

Haute, haute, haute
2013 Studio Tour weekend promises to be classier affair
by E. Assata Wright
Reporter staff writer
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If Jersey City is ever really going to become the best mid-sized city in America, as the new mayor is oh so fond of saying, it's going to have to prove, figuratively speaking, that it knows how to put on a tuxedo and heels and sit proper at the opera, just like the big kids. In other words, small and amateur will have to give way to professional and polished.

To that end, Luca Cusolito, who was selected by Pro Arts to coordinate the 2013 Artists' Studio Tour, said last year was a "turning point" for the tour and she felt there was enough history and momentum to take the event to another level.

"Over the years I've been to a lot of group art exhibitions. I like to attend Armory Week (in New York City). I like to attend SCOPE and Art Basil in Miami. I've definitely gotten a taste of what other [organizations] are doing to showcase artists in a group exhibition setting. We have so many wonderful opportunities in Jersey City, we really deserve to have something nice and something memorable, and that's what I hope to achieve."

'We have so many wonderful opportunities in Jersey City, we really deserve to have something nice and something memorable, and that's what I hope to achieve.' – Luca Cusolito

Hosted and organized by the Jersey City Division of Cultural Affairs and the nonprofit organization Pro Arts, the annual Artists' Studio Tour is a free two-day self-guided walking tour of galleries, exhibitions, artists' studios, and art in public spaces. The Hudson Reporter is a tour co-sponsor.

Each year the tour, which has grown in recent years, showcases the work of professional artists who live and create in Jersey City, but whose art may be unfamiliar to the larger community. While many sites along the tour route are located downtown organizers said there will be several dynamic group shows in the Jersey City Heights, Greenville, and Bergen-Lafayette communities as well.

Lots to see

For the second year the tour will return to the Bergen-Lafayette-based Tenmarc Building, at 430 Communipaw Ave., for its opening night kick-off party and a series of weekend-long group shows. The kick-off opening night party, which is free to the community, will get underway on Friday, Oct. 4 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Last year the cavernous Tenmarc space played host to several group art exhibits that were showcased on opening night. But in a change from 2012, Cusolito and Pro Arts did a public call for curators to curate separate shows in each of the Tenmarc spaces.

For example, Andrea Morin, who has curated several shows for LITM, curated a group show of erotic art titled "Into the Boudoir" for one of the Tenmarc rooms. Nyugen Smith has another space in Tenmarc that will combine visual and performance art. In a similar vein, Art House Productions is also curating a show at Tenmarc that will largely be theatrical in scope, but which will also encompass visual art as well.

Cusolito said special attention was paid this year to how the work there will be presented.

"Last year, there were kind of hodge podge walls," she recalled. "What we did this year is we took those walls down and we put up nice clean white walls. So, it's going to have an upscale exhibition-type of feel. There are a lot more things to see this year and a lot more room to walk around."

Another significant group show will once again take place on Oct. 5 and 6 at 150 Bay St., a space that will be so packed with offerings that Cusolito suggested that attendees set aside "several hours" for that show.

With emphasis going to the big group shows in the last couple of years, it's easy to forget that Artists' Studio Tour weekend is, in fact, a tour that encompasses many small individual work studios and stand-alone gallery exhibits that can get lost in the shuffle. This year, the Division of Cultural Affairs said there are about 400 artists showing their work in roughly 75 different venues throughout the city. With so much to see at 150 Bay and the Tenmarc, attendees shouldn't forget to check out the dozens of other work on display during tour weekend.

The full tour schedule will be published in the Sept. 29 edition of the Jersey City Reporter and will be available throughout the weekend of the tour.

All of the gallery shows included in the Artists' Studio Tour are free and open to the public.

So long, Fourth Street Art and Music Festival

For the past nine years, Fourth Street Arts has hosted a day-long outdoor live music festival that has always coincided with Studio Tour Saturday. This year the free festival will return for its 10th and final year, according to photographer and festival founder Mike McNamara.

"It's just time to wrap this...event up, and the tenth is a nice place to do it," McNamara told the Reporter in August.

In honor of its decade-long contribution to the cultural life of the community, the festival will go from (roughly) 10 a.m. to 10 at night on Saturday, Oct. 5.

