

# resident



# experts

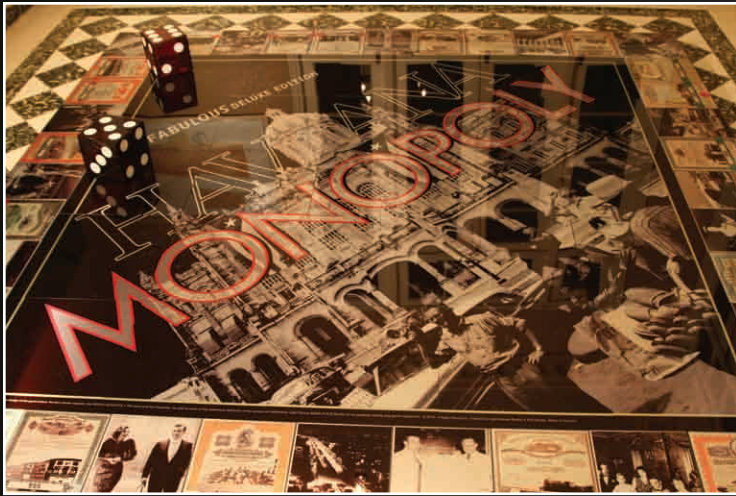
by Jenifer Mangione Vogt

*Visiting artists bring knowledge,  
experience and inspiration  
to Palm Beach County*



Each year, artists from around the world temporarily call Palm Beach County home, providing students of all ages an opportunity to cozy up to both well-known and emerging talent and to gain a deeper understanding of the artistic process.





in 2010, Julie Kent, a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre in New York City and one of the brightest lights in the ballet world, spent time in the studios and on the stage of Boca Ballet Theatre, appearing in an unforgettable production of *Giselle*. Kent was participating in the civic company's artist-in-residence program, which provides opportunities for students to learn from and perform with professional dancers. Dan Guin, executive director and co-artistic director of BBT, recalls that, at the time, an overjoyed young student exclaimed, "If I never dance again – I got to dance with Julie Kent!"

Brushes with greatness are just one of the many advantages of the artist-in-residence programs offered by BBT and other arts organizations in the county, including the Armory Art Center, Palm Beach Photographic Centre and Society of the Four Arts. These vetted and competitive programs attract the best and the brightest artists from around the world. All have teaching requirements – and that means a constant influx of talent helping to attract students of all ages eager to apprentice with the best.

## Bringing A Fresh Perspective

Whether they are established or emerging, resident artists often introduce students – and the organizations that host them – to the lat-

est methods and newest equipment in their respective fields. The program at the Armory Arts Center in West Palm Beach attracts many recent art school graduates who bring a fresh perspective. They work on their craft and also obtain practical experience teaching visual arts classes, such as sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, painting, printmaking and mixed media art. "One of the win-win aspects of the program is that the residents can hone their teaching skills and our students learn new techniques," says Talya Lerman, director of education at the Armory.

The Palm Beach Photographic Centre in West Palm Beach is leveraging a brand new artist-in-residence program to attract top-tier teaching talent that will contribute to its reputation as a leading photography center. Its first resident, Kadir López Nieves, an established mixed-media artist, will teach a series of pop-up classes this fall that delve into his artistic process and expression, as well as his experiences as an artist living and working in Cuba.

The length of these residency programs varies. The Armory's program lasts eight months and includes two to four artists. The Photographic Centre plans to bring in one to three artists per year for a minimum residency of three months each. Boca Ballet, on the other hand, welcomes a robust lineup of as many as 40 artists per year for stints that last one or two weeks. As Guin explains, "We are built on a series of artistic residencies because the core of our mission is to expose students to working professional artists. It's what drives our programming."

In addition to a stipend and studio space, each of the host organizations provides housing for visiting artists. The Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach planned for this when it opened the renovated Dixon Education Building earlier this year. The building con-

tains a beautifully appointed apartment for an artist who will live there for three months during the busy winter season as part of the artist-in-residence program, to be formally announced later this year.

As with the other organizations, the Society of the Four Arts views the program as an engagement tool. "A major aspect of the artist-in-residence program will be interaction with Four Arts patrons," says Ervin Duggan, president and chief executive officer. "We expect that some of our artists will teach; others may lecture or present exhibitions."

## Access To New Audiences

Programs for resident artists are often funded by government or private foundation grants, or gifts from generous donors. The latter is the case at the Four Arts, where a \$500,000 pledge from Larry and Mickey Beyer will provide for the artists' stipends.

According to Lerman, the payment arrangement for residents at the Armory Art Center is among the most generous in the country. "It fully covers their time here," she says. This is invaluable for artists, allowing them to dedicate more time to their art. Chandra DeBuse, a renowned professional potter and teacher in Kansas City, Mo., fondly recalls her time as an Armory resident from 2010 to 2011. She says, "The Armory was a launch pad that



Caption



gave me the time and space to finish the body of work I'd started in graduate school."

"Artists also benefit by having their work seen by a new audience," says Katie Edwards, director of marketing and development at the Four Arts. Residency programs can take credit for introducing artists to collectors. "Our goal is to have a dynamic and interactive experience for both patrons and artists," she says.

"I had the opportunity to participate in an international jewelry exhibition and sale at the Norton Museum of Art," says Lisa Johnson, a second-year resident at the Armory Art Center who teaches metal-smithing and jewelry design.

López Nieves had the opportunity to stage two exhibits at the Photographic Centre at the beginning of his residency. "The program gave me an opportunity to exhibit my body of work in a high-quality museum and it gave the local community the opportunity to be introduced to a new point of view about how to approach the object of art," he explains.



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– Talya Lerman, Director of Education at the Armory Art Center



## A Time To Grow

Ultimately, artist-in-residence programs are about growth. They can help launch careers, like the Armory's program did for DeBuse, who will return this year as part of the Visiting Master Series. "It's exciting to know that the Armory is an incubator for artists" says Lerman.

Residency programs contribute to a sense of community. As Lerman explains, "Resident artists develop bonds with students and staff and each other. They become comrades."

"As a training tool, the professional experience and expertise these people bring inspire a whole new generation of artists in this county," says Guin.

Sarah Smith was 11 years old and ready to give up on dancing when inspiration struck her. Her mother suggested she try taking a class at Boca Ballet before making her final decision. Once there, Smith trained with and performed alongside her idols, including Heather Sanders, Angel Corella and Yan Chen, observing firsthand the day-in, day-out, everyday life and training of professional dancers. "It was really eye-opening for me," she recalls. "Within three months of being there, not only did I not want to quit, I knew this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life." And that's exactly what she's been doing for the past 10 years as a professional dancer with American Ballet Theatre. [a&c](#)



