



Newsletter

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September, 2026

General Meeting September 26

10:00am
Francis Branch
St. Joseph County Public
Library Pasture Room

Speaker
Melanie Golden
Quilling

President
Laura Elliott

Vice President
Kristen O'Dell

Secretary
Elisabeth Simeri

Treasurer
Paul Thornton

Exhibits

Historian

Hospitality
Dee Thornton

Membership
Emily Thomas

Publicity
Catherine McCormick

Publications
Joan Spohrer

Past President
Dee Thornton

President's Corner

I thought last year's show at Fernwood was a record breaker, but NIA's artists came through with even more works of art this year! My humble thanks to everyone who generously volunteered their time and talents to make this show a success. Those who participated by pre-registering online, using our new system, went from 40% to 80%!! The combined effect was greater efficiency receiving the artworks, greatly reduced hours of travel and time to hang the show, and there were no delays in meeting the requirements of the contract with Clark Gallery. Last year it took 5 hours to hang 54 works of art compared to 3.5 hours this year. Cooperation between Susan Ward, curator, and the team of installers was a key to our success.

During our intake day, Paul Thornton, our Treasurer collected payments and logged entries. Catherine McCormick assisted with filling out W-9 forms, receiving the artworks and assisting the curator with arranging them with the correct labels. The artworks entered in the show aptly reflected a range of responses to the theme: "Seasons of Change". Since this is an all-members show there will also be additional awards given by our judge, David Baker. I look forward to celebrating with you all, NIA and all it has to offer our community, at the closing reception on November 15th, 1-3 pm.

Until then, Kristen O'Dell has lined up guest speakers for our General Meetings, September 26th and November 7th, who will inspire you with their experience and inform you about one of NIA's founders.

Best regards,

Laura Elliott, President



Crew Members who installed the NIA show at Fernwood. l-r: Fred and Vasilisa Kiselevich, Susan Ward, Todd and Laura Elliott. Not pictured: Paul Thornton, Laura Hensley and Cathy McCormick.

Sept Presenter Melanie Golden

Sturgis-based artist Melanie Golden has spent the past several years refining her craft in the art of coiling paper. Originally working in more traditional mediums such as acrylics and watercolors, she eventually discovered a passion for creating intricate works with paper—a medium that has become her artistic signature. This is called quilling, which is an art form where you roll, shape and glue thin strips of paper to make intricate designs.

Melanie's work has been featured in several local publications, and she has participated in the Art Around Town as well as the Art Prize Exhibition for the past three consecutive years. She was also selected to create the City of Sturgis's first public art installation and was commissioned to create a piece for Glen Oaks Community College, further establishing her reputation as a distinctive and accomplished regional artist.

Melanie will bring several finished pieces, as well as have one project to demonstrate the various stages of the process. She will go over a brief history of the art of quilling as well.

Art Matters

Idris Busari's music video, Father (<https://bit.ly/fathersong>), was selected and will be screened at Riverbend film festival 2026 in downtown Goshen. RiverBendFilmFest.com

Idris' music video, One Chance Love (<https://bit.ly/onechancelove>), was selected and will screen at All Africa Independent Film Festival 2026 in Rwanda. aaiffafrica.com

His art piece, Sing for Joy, was accepted and will be exhibited at West Grand Neighborhood Organization for ArtPrize 2026. artprize.org

Tom Fehlner's watercolor portrait, "The Old Rock Star" was included in the Round the Bend Exhibition at the South Bend Museum of Art this summer. southbendart.org



The Old Rock Star

Mary Firtl received a Judge's Award at the Northern Indiana Pastel Society 20th Anniversary exhibition held at Heartland Art Center, Plymouth, IN for her pastel "A Walk in the Woods."



A Walk in the Woods

Mary will exhibit work with Catherine McCormick and Peg Luecke in "Three Visions in Soft Pastel" Sept. 5 - Nov. 21, 2026 at The Space In-Between Gallery, 196 Water St., Benton Harbor, MI. A reception will take place 2 - 4pm Sunday, Sept. 27. facebook.com/p/The-Space-In-Between

Linda Fritschner had two paintings accepted for the 37th Art and Social Justice Exhibition, July 9 - August 19 at the Colfax Cultural Center. "Maintenance is an Economic Problem" received a first place award.



