

PALM BEACH  
**FLORIDA WEEKLY**  
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PALM BEACH FLORIDA WEEKLY  
**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

A20 |

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WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 26-OCTOBER 2, 2019



COURTESY PHOTOS

**HAPPENINGS**



PALM BEACH CHAPTER OF THE RARE FRUIT COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL. COURTESY IMAGE

**Plant sale highlights rare fruit**

BY JANIS FONTAINE  
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What's your favorite thing about our tropical climate? The beach? No ice and snow? Sunshine nearly every day?

For the Palm Beach Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International, it's the tropical fruit that makes South Florida sweet.

Once a year, the group hosts a Tropical Fruit & Plant Sale at the South Florida Fairgrounds, which brings vendors from all over the state to West Palm Beach with a wide variety of fruit trees, from avocados to tamarinds, plus specially formulated fertilizers to keep them healthy, and experts to pontificate.

The Rare Fruit Council is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, cultivation and use of tropical and rare fruit. The Palm Beach Chapter was established in 1970. Members meet monthly at 7:30 p.m. on the second Friday of the month in the auditorium at Mounts Botanical Garden, 531 N. Military Trail in West Palm Beach. At each meeting, a lecture by a featured speaker is followed by a seed and plant exchange, and the chapter's famous "tasting table," which offers an opportunity to taste fruits grown by members.

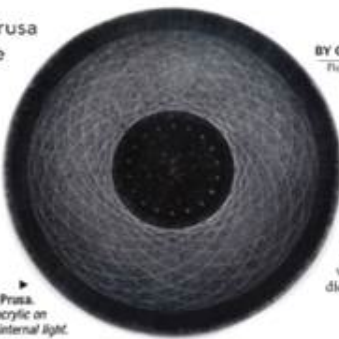
If you'd like to be a member of this group, which promotes the cultivation and use of tropical and rare fruit, annual membership dues

**2019: A Space Odyssey**

Artist Carol Prusa focuses on the solar system in her show at the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

▲ Artist Carol Prusa at work in her studio.

"Nebula," by Carol Prusa. Silverpoint, graphite, acrylic on acrylic dome with internal light.



BY GRETAL SARMIENTO  
Florida Weekly Correspondent

**T**HE STARS LOOK VERY DIFFERENT FROM the second floor of the Boca Raton Museum of Art, where a stunning exhibition of cosmic landscapes keeps us floating in a most peculiar way. 50 years after the first moon landing.

Staring in bad manners, but someone forgot to tell the eclipses hanging from these walls. Their black pulsating pupils follow us everywhere, make us guess whether they will expand or contract or die off. Luckily for us, whether exiled to the

SEE ODYSSEY, A26 ▶

**Ballet Palm Beach plans classics, originals for 2019-20**

FLORIDA WEEKLY STAFF

Expect something old and something new next season from Ballet Palm Beach. "Highlights of the season include fairy-tale classics, as well as two original

A week later, the company will perform "The Nutcracker" at the Kravis Center. Shows are 7:30 p.m. Dec. 6, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7 in the Kravis Center's Dreyfoos Hall.

In February, the company performs



## 2019: A Space Odyssey

Artist Carol Prusa focuses on the solar system in her show at the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

