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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
OCEAN CITY ART LEAGUE OPENS NEW SHOWS AT  
FREE FIRST FRIDAY RECEPTION ON APRIL 3

OCEAN CITY, MD — March 30, 2026 — The Art League of Ocean City invites the public to the First Friday art opening on April 3 from 5-7 p.m. at the Ocean City Center for the Arts on 94<sup>th</sup> St. bayside. The public is invited to attend this free event with refreshments sponsored by PKS Investments and complimentary hors d'oeuvres.

The Thaler Gallery hosts “For the Love of Pastels” featuring the work of the Maryland Pastel Society. Founded in 1977, the Maryland Pastel Society is a nonprofit devoted to the promotion and development of professional, original works of art in the medium of soft pastel and to the creative and technical development of its members. While the Society had its roots in the Baltimore area, its members (over 200 today) come from all over the Mid-Atlantic region. The show will feature twenty-four Pastel Society members in the Thaler Gallery.

The Corporate Partner Juried Group Show, an annual exhibition, will be on display in The Sisson Galleria. The Art League receives support from more than 50 local businesses that have signed up to be corporate partners. “Our corporate partnerships are critical to keeping the Ocean City Center for the Arts up and running, and this is one of the ways throughout the year to thank them for their support. There is a vital connection between our local business community and the arts, and nowhere is that more visible than this show. This exhibition is a celebration of our deep gratitude for those who support us. We are recognizing that their generosity provides the tangible resources our artists need to thrive.” Jessica Bauer, Development Director, said. The cash awards judged by local artist and instructor, Katie Cassidy, are in honor of the corporate support the Art League receives all year round from the business community.

The Schwab Spotlight Gallery hosts UMES associate professors Elvin Hernandez, Brad Hudson and Collin Byrd, and celebrates Manga and Anime styles of animation originating in Japan, characterized by stark, colorful graphics depicting fantastic or futuristic themes. The Youth Manga and Anime show will also open on First Friday and continue through April 6. The Art League developed this exhibit to promote creativity among students outside formal art programs and to increase community awareness of the Manga and Anime art form. Students in middle, high school, and higher education submitted entries judged by Byrd, Hernandez, and Hudson. Past President, John Sisson and James Dufendach of Ocean City Comic Con recognize the artistic potential of students both within and outside formal art programs and have willingly sponsored the cash prizes for the student show. “We are incredibly proud to bring the bold world of Manga and Anime to the Schwab Spotlight Gallery,” said Rina Thaler, Executive Director

of the Art League. “This exhibit acts as a bridge between generations; by showcasing these professional works alongside the impressive talent of local students, we are fostering a space where creativity knows no bounds.

Studio E presents Pat Lang and Steven Sirota. Pat Lang, a Maryland-born, self-taught painter, has forged a personal language through experiment, persistence, and study of galleries and art publications. Her work has been widely exhibited and recognized for its tactile surface and lyrical color. Steven Sirota began making wire art in 1972; after pauses for military service and a business career, he revived the practice in 2025 as “Wire Works,” exploring tension and form in metal.

The Artisan Showcase, in the Felber Gift Shop, features artwork by Mallory Vara, an Ocean City, Maryland multi-media freelance artist whose work blends suburban and city influences, reflecting a mind where complexity meets simplicity and chaos meets calm.

The satellite galleries for the Art League of Ocean City, The Princess Royale at 9100 Coastal Hwy., hosts photographer Jim Halvorsen showcasing Ocean City Yacht Shots, and The Coffee Beanery at 94<sup>th</sup> St. will display the work of Carly Whittington, a plaster artist and photographer from Berlin, Maryland. The Arts Center shows will be on display through April 25; the satellite galleries, through June 28. More information is available at [OCart.org](http://OCart.org) or by calling 410-524-9433.

The Art League of Ocean City is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the visual arts to the community through education, exhibits, scholarship, programs and community art projects. Funding for this event is in part provided by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment of the Arts, organizations dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.