Maintenance is an Economic Problem

Lisa Kiselevich's photo "Rockwellian Amidst Orwellian" received the Orval O. & Margaret C. Haag Memorial Award at Salon Show "My America" at South Shore Arts (June 19 - August 15). southshoreartsonline.org



Rockwellian Amidst Orwellian

Sunday Mahaja will be showing his work "Every Little Girl's Dream" at Artprize this year from Sept-18-Oct 2 at Gerald Ford museum. artprize.org

Catherine McCormick will exhibit work with Mary Firtl and Peg Luecke in "Three Visions in Soft Pastel" Sept. 5 to Nov. 21, 2026 at The Space In-Between Gallery, 196 Water St., Benton Harbor, MI. A reception will take place 2 - 4pm Sunday, Sept. 27. facebook.com/p/The-Space-In-Between

Ramiro Rodruquez has some prints displayed at the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis as part of Consejo Grafico Nacional: Latino Printmakers in the United States, which is on display until May of 2027. He has a print accepted and displayed at the 102nd Hoosier Salon at the Indianapolis State Museum, which won two awards: one for a first time exhibiting artist and a third place in the Portrait category.

He will be exhibiting with **Laurie Rousseau** at the Chesterton Art Center's 4th Street Print Exhibition + Fest this October. chestertonart.org

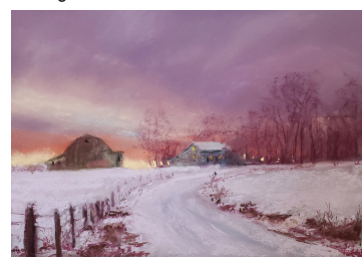
Deborah Stipanovich participated with five Duneland Plain Air Painters in Valparaiso Creative Council (VCC) Art Mural walk August 22. Painted the artists as they were working on the murals. Artwork will be displayed at the fall artist reception Sept 16 at VCC from 5-7pm. valpocreates.org

Dan Slattery received a Judge's Award for his pastel painting "End of The Lane" at the NIPS' 20th Anniversary Exhibit at the Heartland Artists Center in Plymouth. His watercolor "Riding Driftwood" won the First Place Award at the Heartland Small Wonders Exhibit.



Riding Driftwood

Joan Spohrer had a piece accepted to the Art Barn School of Art's 32nd Annual Juried Exhibition June 8-August 13, Valparaiso, IN. artbarnschool.org



End of the Lane

She had a piece accepted to the SBMA's Round the Bend exhibit this summer. She also won a Merit Award at the 59th annual Leeper Park Art Fair June 20-21.

Barbara Stephenson's pastel painting, "In My Rose Colored Glasses" won a Silver Award in the Great Lakes Pastel Society online show, July 12, 2026.

"Summer Splendor" Exhibit

June 2-26, Historic Plymouth Firehouse, Plymouth

Congratulations to the award winners of our summer exhibit at Heartland Art Center, held in the Historic Plymouth Firehouse June 2-26.

Thank you to judge Matthew Celmer of Moontree Studios.