*/ September 26, 2019*

BY GRETEL SARMIENTO

Florida Weekly Correspondent



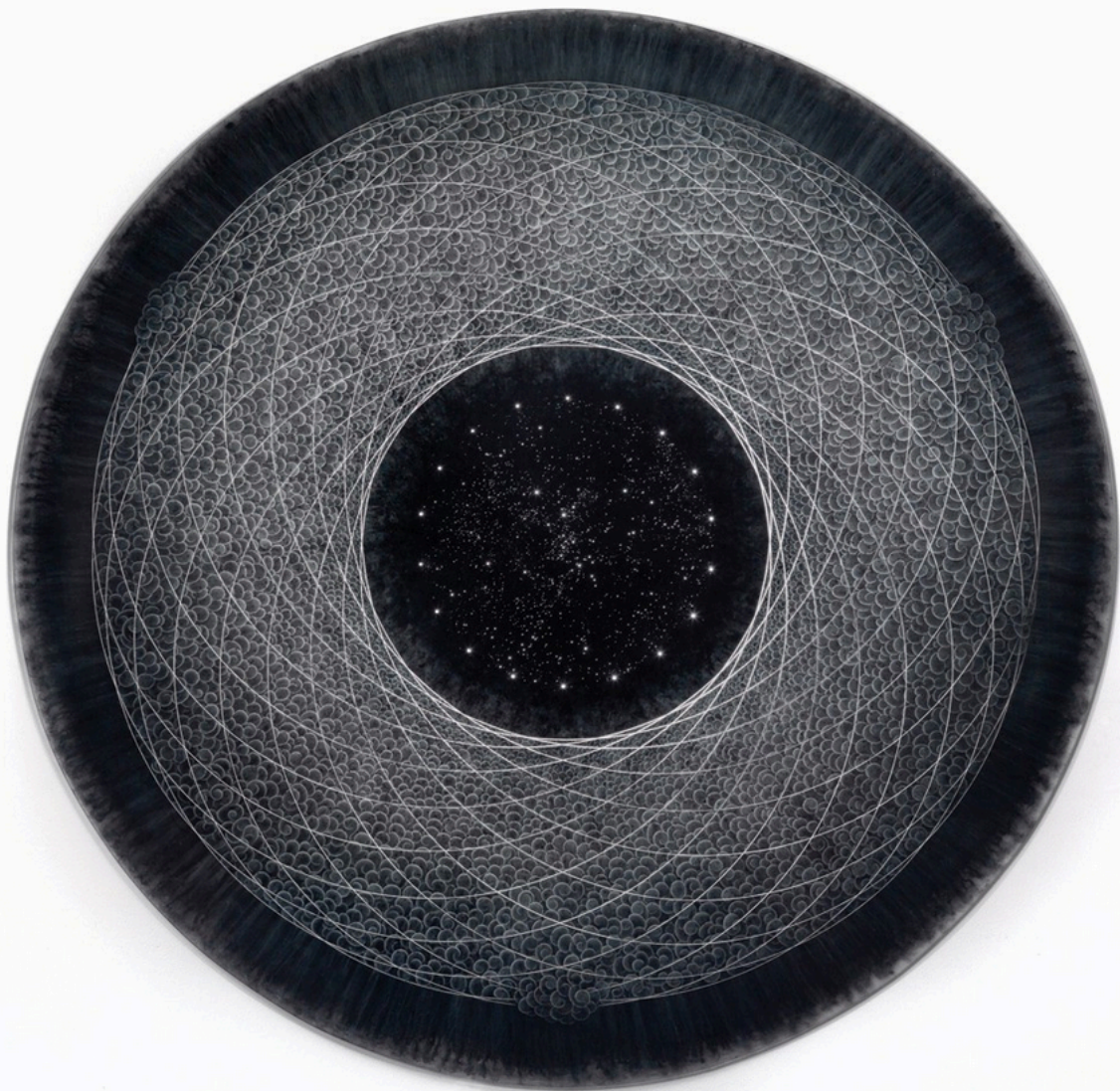
Artist Carol Prusa at work in her studio.

**THE STARS LOOK VERY DIFFERENT FROM** the second floor of the Boca Raton Museum of Art, where a stunning exhibition of cosmic landscapes keeps us floating in a most peculiar way, 50 years after the first moon landing.

Staring is bad manners, but someone forgot to tell the eclipses hanging from these walls. Their black pulsating pupils follow us everywhere, make us guess whether they will expand or contract or die off. Luckily for us, whether exiled to the middle or the outer edges of the frame, the black holes stay under control.

The gallery housing "Carol Prusa: Dark Light" hits pause on whatever mundane thoughts we had going on in our head to focus on the big mysteries of our solar system. The room might as well be a capsule transporting us thousands of miles away to a destination that could be anywhere and nowhere. Running through Jan. 19, the solo show features mystical acrylic works depicting spheres, circumferences and microorganisms in exquisite detail. They carve a journey like no other; devoid of color and shock but not gravitational force.





"Nebula," by Carol Prusa. Silverpoint, graphite, acrylic on acrylic dome with internal light.

See-through organisms rush to proliferate, then crash and fuse with one another in "Cosmic Dust." What appears to be a mere molecular process from a distance sees anonymous particles kiss and hug upon close examination. A Mars black background stands witness to their microscopic orgiastic dance.