The day will start Breakfast with the Beatles at 10:15.

"There's going to be a live band that's going to play a one-hour set of Beatles songs and for anybody who comes there's going to be free coffee, juice, and bagels," McNamara said.

This will be followed by an interactive performance by Preschool of Rock at 11:30 a.m. and Three Little Birds. Both bands are kid-friendly and should appeal to families.

For those interested in more adult fare, the day will feature 10 additional bands, including Wyld Life, Crazy in the Brain, Born at Sea, the Dove Cats, and Rest Ashore, among others.

Also included in this year's Art and Music Festival will be the Jersey City Homebrew Competition, from 4 to 8 p.m. at 377 Newark Ave. The Homebrew Competition will feature over 25 homebrews produced by Jersey City brewers and others. Participants will have an opportunity to sample the available beers and vote for their favorites.

Prizes will be given to the top two brews, as decided by a panel of judges, although there will also be a "people's choice" award given as well.

While the Artists Studio Tour and the Art and Music Festival are free events, there is an admission fee to participate in the Jersey City Homebrew Competition. Tickets are \$17 in advance and \$20 the day of the event. To purchase tickets in advance, visit jchb.brownpapertickets.com. A service fee will apply. Proceeds from the competition will benefit Fourth Street Arts' scholarships given to Jersey City high school students with an interest in pursuing an arts degree in college.

"It's going to be mellow, but music heavy," McNamara said of this year's Art and Music Festival. "We have two stages right next to each other. So, it's going to be music, after, music, after music with no breaks. There will be a big final jam to end it all."

McNamara and the Fourth Street Arts organization are regrouping, he said, and might return in 2014 with a summer concert event in lieu of the October Art and Music Festival.

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Jersey City Artists Studio Tour Returning This Weekend

By Paul Cox • Oct 4th, 2013 • Category: Arts, Blog

The Jersey City Arts Studio Tour (JCAST) is back for its 23rd year, a collaboration between the city Division of Cultural Affairs and local arts organization Pro Arts Jersey City.

The weekend of free, self-guided walking tour of Jersey City studios, community spaces, and even business featuring celebrated art and music will begin today, Oct. 4, and wrap up on Sunday, Oct. 6.

Showcasing over 400 artists and 75 venues, the sprawling tour aims at highlighting Jersey City's continually rising art and music scene, while giving art lovers a chance to leave their current stomping grounds for exhibits in areas of the city they may not be familiar with.

JCAST kicks off with an opening party tonight, Oct. 4, from 6 pm – 9 pm at one of the flagship locations for the weekend, the Tenmarc building located at 430 Communipaw Ave. Featuring 17 curated group exhibitions with over 450 pieces of art that include the Pro Arts Members Show, "In The Boudier", "Dark Fable" visual art and performance by Art House Productions, and music by The Smoove Sailors, Nobuki, and special guests.

Starting at 5:30 pm there will be free shuttle buses departing from the Grove Street PATH Station heading to the venue. Return service will be available until closing.

On Saturday and Sunday, exhibits and studios will be free and accessible to the public between noon and 6 pm.

During the entirety of the weekend, art enthusiasts, Jersey City adventurers, and anyone wanting to enjoy something out of the ordinary, are encouraged to move between the different establishments at their leisure and whim. With events in nearly every part of the city, from Greenville to the Heights, the tour hopes to not only bolster support for the arts, but to also stretch the idea of where art can be found and how it affects the community.

"Jersey City's artists are a vital part of our community and we encourage everyone to join us in celebrating their creativity and supporting the arts," said Mayor Steven Fulop. "We recognize how important the artists are to the vibrancy of our city, and not only do we embrace the arts, we are working to expand the role of art in our community."

"As far as I am concerned, the Jersey City arts community is deserving of every ounce of support that can be offered to insure that they not only survive, but thrive, in our city. Our visual and performing artists make our city a more beautiful place to visit and to call home," adds Maryanne Kelleher, director of the Division of Cultural Affairs.

"The Jersey City Artists Studio Tour promises to be an amazing sensory experience for all tourgoers," adds Kelleher.

