

Joan Mitchell Center open house Aug. 22 previews campus, artist residencies

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WILL COVIELLO

A new, modern 8,000 square foot building houses 10 artist studios at the Joan Mitchell Center.

The Joan Mitchell Center (2275 Bayou Road, 504-940-2500) holds an open house from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, and New Orleanians can meet foundation executives, staff and local artist recipients of emerging artist grants and tour the two-acre campus, which features 8,000 square feet of new, modern studio space, artist residences and a renovated community space in the corner building that once housed the

restaurant Indigo. The center is about to welcome 10 artists to the first iteration of its full-scale residency program, expanding on a 2013 pilot program.

"An artists in residence program is central to our idea of what artists need," says Joan Mitchell Foundation executive director Christa Blatchford.

The open house also features projections of work by incoming artists, a film about Joan Mitchell and light refreshments.

The New York-based Joan Mitchell Foundation follows the vision of its namesake, abstract expressionist painter Joan Mitchell (1925-1992), to support contemporary artists around the world. The foundation also lends the artist's paintings to museums and institutions and houses her archives.

Immediately following Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures, the Joan Mitchell Foundation started assisting New Orleans artists in need. It continued that assistance for three years and in 2010 bought property on Bayou Road to open its first satellite location, Blatchford says.

"We recognize New Orleans as a creative community that supports artists," Blatchford says. "We saw a tide of artists coming to New Orleans and out of New Orleans. That was inspirational to us."

In New Orleans, the foundation has invested \$12 million in acquiring the property, renovating buildings and constructing new ones, provided \$3.2 million in support to arts organizations and awarded almost \$1 million in artist grants. The center also has provided free use of its facilities to more than 60 arts and culture organizations, says Gia Hamilton, director of the Joan Mitchell Center. The compound hosts free monthly Community Coffee open houses with artists, artist talks and an annual town hall (the next one is Oct. 24 and it focuses on art and social justice in cooperation with the Louisiana Center for Children's Rights).



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A portrait of Joan Mitchell hangs in a common space among the center's new studios

The first round of residencies begins Sept. 15 and includes six visual artists in one to two month residencies, one artist who focuses on community engagement and three local emerging artists, who were nominated by peers and invited to apply to the program. Residents were selected from applications by current foundation grant recipients. Visiting artists include New York sculptors Xenobia Bailey, Heather Hart, Vendana Jain and Blane De St. Croix, Oregon painter Julie Green, Miami painter Glexis Novoa, Maryland painter Lavar Munroe, Wisconsin sculptor and installation artist Roy Staab and others. Local emerging artists include YaYa alum Paul Wright, NOCCA grad Miro Hoffman and painter Cecilia Givens. A total of 76 artists are scheduled to participate in 2015-2016. A full list of incoming and past participants is [here](#).



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The residential building features individual apartments and common spaces.

Resident artists get individual studio spaces, access to computers and digital equipment necessary to build a portfolio, professional development support, small apartments and support in meals and amenities.

Upcoming events include an operatic piece, Eco-hybridity, running Aug. 28-30 at Indigo House. Admission is free. The Sept. 9 Community Coffee features local curators and artists and there are refreshments from Pagoda Cafe. On Sept. 23, a Visual Mashup with the theme "Storytelling" features visual artists working with artists in other media in an informal presentation and networking event.



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