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## Landmark is 'pulsating with artistic life'

BY JASON BRAFF • THE JOURNAL NEWS • JULY 11, 2008

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NYACK - The Edward Hopper [House](#) Art Center is a living, breathing organism of the arts.

From the outside, where a statue display and jazz concert series take place, to the inside where paintings hang on the walls, it's easy to see the house is alive with imagination. But up the stairwell in Edward Hopper's 1949 painting "Stairway" is where you will find where the imagination was born.

"All my life people said I had a 'Hopperesque' feel to my work, and now I've basically ended up in his bedroom," painter Patti Mollica said. Mollica, a Nyack resident, has been renting a room in the house as a studio for the last three years. Like Hopper, Mollica has used Nyack as an inspiration for her work.

"Nyack is a great place to paint," she said.

Aside from two art studios on the second floor, the Hopper House, where American painter Edward Hopper grew up, is dedicated to being a hub for anyone interested in the arts. The multi-arts center displays local art in its indoor and outdoor galleries, and educates people of all ages through workshops that include poetry, drawing, painting and photography. The house does not have any original Hopper paintings, but it sells books, postcards and posters of Hopper's art.

Carole Perry, executive director of the Hopper House, said the house lets Hopper's legacy live on.

"It is really important in history, and continues to influence artists today," Perry said. "It's pulsating with artistic life from the past and the present."

Much of Hopper's early work and some later paintings depict images in and around Nyack. Some of his work associated with Nyack and its surrounding towns includes "Bootleggers," which depicts a house on Spear Street and Piermont Avenue in Nyack, and "House by the Railroad," which depicts a house on Route 59 in Haverstraw.

The Hopper House, built in 1858 by Hopper's grandfather, John Smith, was about to be demolished in 1970 before a group of residents formed the Edward Hopper Landmark Preservation Foundation and halted plans of demolition. In 2000, the house became part of the National Register of Historic Places. According to Perry, the Hopper House has welcomed visitors from Nyack to Europe and Asia. Hopper fans are drawn to the home to get a better understanding of his inspiration for early paintings, while others come to enjoy the local art.

"Having it is integral when you live in an artsy community, and the Hopper House is a mainstay in Nyack,"



Visitors arrive at the Hopper House in Nyack yesterday for a weekly event featuring wine, cheese and live music. (Photos by Angela Gaul/The Journal News)



Painter Patti Mollica of Nyack has a studio at the Hopper House Art Center. "All my life people said I had a 'Hopperesque' feel to my work, and now I've basically ended up in his bedroom," she said.

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said Robert Cummings, a new resident of Nyack. "We came from Orange County. We wanted a more cosmopolitan area with more access to things like this."

Cummings was one of over 60 people at the Hopper House last night for a benefit to raise [money](#) for the Music in the Garden jazz concert series. The weekly series, in the backyard of the Hopper House, is held Thursday nights at 7:30. In its 28th year, it has different performers each week. The seven-part series began last week and culminates Aug. 14.

Pearl River neighbors Joan Smith and Elaine Scott were at the benefit last night to support the arts. Scott, a sixth-grade teacher in Suffern, said it is important for children to be exposed to the arts.

"I feel strongly about the arts, and I have an appreciation for it," Smith said.

In August, the house will host a poetry and music workshop for anyone 13 and over. The workshop allows poets to collaborate with musicians for a performance at 7 p.m. Aug. 14. The workshop lasts from Aug. 11 to 14.

Reach Jason Braff at [jbraff@lohud.com](mailto:jbraff@lohud.com) or 845-578-2497.

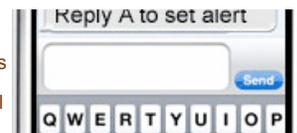
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