

DELAPLAINE ARTS CENTER: THREE DECADES OF BRINGING ART TO THE COMMUNITY

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The nonprofit arts center was established in the 100-year-old historic Mountain City Mill building along Carroll Creek Park, at the very nexus of the city's renaissance, merging history, innovative green spaces, renewed economic growth and a thriving arts community.



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Turn back the clock to 1986. Carroll Creek still meanders through Downtown Frederick, silently recalling its cataclysmic swelling just 10 years before, and the Carroll Creek flood control project and park are still on the drawing board. A number of downtown shops now stand silent as longtime retailers, some multi-generational, retire and others struggle to compete with two bustling malls on the outskirts of town. Frederick County's arts scene is small, but getting ready to burst forth.

It was into this environment that The Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center was born. The nonprofit arts center was established in the 100-year-old historic Mountain City Mill building along Carroll Creek Park, at the very nexus of the city's renaissance, merging history, innovative green spaces, renewed economic growth and a thriving arts community.

Since its founding nearly 30 years ago, the Delaplaine has provided educational opportunities and experiences in the visual arts to the Frederick region through classes, exhibits and programs. A cornerstone of the region's vibrant arts community, the Delaplaine welcomes more than 80,000 visitors per year from the county and beyond. An on-site rental hall and gallery shop invite event-goers and shoppers from throughout the area.

The Delaplaine is an ideal place for both the art lover and the "art curious." More than 270 classes and workshops are offered each year. Among its instructors are some of the most respected artists in the region. Classes for all ages and skill levels include a variety of media including ceramics, drawing, painting, photography, wood-working and more.

The Delaplaine recently completed extensive renovations to its jewelry studio, expanding the space to more than twice its original size, providing dedicated workspaces for various machine and tools, and the addition of professional jeweler's benches. "They are my favorite feature of the new jewelry studio," said Gina Copanzzi, a metalsmith artist and jewelry instructor at the Delaplaine. "Both the novice and the advanced student can learn jewelry-making in a professional studio setting."

Exhibits change frequently in the Delaplaine's seven on-site galleries, and a reception on the first Saturday of each month invites people to come and meet the artists. The galleries are open every day and admission is always free.

"The Delaplaine's exhibits communicate a wide range of artistic expression including sculptural installations, contemporary realism, and solo exhibits by artists from around the country," explains Diane Sibbison, who has been the Delaplaine's Exhibition Manager for more than a decade. "The gallery space here is large enough to showcase group shows presenting national and international artists and arts organizations. Truly, there's something for everyone on our schedule."

Three satellite galleries are located at the Brunswick, Thurmont, and Urbana public libraries, expanding the arts center's reach beyond its own four walls into other areas of the county.

Making the visual arts accessible to everyone is one of the Delaplaine's fundamental goals. The Community Outreach Initiative provides free, hands-on art experiences to economically disadvantaged preschool-aged children, senior citizens, developmentally challenged adults, and other at-risk and underserved audiences. Community partners include organizations such as Head Start, Boys and Girls Club of Frederick County, the Alzheimer's Association, Arc of Frederick County, Frederick County Department of Aging, and local public and private schools.

"Our community outreach programs are supported by local businesses and residents who are dedicated to the arts and understand that access to them raises everyone's quality of life," said Catherine Moreland, Delaplaine CEO. "Outreach is not just something we do — it's a vital part of what we are."

"We've come a long way from a small grassroots organization to becoming a vital part of Frederick County's blossoming arts scene and an engine for economic growth," Moreland added. "But one thing that's never changed is the commitment of our members, donors, students and visitors to the Delaplaine and the arts."

Celebrating its milestone birthday in April 2016, the Delaplaine is busy preparing for its next 30 years of local art, and you are cordially invited along!

Photos courtesy of the Delaplaine Visual Art Education Center



For more information about upcoming classes, programs at The Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center, visit Delaplaine.org or call 301-698-0656.