



Switch out the cars on the street and the attire on the passers-by, and Hollywood Boulevard would feel like a scene from “Back to the Future.” Developed in the 1920s, the palm-lined street is home to a myriad of Mediterranean-Revival and Art-Moderne buildings that have earned this strip of road a spot on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, however, the area feels anything but old; downtown Hollywood is now known as the pre-eminent contemporary art capital of the Gold Coast. While the unique architecture, walkable city center and overall bohemian vibe have always attracted those with artistic talents, the area is currently experiencing a creative resurgence.

Tina Buccellato, owner of Muzart Creative Arts Studio, relocated her business to downtown Hollywood’s Harrison Street, just one block over from the main drag of Hollywood Boulevard, about 10 years ago. In the search for a more affordable place to set up her multimedia studio, which offers a range of classes and events, from wine and painting parties and gallery exhibits to dance and music classes, Buccellato fell in love with the city’s vibe and artistic community. At the time, Hollywood was experiencing an artistic heyday of sorts with a new monthly art walk and number of galleries and studios spread throughout Hollywood Boulevard and neighboring Harrison. But, because of rising rents and the economic downturn, the scene eventually fizzled out.

Not anymore, says Buccellato. The vibrant creative buzz is back, thanks in great deal to the city of Hollywood and its Community Redevelopment

Agency, which have been working to turn Hollywood into a city of the arts. With a newly renovated Arts Park at Young Circle featuring live music and performances, a new art-house movie-theater Cinema Paradiso, and the Downtown Hollywood Mural Project, which aims to offer a public space for art in the community, the city has started to draw crowds of art enthusiasts and novices.

“Artists from Wynwood [Miami’s world-renowned neighborhood for street art] are starting to move back,” says Buccellato. “It’s attracting people to come and check out the eye candy. Between the art and the beautiful buildings, it’s creating a funky energy. There’s something exciting to talk about now.”

Started in August 2012, the Downtown Hollywood Mural Project pairs artists with building owners to create an outdoor museum for the city’s residents and tourists. Every month during the third-Saturday art walk, the blank canvases of walls are transformed into colorful murals. Jessy Nite is one of those Miami artists who made her way up to Hollywood to claim a wall of her own. Originally from New Jersey, Nite found herself in Miami’s burgeoning art scene after relocating for school; however, she has been familiar with the artistic environment in Hollywood since taking an internship in the area during her studies. In addition to her public mural at 1901 Harrison St., Nite was given a spot to show her work in the prestigious The Art and Culture Center of Hollywood in fall of 2013. Nite believes it’s programs such as these that are putting the charming city on the creative map for all to enjoy.