Highlights of the this year's Studio tour include an Hispanic Heritage Month group exhibition at City Hall celebrating Hispanic American Culture, "A≠A" a group exhibition at [Panepinto Galleries](#), The Drawing Rooms at 180 Grand St., and the new downtown gallery Freshly Printed at 383 Monmouth St.

Be advised that a notice sent our by City spokeswoman Jennifer Morrill stated that Mana Contemporary will be closed to groups during the Artists Studio Tour. Buses are cancelled to that stop.

The closing party will be held on Sunday, Oct. 6 from 6 pm – 9 pm in the courtyard at 150 Bay Street, featuring a performance by blues musician Eliza Neals, Debra Devi, and Kit Vogalsang.

Tour maps can be obtained from tour welcome tents at Grove Street PATH Plaza and City Hall during the weekend.

Check out JCI's online map here (bit.ly: <http://bit.ly/2013JCArtTourMap>)

Disclosure: The Jersey City Independent is a proud media sponsor of the JCAST.

JCI's Coverage from the 2012 Jersey City Artists Studio Tour:

- [PHOTOS: Jersey City Artists Studio Tour 2012](#)
- [Artists and Their Work: A Series of Jersey City Artists Studio Tour Portraits](#)
- [Writer Summer Dawn Hortillosa's 'first date' with the tour](#)
- [Spectacular Opening Party Reminds Publisher Catherine Hecht of 111 First Street](#)
- [Local Artists Banding Together for 22nd Annual Jersey City Artists Studio Tour](#)





Thousands participate in 23rd annual Jersey City Artists Studio Tour



By **Summer Dawn Hortillosa** / For The Jersey Journal

on October 07, 2013 at 3:03 AM, updated October 07, 2013 at 3:06 AM

Print

Jersey City was the destination of choice for art lovers this weekend as the 23rd Jersey City Artists Studio Tour drew thousands of aficionados.

Attractions included installation group shows like the steamy “In the Boudoir” and “Dark Fable” which married visual art, creative writing and theater. There were also performances by conceptual artist Nyugen Smith and the cast of the forthcoming play “A Legend of Communipaw.”

The fun started Friday at the Tenmarc Building, 430 Communipaw Ave., a flagship location for the tour, which is run by the city Division of Cultural Affairs and Pro Arts Jersey City.

“I’m really encouraged by the tremendous amount of community support and really proud of the artists and curators who put this together,” said Studio Tour Coordinator Luca Cusolito.

On Saturday, Downtown Jersey City, the most art-saturated area of the city, saw plenty of traffic with crowds flocking to the last 4th Street Art and Music Festival and other community spaces, businesses and venues participating in the tour.

Photographer Charlie Steiner, who is part of a Pro Arts exhibit at CityLife Church, 125 First St., in the Powerhouse Arts District, said he likes showing in nontraditional spaces.

“I like being in places where people see art in their normal life,” he said.

Painter and graphic designer Andy Castillo said yesterday he was excited to be opening his home and studio at 179 Newark St. for the fourth time. Many visitors, he said, enjoy the intimacy of the space and ask him about more than just his paints or process.

“They ask about the Dominican Republic, my life back there, why I came over here and the transition process in becoming an artist here,” he said.

Artist spots outside of Downtown also made waves this year. Those venues included Evening Star Studios, 11 Monitor St., in Bergen-Lafayette, Project Greenville, 128 Winfield Ave., and the Distillery Gallery.

“It’s grown way beyond our initial imagination,” Franc Palaia, co-founder of the tour, said about the annual event. “Big doesn’t always mean better, but in this case, there are more artists now and the tour is growing according to its needs.”

Artist Norm Kirby, who curated “Drawings and Paintings” at Tenmarc and displayed wire “drawings” at BigDrum Art and Framing, 127 First St., said the tour is a great opportunity to interact with peers.

“It’s interesting to see what artists are making and what they think of (my work),” he said.

Sawadee Thai curator Joan Marie Palmer said the tour, which ended yesterday at 6 p.m. and included more than 70 locations, shows what JC has to offer. “Jersey City is really turning around,” she said. “There are great artists in Jersey City...There are great things happening here.”



Jersey City Artists Studio Tour starts off strong

Summer Dawn Hortillosa / For The Jersey Journal By **Summer Dawn Hortillosa / For The Jersey Journal** on October 05, 2013 at 4:45 PM, updated October 05, 2013 at 5:29 PM

The 23rd annual **Jersey City Artists Studio Tour** is off to a strong start with crowds visiting over 70 locations for the citywide event.

