



LAURA MORTON

Clockwise from top: Glass and wood sculptures by George Saldivar are in a window at the MPAF Gallery, which is located in Cannery Row; Dana Lemonier looks at art on display at the MPAF Gallery, a membership co-op that sells the work of about 30 artists; a child participates in a craft at the Monterey Museum of Art.



MONTEREY MUSEUM OF ART



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# Explore Monterey area's vibrant art scene

By Jeanne Cooper

The Monterey Peninsula's natural beauty has a long history of attracting artists, including Jules Tavernier, a French transplant to San Francisco who became a beacon to other creative spirits upon opening his Monterey studio in 1875.

Nearly 150 years later, visitors can not only find galleries and museums showcasing the art of the region but also enjoy opportunities to interact with today's Taverniers — and maybe unleash their inner artist as well.

At the Monterey Museum of Art, some 250 events a year include concerts, curator talks and workshops with artists, such as Carmel's Edi Matsumoto, who will demonstrate how to create a collage vision board on Nov. 16.

In December, the Monterey Museum of Art will invite the public to use chalk and markers to create a "giant" three-wall mural for its three-week "Illuminado: Art Connecting Community," exhibition, which will be paired with the return of a student art show called "Lumina Lane," according to Corey Madden, the museum's executive director.

"We turn the museum into the people's creative space," Madden said. "These are the kinds of things that demystify what it is to be an artist, and we meet people where they are. We don't ask that people come into the museum already venerating and understanding art history — we ask that they come in with their creativity and wonder."

Madden is proud of the museum's "content-full" exhibitions, including current shows featuring works by Japanese American and Chinese American artists affected by war and two pairs of celebrated West Coast artists.

"We're not just putting paintings up on the wall," she noted. "We're welcoming you in and saying, 'Let's go on an adventure together and be curious.' You might be making art and look up



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Susan Lemonier looks around at the art on display at the MPAF Gallery on Cannery Row.

and see something on the wall and say, 'Oh, now I understand why I'm doing this.' ... People just pour into the museum when we give people a chance to express themselves or discover something they've never experienced before."

Founded in 1969 by a group of Monterey County artists, Pacific Grove Art Center "grew out of the hippie movement and the tail end of the Chautauqua movement," according to Karen Owens, president of the nonprofit center's board of directors. "Our motto is building community through creativity, and we really take this to heart," she said.

The center's sprawling venue on the second floor of a building on busy Lighthouse Avenue includes four large galleries and 18 artists' studios. Visitors can meet the artists and tour the studios whenever the center debuts new gallery exhibitions, which coincide with downtown Pacific Grove's lively First Friday

## Details

**Monterey Museum of Art:** 559 Pacific St., Monterey, 831-372-5477, [www.montereyart.org](http://www.montereyart.org). 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Sunday. Closed Nov. 28 and Dec. 23-Jan. 10. \$15 adults, free for students, active military with ID and ages 18 and younger. Nov. 16: Create a vision board collage in an artist workshop with Edi Matsumoto, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.; \$50, register online. Dec. 5-22: "Illuminado: Art Connecting Community," interactive exhibition.

**MPAF Art Gallery:** 425 Cannery Row, Monterey, 831-655-1257, [www.mpaf.org/cannery-row-gallery.html](http://www.mpaf.org/cannery-row-gallery.html). 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Free admission.

**Pacific Grove Art Center:** 568 Lighthouse Ave., Pacific Grove, 831-375-2208, [www.pgartcenter.org](http://www.pgartcenter.org). Noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. Free admission.

evening festivities and change every two months.

"People get a chance to talk and interact with the artists, and the artists and the people really enjoy that," Owens said. In between opening gala

nights, which often include Owens' digital art projections on the nearby Pacific Grove Library and other buildings, the center hosts art classes with renowned Monterey artists such as painter Warren Chang, workshops with its

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Karen Owens, president of the Pacific Grove Art Center's board of directors

studio artists such as felt artist Sahar Jabr, life drawing classes, children's classes, hootenannies, book signings and other events open to the public.

"We have a lot of art up here," Owens said.

Visitors will always find at least one artist inside the Monterey Peninsula Art Foundation's gallery on Cannery Row. That's because the 32 artists chosen to show their works at the MPAF Gallery, a former carriage house with a cozy redwood interior, have each had to commit to running it at least one day a month. You may even get a two-fer, since some older artists may be paired with one of the younger artists for their shift, according to MaryLee Sunseri, the nonprofit foundation's board president and a pastel artist.

"We're a true co-op," she explained. "Every three months, we move our art seven spaces to the right, a reoccurring dance of this art that goes around our building, and then people bring in new art, too."

The current show, "Art Is Unique," runs through Feb. 28.

"We have so many different styles, everything from abstract art to very realistic art," Sunseri said. "We have every kind of medium, and some people are good at many different mediums, and so they bring in all kinds of different works. It's very special. People can walk in and there's going to be an artist on duty to show them around, or the artist can just hang back and let them enjoy seeing all the different art inside."



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Left: The work of Lise Aissen, at left, and Melissa Bispo is on display at the MPAF Gallery. Right: Artist Belle Yang talks at the opening of her exhibition that also features work from her late father, "Imagining China: The Art of Belle Yang and Joseph Yang" at the Monterey Museum of Art. It runs through Nov. 24.