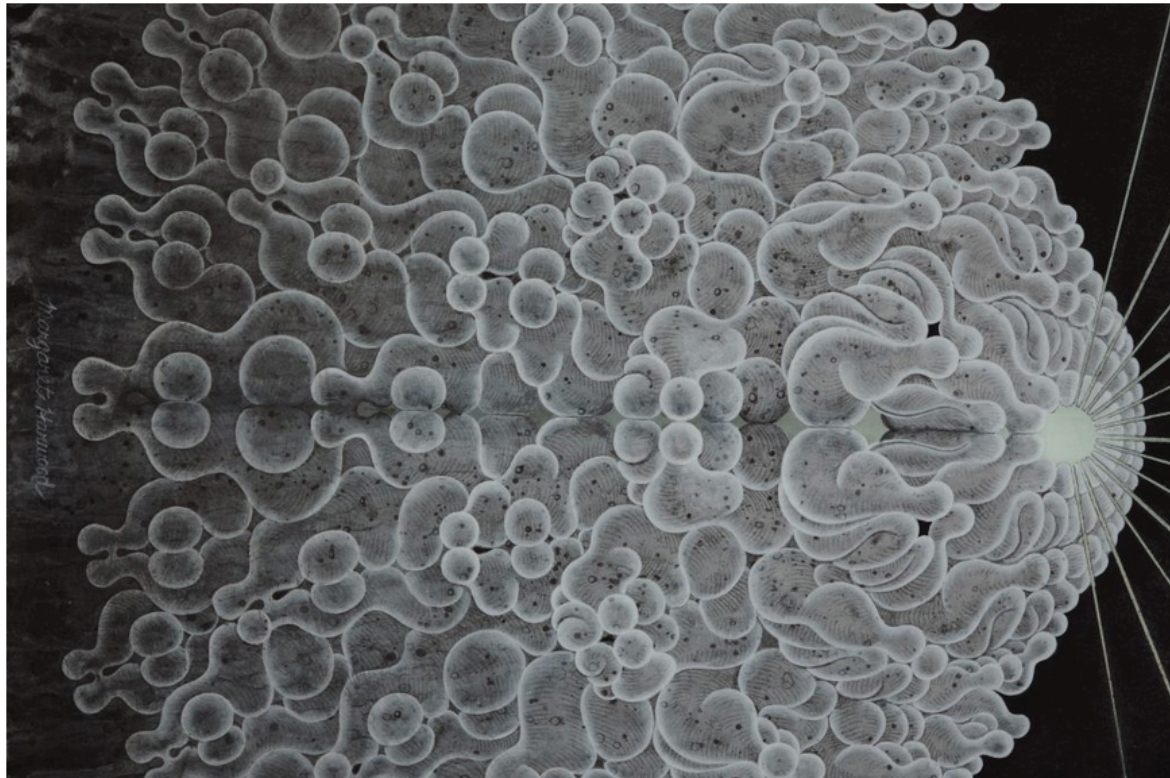
An outer ring sporting a delicate lacy pattern frames the turbulent core of "Between Day and Night," but the bleak landscape is not without hope. Amid mercurial clouds hangs a diminutive dark disc defined by a bright white light shining from behind. Its piercing beauty and perfectly round form are comforting. A similar piece titled "Diamond Ring" on the western wall zooms in on this tiny eclipse and thickens the lace effect.

Meanwhile, bright specks shape a galaxy at the center of "Nebula." The smooth acrylic dome does its best to contain a cloud of ghostly cells threatening to grow out of its assigned space. It's not as somber a picture. The tiny internal lights signal life.

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Above: A closeup look at the exquisite detail of Prusa's "Cosmic Web (for Harvard Computers)" COURTESY PHOTOS

The heaviness conveyed by the works masks the fluidity and ease of Ms. Prusa's creative process, which she describes as "therapeutic."

"I will sit with a work until it answers something for me that I didn't even know I was looking for," said Ms. Prusa, who resides in Boca Raton. "It takes as long as it's going to take."

It's the type of work that requires more resilience than sense of urgency. If for some reason the message does not come across clear, she obliterates it and starts from scratch.

"I have been known to have hundreds of hours into a piece and lose it," she said. "It has to have a sort of vibration to me."

The Chicago-born artist, who teaches painting at Florida Atlantic University, is known for her silver-point technique, which calls for long hours of labor. She applies materials such as powdered steel, graphite, fiberglass, black iron oxide and titanium with surgical precision. The otherworldly compositions on display are testament to her supernatural upper-body strength.





Right: Carol Prusa uses her silverpoint technique as she works on a sphere.

"Actually, I have to work out so I don't get carpal tunnel," said Ms. Prusa.

Among the never-before-seen pieces the artist created specifically for "Dark Light" are seven small-scale etchings dedicated to female astronomers. The suite titled "Galaxias Kyklos" (Greek for "Milky Way") takes a more scientific approach to highlight the role these pioneering women played. They resemble mathematical observations, calculations, experiments. Most feel like synopses of grand universal notions such as infinity, possibility and transformation. And they sport such neat symmetrical orbits. Among them is a print showcasing a floral motif that honors Maria Mitchell, the first female astronomy professor and the first person ever to spot via telescope a comet outside the reach of the naked eye.



A magnifying visor sits on an etching plate in Carol Prusa's studio.

Ms. Prusa's work is no stranger to the Boca Raton Museum. Several of her pieces appeared in its "Glassstress" group exhibition two years ago. She also served as guest curator to the "All Florida Invitational" show in 2016. She admits this time is different. Not only is the spotlight solely hers, but her body of work has acquired darker undertones. She used to equate her creations to dawn and morning. Now, it's all about night and dusk. The artist attributes the shift in part to getting older and in part to dreary current events. She stops short of calling them negative.

"I think there's an energy out there that is weighing on all of us. And there is a sense of helplessness," said Ms. Prusa. "But in turning darker, I also appreciate the answers that come in darkness." ;