

Art For All

Blue Morning redefines the gallery experience

BY LAURIE EINSTEIN KOSZUTA

JANUARY 31, 2026



Tucked along Palafox Street in downtown Pensacola, Blue Morning Gallery is a local treasure. It's a place where creativity feels approachable, and art leads to a smile.

Unlike traditional galleries, Blue Morning is entirely artist-run. There's no owner, no paid staff, just a volunteer board of directors and member artists across every medium who keep the gallery running. Founded in 1997, the Blue Morning Gallery co-op began with about 20 artists. Today, it has grown into a thriving collective of more than 60 members, dedicated to keeping art alive, affordable, and welcoming to everyone.

Every month, every artist volunteers for three 3½-hour shifts greeting visitors, handling sales, and sharing the stories behind the art. "It's about being part of a community," says Board President David Schulz, a black-and-white photographer and graphic designer. "We want people to walk in and immediately feel at ease."



That warmth inside Blue Morning defines the gallery's magic. Inside, you'll find everything from oil and watercolor landscapes to sculpted gourds, turned wood, ceramics, and textile art. Visitors are invited to browse without pressure and ask questions freely. "We're the smaller, friendlier gallery," says founding member Marcia Holland.

"We welcome children and make it family oriented."

Artists who want to join the co-op are put on a waiting list that can last for more than a year. When a space opens, applicants submit work to a rotating jury, and if accepted, they commit to the volunteer schedule. Members set their own prices, share a small commission with the gallery, and rotate display locations three times a year.



The co-op also nurtures emerging talent through its partnership with the University of West Florida, awarding an annual scholarship and featured-artist wall to a student.

To the public, Blue Morning is known for a sense of fun that extends beyond its walls. First Friday receptions turn the space into a lively evening event, complete with live music, wine, and hors d'oeuvres. A different artist or a group of artists takes over the Featured Artist Wall each month, giving regular patrons new reasons to return. The gallery also participates in Pensacola's popular Gallery Night, when Palafox closes to traffic, and downtown fills with art and music.

After weathering economic shifts, hurricanes, and a pandemic, Blue Morning Gallery relishes just celebrating local art. As Schulz puts it, "If you can make a little money doing what you love and keep the arts alive in the process, that's success."

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