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forms of studios, including those based in artists' home and standalone working studios. Additionally, the Astoria Studio Collective will host seven artists and 12 will be at the Astoria Art Loft.

Many of the participating artists also have work in AVA's current gallery show, which opened during the Second Saturday Art Walk on July 13. According to Eskelin, the organization has long wanted to coordinate an exhibit, and their physical headquarters downtown – opened earlier this year – makes that possible.

Illuminating local artists

The tour features a diverse array of established and emerging visual artists.

Beyond shining a light on their professional work and creative process, the tour also supports them

through professional development, networking and building contacts, Eskelin said.

For artists Lâm Quảng and Kestrel Gates, the duo behind HiiH Lights, participating in the event for the past few years has helped “keep people aware of us up there,” Quảng said, referring to their studio-gallery, located in a barn on their countryside property off Lewis and Clark Road.

Although HiiH Lights' handmade paper lights – custom designed and sculpted by Quảng and painted by Gates – are featured at Imogen Gallery, the tour brings “a good amount of people out to our place,” Quảng said, adding, “The more, the merrier.”

Additionally, he said, it's by chance regular visitors get to observe the paper light-creation process in various stages, so “the more time you spend there, the more you get to see.”

Andrews, who is participating for the third year, also enjoys giving the public a glimpse into the slow and meticulous yet meditative procedures and techniques of woodblock printing.

“It's really nice to have people see the background, rather than just seeing the print in the final form,” she said. “I definitely enjoy exposing people to the process, because it's not a process many people are familiar with.”

‘The courage to fail’

John Wesley Willis, who paints with oils on panels, is one of several new additions to the Astoria tour this year. Although inviting people into his private workspace will be a unique experience, “everything is unique because this is the first year that I've made art for a living,” he said.

Willis' foray into life as a professional painter was mobilized by an acute sense of determination and discipline. Although he painted a little in his teens and 30s, it wasn't until about three years ago that he committed to completing 100 paintings in a year. This strategy helped him overcome a dissatisfaction fed by an initial inability to accurately or adequately translate a men-

tal image or message into a finished product, which commonly poses an obstacle for emerging artists.


“It's frustrating because you have a vision, and if you can't quite execute it, it slows you down,” he said.

Setting a lofty goal forced him to push through that stage, be experimental, and discover his visual language. In Willis' opinion, people often misperceive or misidentify creative talent as “a gift that just arrives one day in a shiny package.” In reality, he said, “It's an area in your life in which you have the courage to fail.”

“If you have the courage to fail, what happens is, you do a lot of experimenting and you get better at whatever you're doing,” he said.

Since moving to the area, he has found ample inspiration in Astoria's cityscapes, which capture a pleasing interaction between the urban and rural, natural elements and those that are manmade.

When he paints cityscapes, his objective is to instill “a sense of place” into each rendering, focusing on the essence, rather than the details.

“I want it to look like what it feels like to be in this special place,” he said. 



J-Redland-Anderson

Artist Sarah Bolerjack painting.



J-Redland-Anderson

Artist Noel Thomas paints near the water.



Iris Sullivan-Daire

Artist Iris Sullivan-Daire works in her studio.

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Crossword Answers

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