

Brush Strokes NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, *Bart Hudson*

Greetings from First City Art Center. I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday.

As we start the new year, I want to share what is happening at First City Art Center. Clearly, we are growing. It is exciting and encouraging that so many of our neighbors share a love of art and want to express their creativity. Our Ceramics Department has exploded. We have nearly 250 people taking class each week. Our glass department has turned a corner and we now have a great group of gaffers – both hobbyist and professional – that are regularly blowing glass. Our Make-Your-Own glass instruction has really taken off and is growing exponentially - if you have not yet tried your hand in the Hot Shop, we encourage you to give it a try. And our youth programming is bursting at the seams. 2025 saw a tremendous increase in Field Trips by both young and not so young and our summer camp, Creatisphere, grew by 25%.

All this increased activity does not come without some growing pains. Change is always difficult – but necessary. The overarching message is that *Art is Fundamental* to our well being and the desire to be creative is in our DNA. We strive every day to provide an environment connected to that creativity.

With our unprecedented growth, we are reimagining the Gallery 1060 building. We simply have run out of instructional space. We have had to close the original Youth Art Program building due to its structural condition and we must have space for our growing children's summer camp program. Soon, we will be converting the existing Administration building into 2 large classrooms and some much-needed storage. This will enable us to offer classes in new mediums that folks have been asking for and add classes where we have folks on waiting lists. We will move operations and staff into the existing gallery space and create a Gallery that will showcase work by the FCAC community. The gallery exhibitions and sales will be available to all FCAC students through a vetted process that ensures quality and variety. (More on this as the concept develops.) The open space will be available for art talks, lectures, demonstrations, and meetings. We will continue the history of the juried art shows.

We hope to see you on campus creating in 2026.



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2026 EVENTS

February 27th

Hot Glass Cold Brew: 70s Edition

April 11th

Artful Home: A Home & Garden Art Sale

May 1st

Hot Glass Cold Brew: theme TBD

October 10th

20th Annual Pumpkin Patch

November 14th

Pour & Play

December 4th

Hot Glass Cold Brew: Holiday PJ Party



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CERAMICS DEPARTMENT UPDATES

CERAMICS SUPPLY MANAGER

Garrett Allen

The placement of clay bodies has been adjusted to better stock a wider variety of opportunities for our students and our community. As a reminder, please be mindful to always get clay directly through Garrett, or your clay instructor, to ensure the proper materials are acquired. To fulfill needs in our area, we will also begin stocking low-fire slip. Additionally, it's finally time to restock our office retail space! We will be featuring a larger selection and variety of tools, as well as the much anticipated restock of AMACO Glazes and Underglazes! If you have any special orders, please send them in so they may be included on the shipment. If you have suggestions of what you'd like to see provided in the retail space, please feel free to send Garrett your suggestions.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with so many of you talented artists and to help provide the materials needed for your craft.

Send your orders to sales@firstcityart.org or call or text, 850-792-5162

DIRECTOR OF CERAMICS

Ben Twingley

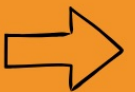
We welcome back all our returning ceramics students and are also happy to see many new faces in our studios as we kick off 2026.

I want to personally thank all of our talented instructors who continue to provide a creative experience for our students each week. Additionally, thanks need to go out to all our past and current volunteers who assist with events, open studio times and other tasks in and around our studios.

Speaking of volunteers, we started the new year with an effort to help our partner non-profit, Manna Food Pantries with their upcoming fundraiser, the Clover Fill a Bowl/Pick a Bowl event slated for March 6. Around 30 volunteer potters from FCAC created almost 250 ceramics bowls over two days. Thanks from us and Manna to all who participated.

Here is a link for information about their event: www.mannahelps.org/events/pick-a-bowl-fill-a-bowl/

**Read on for more exciting
ceramics department news!**



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GET FIRED UP! FOR OUR NEW KILN

We are excited to share that we have our eye and dreams on purchasing an industrial sized kiln for the Ceramics Department. Our oldest kiln has over 900 firings on it! The larger kiln will have the capacity of about two of our current kilns and provides for easier loading. This new front loading, double door kiln will advance our firing capability significantly. The addition of the kiln will allow us to retire our oldest barrel kiln (to be used for parts) and allow for a much quicker turnaround in student creations. This is a tremendous opportunity for our community. The ballpark cost of the kiln is \$40,000.

We have been offered a \$10,000 donation toward the purchase of the kiln as a matching opportunity. Every dollar donated will be matched from this commitment. This is *HUGE*. Please consider donating toward this effort. Every \$\$ counts. You can click this page, go to our website at firstcityart.org/donate, or stop in the office.

Thank you for considering being a part of this exciting opportunity at FCAC. We are grateful for every contribution!

GLASS DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Our glass department is thriving. Our glass artists are pushing the boundaries of their creativity and producing stunning art. We are fortunate to have several new blowers who are bringing new perspectives and ability to add to our seasoned crew that is the backbone of the department. Our "Make Your Own" opportunity has really grown in the last year. If you have every imagined blowing glass, MYO is a great singular introduction to test the water (or fire). Please note the upgrades to the hot shop. We are grateful for the staff attention to the details of this department.

Sadly, our campus kitty, Sophietta, has disappeared. She quickly became a campus favorite, visiting classes and greeting everyone. She disappeared just before Christmas. We maintain hope and her food bowl. She is chipped. Please let us know if you think you see her.

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YOUTH ART PROGRAM

YOUTH ART DIRECTOR *Raylene Solis*

Happy New Year!

The Youth Art Program has been busy providing more classes and field trips for local students of all schooling levels and types! As a reminder we have 6 week classes for ages 4-18 Monday through Thursday. Our Art Labs offer a variety of mediums every session to get students familiar with different types of art and processes. We also offer clay hand building classes for ages 7-17 where students are taught the basics of clay and are encouraged to build on these techniques to develop their skills.

Saturdays have become a day of rotating programming each month with an all ages (yes adults welcome) mixed media art class, clay hand building classes for 5-12 year olds, and a family clay date class to give an opportunity for kids and their grown ups to make something together!

YAP also offers an art camp for Escambia County School District student holidays as well as a weekly Summer Camp for 10 weeks between May and August.



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GALLERY 1060

STUDIO ARTISTS SALE



JANUARY 30: 2-6PM

&

JANUARY 31: 10AM-2PM

**DISCOUNTED WORKS FROM
LEADING LOCAL ARTISTS**

ALLEN JONES

JOE HOBBS

DIANE COLLINS

CHUCK LISNER

BEN TWINGLEY

JENNIFER FLEMMING

**@ FIRST CITY
ART CENTER**

1060 N GUILLEMARD STREET

