

A bloomin' good idea: Naples Botanical Garden through local artists' creative lenses

By [Harriet Howard Heithaus](#) June 30, 2021



There's no sneezing in this garden. All the pollen is confined to images on canvas or photo paper, depictions of fascination with Naples [Botanical Garden](#).

But like the gardens outside of its Kapnick Hall location, it will probably stimulate some smiles.

"Artists in Bloom" brings local artists' eyes to the garden's grounds, from its River of Grass to its water lilies and the smallest of its buds. You could possibly even see a garden resident here or there, a bee making its happy way among the blooms or a bird in flight.

Organized in partnership with the United [Arts Council](#) of Collier County, the show holds 32 widely different interpretations of the garden, all from 28 local artists.

"It serves as a reminder of how art and nature are intrinsically linked, and gently prompts the viewer to experience the Garden in a new way," says publicity about the exhibition.

To [Erin Wolfe Bell](#), the garden's director of exhibitions and special programs, it's also testament to the spectrum of perspective among local artists.

"There's such a wide variety of styles and subject matter — charcoals, photographs, paint, watercolor, oils," she said. "Some are the size of a piece of paper and some are five feet across."

The styles range from semi-abstract, as in Tanya Trinkaus Glass' "Looking West at the Garden," to Susan Nardine Pratt's detailed, magical palm dance in "Bismarkian Sway."

While the idea was Bell's, they relied on the UAC for the process.

"They are kind of experts in this kind of project. We formed the idea. We had the space. They helped us with us with logistics of getting the call to artists out and finding a guest juror."

Applicants were limited to members of the Naples Botanical Garden or the UAC. Still, the organization had to cull from more than 100 entries, for which local artist [Lauren Amalia Redding](#) served as juror.

The garden allows artists to paint on the grounds, and among the most popular times is during the early members-only hour from 8 to 9 a.m. But this isn't all plein-air work, Bell said: "Some of the artists came here to work. Some just came, went back to their studios and created. Some of them took photographs that they worked from."

The garden has traditionally featured local artists for its summer exhibitions in Kapnick Hall, and this year, it is showing some special love for local visitors as well. There's a deep discount from its \$20 adults, \$10 children admission to \$12 for adults and \$3 for ages 4-17 from Collier, Lee and Hendry counties.

And for those who can't come, Naples Botanical Garden now has an [Earthcam link](#) that allows people to look in on its Brazilian Garden 24 hours a day. Some of the more interesting views may be under full moonlight when the animals that aren't out during the day feel free to wander around.

The camera will also treat viewers to the process of heavy equipment packing up one of the giant rootlike sculptures from Steve Tobin's "[Nature Underground](#)." Its stay at the garden ends Sept. 6.

Harriet Howard Heithaus covers arts and entertainment for the Naples Daily News/naplesnews.com. Reach her at 239-213-6091.