

news release



akron area **arts** alliance

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For Immediate Release

Images Available On Request

News in this Release:

- **Opening Reception Friday, August 15**
- **Four Free Art Demonstrations Open to Public**

Visual Arts Group Celebrates 75th Anniversary at Summit Artspace

(Akron, OH) – On Friday, August 15 from 6 to 8 pm, the Women’s Art League of Akron invites the public to help celebrate the opening of its 75th anniversary show at Summit Artspace Gallery. Titled *Then & Now Brushstrokes*, the juried exhibition features works by current club members, which were specially selected by artists John Smolko and Ken Kirkland. There will also be a display of historical paintings from the 1930s-1940s created by the group’s charter members.

The Women’s Art League first met on September 22, 1933 in the Rose Boulevard home of Florence Richardson. Twenty artists, mainly art teachers and socialites, attended. The league was formed in reaction to the for men only Akron Society of Artists, which was founded in 1931. The group, which is still active today, did not admit women until the 1980s.

The league women were professional and dedicated painters. One member, Greta Kempton, went on to paint Harry Truman’s official presidential portrait that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. They met every Friday to sketch and paint. Their favorite subject was landscapes, painted primarily in oils and watercolors. The club held shows to sell their works and hosted the annual Rubber Ball.

Well-known charter members include Gertrude Seiberling, Jane Barnhart, Julia Devell, Grace Rankin, Ruth Oenslager and Katherine Calvin. Paintings by these women and others have been loaned by collectors for the exhibit, which runs through September 20.

During the show, there will be four special Saturday events from 1 to 3 pm. On August 16, artist Nicki Lanzi will conduct a floral watercolor on canvas workshop. A \$5 supply fee can be paid at the door and participants should bring their own watercolors if possible. The rest are free art demonstrations:

August 23 – Prisma Color Pencil by Elinore Korow & Acrylic Landscape by Betty Wolfe
September 6 – Acrylic Floral by Barbara Lord & Watercolor Mixed Media by Linda Nye

September 13 – Watercolor by Sally Heston

There is no registration necessary for any of the events.

Summit Artspace, a project of the Akron Area Arts Alliance in cooperation with Summit County government, is dedicated to showcasing local art. The gallery is located at 140 E. Market St. in a historic, art deco building one block east of the Akron Art Museum. Admission and parking are free. Exhibition hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday noon to 5 pm.

The Akron Area Arts Alliance is a non-profit advocacy group. Its membership includes 46 arts and cultural organizations plus 80 arts supporters. Summit Artspace is supported by the Akron Community Foundation, Mary S. & David C. Corbin Foundation, Welty Family Foundation and Ohio Arts Council.

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