

Sunset goes Nova: 'New Art' shows scene is blowing up

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Photo by Georgine Benvenuto

Floating in a most peculiar way: This giant astronaut painting by Kenneth E. Parris III is part of the "Ars Nova" show at Tabla Rasa Gallery. Work in the show was chosen by gallery owners Joseph and Audrey Anastasi.



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Photo by Georgine Benvenuto

A tough pick: Gallery owners Audrey Frank Anastasi and her husband Joseph selected 11 artists for their new forward-thinking show "Ars Nova."

This local art scene is a hotspot!

A Sunset Park gallery is putting a spotlight on the work of local artists in "Ars Nova," an exhibit of focused on fresh, forward-thinking art. The curator of the show, whose title simply means "New Art," says that a bright new perspective is representative of the area's flourishing creative community.

"We're a little bit out of the way but not anymore," said Audrey Anastasi, also the director of the Tabla Rasa Gallery. "People are kind of discovering Sunset Park. The art community here is vibrant."

To recruit artists for the show, Anastasi headed to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where the group Chashama provides affordable studio space for artists. She and her husband Joseph, with whom she owns the gallery, were struck by the work of Prospect Lefferts Garden painter Kenneth E. Parris III, known for his series of paintings of dancers. However, the gallery will display futuristic paintings from Parris's most recent body of work, part of a series titled "How we make it and survive while trying, struggling for an extraordinary and peaceful life," which explores the conflict between ideals and reality.

Parris will discuss his paintings during an afternoon talk at the gallery on Jan. 23, including details about his dancer series, which he worked on for five years. To create those images, Parris toured with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company for two years, painting them from a backstage perspective. He says that dancers are the ideal subjects for his work.

"Dancers are the perfect models not just because of the musculature, but because they have such an understanding of their bodies," he said.

His body of work captures private moments, celebratory dinners, and parties — moments that often go ignored, he said.

"I wanted to tell this story because it's a story that people don't necessarily think about when they see these beautiful dancers on stage," said Parris.

"Ars Nova" also showcases work from 10 other artists, and includes digital images given form with a three-dimensional printer, paintings focused on urbanization and migration, and a video project which displays more than 2,400 storefronts throughout New York.

But Anastasi says that visitors to the gallery, which has been a Sunset Park staple for ten-and-a-half years, can be assured that the work will seize their attention.

"We only show work that grabs us," said Anastasi. "We love all of this work."

"Ars Nova" at Tabla Rasa Gallery [224 48th St. between Second and Third avenues in Sunset Park, (718) 833-9100, www.tablarasagallery.com]. Opening Jan. 14 at 6 pm. On display until Feb. 20, Thu–Sat, 1–5 pm. Kenneth E. Parris III talk on Jan. 23 at 2:30 pm. Free.

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