Hundreds attended the kickoff party at the Tenmarc Building, 430 Communipaw Ave., a flagship location for the tour, which is run by the city Division of Cultural Affairs and Pro Arts Jersey City.

Attendees were immersed in art in installation group shows like the steamy "In the Boudoir" curated by Andrea Morin and "**Dark Fable**" by Art House Productions which married visual art, creative writing and theater. There were also performances by conceptual artist Nyugen Smith and the cast of upcoming play "A Legend of Communipaw" directed by Trish Szymanski, adapted from a Washington Irving short story set in late 1600s Dutch Jersey City.

Studio Tour Coordinator Luca Cusolito said last night was a success.

"I'm really encouraged by the tremendous amount of community support and really proud of the artists and curators who put this together," said Cusolito. "It's nice to see the (artists and curators) interacting," she added. "I'm proud that we've facilitated that."

Franc Palaia, who founded the tour and remembered when it only included about 25 studios, was pleased to see how far it's come.

"It's grown way beyond our initial imagination," said Palaia, who has a studio on Fourth and Newark. "Big doesn't always mean better, but in this case, there are more artists now and the tour is growing according to its needs."

Today, tourgoers are making their way to venues in neighborhoods like Downtown Jersey City, the Village, the Powerhouse Arts District, the Heights, West Side, Bergen-Lafayette and Greenville.

One of today's highlights is the 10th annual 4th Street Art and Music Festival at Fourth Street and Newark Avenue. Hundreds are turning out to the Village neighborhood **for what will be the final edition of the event**, which is featuring local bands like Overlake, Crazy and the Brains, Wyldlife and even Star-Ledger and Journal correspondent Jim Testa. Local artists and vendors are also joining in on the fun.

4th Street Arts' Mike McNamara reflected on the legacy of the popular event, which ends today at about 10 pm.

"We made a hub. We gave artists a place to go at night after 6 p.m. when everything closes down," he said. "Everyone just came here and it was amazing."

Now, he says, other venues are also becoming "hubs," such as 150 Bay Street, which is home to dozens of resident artists and will also host the closing party for the tour tomorrow from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Steps away from 150 Bay are several artist studios and group exhibits like "Memento Mori" at Warehouse Cafe, 140 Bay St., which mixes playful and serious looks at mortality, and a photography exhibit by several Pro Arts Jersey City members at CityLife Church, 125 First St.

Photographer Charlie Steiner, who is showing vivid shots of workers repairing rice terraces in northern Luzon, Philippines, said he's glad to display his work at CityLife.

"I like being in places where people see art in their normal life," he said.

While group shows in galleries, businesses and community spaces are increasingly becoming hot spots on the tour, there are still plenty of good old-fashioned studios to visit. Artist and graphic designer Andy Castillo, for example, is opening his home at 179 Newark St. for the fourth time.

"I really like it because people respect my area. They know it's a private space," said Castillo, who hangs his black-and-white acrylic paintings in the common area of his apartment, where you can also see his work computer, pictures of his 6-year-old son Daniel on his fridge, and other personal mementos.

Many visitors, he says, enjoy the intimacy of the space and ask him about more than just his process or what paint he uses.

"Some people come here and are very into not only my artwork, but also my life," he said. "They ask about the Dominican Republic, my life back there, why I came over here and the transition process."

Many say getting to know local artists is one of the best perks of the tour.

Jayne Freeman, a local writer and childbirth educator, said she tries to go to every art event possible in JC. "The art scene has been a part of my world since I got here," she said. "I always thought it was better to move here than any other part of Jersey from Manhattan...here we have things like they have in DUMBO, Williamsburg or what SoHo used to be. And what's different about Jersey City is that here, you can know virtually all the artists. It's more fun that way."

The Jersey City Artists Studio Tour continues through 6 p.m. today and from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. tomorrow at 72 venues throughout the city. Maps can be obtained at various stops as well as at City Hall, 280 Grove St. Shuttle buses going to key stops citywide depart from City Hall.

Stay tuned tomorrow for more coverage of the tour.

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