Judge's Awards

"Sitges, Spain"
Joan Spohrer
Acrylic

"Oranges Study a la A. Picard,"
Mary Firtl
Pastel

"Queen of Spring"
Eileen D'Haeze
Monotype

Merit Awards

"Backside of the Moon,"
Laura Hensley
Acrylic Pour

"Butterfly on Cone Flower,"
Phil Gleissner
Photography

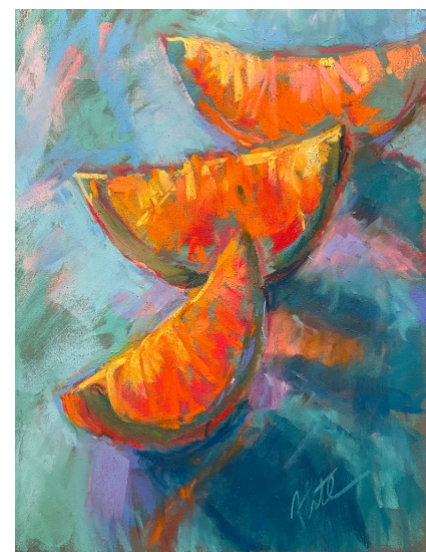
"Lighthouse Dawn,"
Dan Slattery
Pastel



Eileen D'Haeze



Joan Spohrer



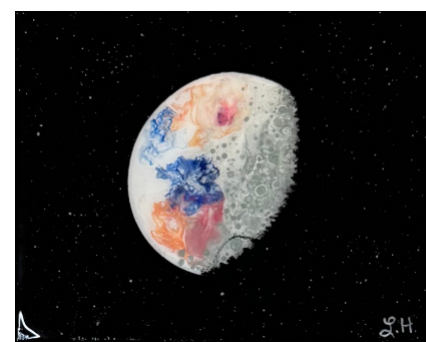
Mary Firtl



Phil Gleissner



Daniel Slattery



Laura Hensley

Calls for Art

Heartland Artists 38th Annual Juried Exhibit

runs September 29 - October 30, with a reception & awards October 30, 6-8 pm. Deadline to enter is September 19. Visit heartlandartgallery.com for a prospectus.

The 48th Elkhart Juried Regional is accepting entries September 8-19. The show will be on exhibit at the Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S Main St., Elkhart, October 10 - December 31. Visit midwestmuseum.org for a prospectus.

Holiday Market at MMAA

The Midwest Museum of American Art will host a Holiday Market Saturday November 7, 10am - 4pm. Applications for vendor spaces must be completed by October 1. Submissions must include images along with a completed application. Accepted artists will be notified by Friday, October 9. Visit midwestmuseum.org/mart/ to apply.

Art Barn Holiday Gift Gallery

The Art Barn School of Art's 9th annual Gift Gallery will take place October 21- December 24. Fine art and functional art pieces will be considered. Visit artbarnschool.org for more information and application.

NIA Calendar

Fall Exhibit

Fernwood Botanical Garden Clark Gallery
September 5 - November 15
Reception and Awards November 15, 1-3pm

General Meeting

Saturday September 26
Francis Branch Library
10am - 1pm
Melanie Golden paper quilling

General Meeting

Saturday November 7
Francis Branch Library
10am - 1pm
Journalist Gayle Dantzler on behalf of artist Carolyn Jagodits, cartoonist & fashion artist

General Meeting

Saturday March 13, 2027
Francis Branch Library
10am - 1pm
Alex Ann Allen, painter & muralist

May Social

Saturday, May 1, 2027
NIA Social with members of SJVWS and NIPS
noon - 2pm
Sacred Heart Parish Center, Notre Dame campus

"Three Visions in Soft Pastel" Exhibit Features NIA Artists

"Three Visions in Soft Pastel" featuring art by Catherine McCormick, Peg Luecke, and Mary Firtl will be on view Sept. 5 to Nov. 21, 2026 at The Space In-Between Gallery, 196 Water St., Benton Harbor, MI, in Benton Harbor's historic Arts District. The entrance is adjacent to the building's colorful mural. A reception will take place 2-4 pm Sunday, Sept. 27. The gallery is open Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:30 to 6:30. To schedule a viewing at another time, leave a message with curator John Gatto, 269-861-0030.

The three artists have worked together for more than 20 years as teachers and class members at South Bend Museum of Art. All have won awards in regional exhibits, are members of the board of Northern Indiana Pastel Society and have participated in the Hoosier Women's Art Awards at the Indiana Statehouse. Mary Firtl and Catherine McCormick teach pastel classes at the South Bend Museum of Art. A total of 24 works will be featured.

SBMA Art League Luncheon

September 15, 2026 • 11:30am
Speaker: Avon Waters, Pastel Artist and CEO of Art Nature Consortium
Papa Vino's Italian Kitchen, 5110 Edison Lakes Parkway, Mishawaka
Topic: Art Nature's project on glacial lakes, which includes museum exhibits and a PBS documentary. Manchester U biology professor Jerry Sweeten will join the discussion.
Reservations : southbendart.org

Classes

Daniel Slattery will be offering his watercolor landscape class, "Expressions in Water and Light", at the South Bend Museum of Art. This six-week course, for beginning and continuing watercolor students, meets on Monday afternoons starting September 14. For details or to register, go to <https://southbendart.org/education/#studio>.

Goshen Painters Guild will offer a workshop with artist Terry Armstrong Saturday Sept 19, 8:30am - 4pm. Cost is \$115. Registration and information can be found at goshenpaintersguild.org