site gives you advice on how to get the best results. There are lots of product options, from clothing to accessories (T-shirts, dresses, onesies, flip flops, face masks, hats), to drinkware (shot glasses, coasters), to home décor (prints, posters, bedspreads, magnets, tea towels), to miscellany like puzzles, stickers, and banners. You retain the intellectual property rights to your images—essentially, you're just granting CafePress a license to print and sell.

You pay no upfront costs. CafePress sets a base price for a product; you set a markup for that product (the markup is the value added by your art). The buyer pays the total cost to CafePress. CafePress then sends you a check or deposits money in an account for your share (the markup). So, it can be a stream of free money for you for no work at all, once you set up that shop. This part of the website gives you the nuts and bolts: <https://www.cafepress.com/p/help-creating-selling>. It has clickable sections on getting started, getting paid, designing, and selling. Check out YouTube videos on how to make money with CafePress, or you can read this helpful wikihow article: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Money-on-Cafepress>.

Fine Art America | Affordable Wall Art from Independent Artists
<https://fineartamerica.com>

This site bills itself as the “world's largest online art marketplace and print-on-demand technology company.” Like CafePress, Fine Art America sets a base price, and the artist adds the markup on top of that base price. Whatever you set as your markup, that's exactly how much you earn on the sale. Let's say that the base price for a 24" × 36" canvas print is \$50 and that you set your markup to be \$25. A buyer would pay \$75 for the canvas print, and you would earn \$25.

One interesting option offered by Fine Art America is that you can also sell your original artwork 100% commission-free. If a site visitor is interested in purchasing an original work, that person can email you directly from your profile page. You handle shipping and other logistics, but the money is all yours. In addition, Fine Art America offers you the opportunity to issue online press releases, create blog posts, promote events, compete in contests, and participate in professional networking through moderated groups. Further, there are a number of tools for tracking sales, visitor traffics, and comments on your art.

Logistics are laid out at <https://fineartamerica.com/sell-art-online>. YouTube has a Fine Art America video called “Fine Art America Review – What It Is – How To Use It – What I Think of It”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOPRywweUUE>.

(continued on page 7)

(Art as Merchandise *continued from page 6*)

There's even an inexpensive book on Amazon, published in 2017, called *Making Merchandise from Art*, by Lisa Shea. It looks like a good place to start to get some ideas, and it will walk you through the basics of taking photos of your art, uploading them to a computer, and using sites like CafePress and Fine Art America.

CafePress and Fine Art America are perhaps the best known of these sites, but there are many others out there. Check out Zazzle (www.zazzle.com), which offers products for entertaining and events, or Red Bubble (www.redbubble.com), which has a new "Pets" category. Have a great idea for a bandana for dachshunds? This may be your site.

Individuals who have sold for a while typically recommend the following: You should endeavor to produce good artwork that works well for the medium of a T-shirt or a mug or towel or cards—whatever product will make your design or artwork shine. For example, a painting with a lot of fine detail will likely not work well on a refrigerator magnet. If you're ambitious, you can look at these sites not as an end in themselves but rather as a stepping-stone to bigger things. There's a lot of competition (each of these sites offers literally millions of products), and you could probably make more money selling your work on your own website, or on a platform like Etsy, which is designed for independent sellers. But, regardless of how you market your art, and your art merchandise online, generating real income means treating your endeavor like a business from the start, including saving and re-investing funds, and tracking your income and expenses.

Before signing up, take a look at several sites, see which ones you like, look at reviews, and read advice from artists who have tried selling this way and either love it—or not. These sites are intriguing, and it may be worth giving one of them a try. Would it work for you and your art?

HCAA Calendar July–September

July

July 9: 9 AM	Franklins Installation "Fantasy"
July 9: 9:45 AM	Fleisher's Installation "Thoughtful Renderings"
July 9: Noon	Prince George's Plaza Community Center (PGPCC) Installation "Travel View"
July 9: Noon	PGPCC Solo Wall Installation
July 17: 2–4 PM	PGPCC Solo Wall Reception

August

Aug 5: 6–8 PM	Community Forklift First Friday
Aug 6: Noon	PGPCC Solo Wall Installation
Aug 7: 3–5 PM	Franklins Reception
Aug 21: 2–4 PM	PGPCC Reception

September

Sept 2: 10 AM to 8 PM	Greenbelt Labor Day Festival
Sept 2: 6 PM	Community Forklift First Friday
Sept 3: 10 AM to 8 PM	Greenbelt Labor Day Festival
Sept 3: Noon	PGPCC Solo Wall Installation
Sept 10: 9 AM	Franklins Installation "New Perspective"
Sept 10: 9:45 AM	Fleisher's Installation "Vision Quest"
Sept 10: Noon	PGPCC) Installation "Heritage Reflections"
Sept 17: 12–6 PM	Bladensburg Waterfront Festival
Sept 25: 2–4 PM	PGPCC Solo Wall Reception

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