



The Tennessee Valley Art Association

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Press Release
Tuesday, May 29, 2007

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29th Annual Helen Keller Festival of the Arts

The festival features work of jury-selected regional artists in a broad array of media, The Quilters of Gee's Bend, Imagination Station, Artists at Work and Sunday afternoon music.

Tuscumbia, AL – The Annual Helen Keller Festival of the Arts will be held on Saturday, June 23, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 24, 2007 from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on the “North Bank” in Spring Park in downtown Tuscumbia, Alabama. Admission is free of charge.

The Festival of the Arts is held in conjunction with the 29th Annual Helen Keller Festival, which also is located in Spring Park in Tuscumbia, AL. The location is central to major cities in the tri-state area, including Birmingham, AL, Memphis, TN, Nashville, TN, and Tupelo, MS.

Juried Work of More Than 60 Regional Artists

The festival includes the work of more than 60 award-winning artists from throughout Alabama and the surrounding region. The artists work in a broad array of media, including pottery, painting, jewelry-making, wood, stained glass, fused glass, sculpture, photography, broom making, candle making and leather.

“We are particularly excited about the caliber of the artists who are participating this year,” says Jim Berryman, Assistant Director of the Tennessee Valley Art Association and coordinator of the festival. “Their work is exceptional, and it is affordably priced in a range from approximately \$2.00 to \$2,000. This makes it a great opportunity for people to purchase fine art for their homes or for gifts.”

The Quilters of Gee's Bend

Members of the renowned Gee's Bend Quilters Collective will be at the Festival of the Arts sharing their lives and work. They are recognized internationally for their bold, sophisticated quilting style, which combines traditional designs with a modern geometric approach. Their work has been featured at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, they are winners of the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Living Legacy Award and have been honored by the United States Postal Service with postage stamps based upon their work.



Imagination Station

Fun, hands-on activities will engage children's creativity at "Imagination Station." Kids will participate in an Art Safari to Japan, Holland, Australia, China and the United States making art objects that represent each culture. Kids will also have the opportunity to try their hand at calligraphy, see a demonstration of Rangoli – a Hindi sand painting technique, create a self-portrait floated on a helium filled balloon and more. Activities are free.

Artists at Work

Festival-goers will have the opportunity to see "Artists at Work" in a variety of media. Look for the "Artist at Work" signs on the North Bank. These artists will be demonstrating their techniques and answering questions. Artists include Henry Beckman, storyteller known for working in words and wood; Charlie Lucas, internationally known outsider artist; and George Jones Jr., a fourth generation master broom-maker.

Sunday Afternoon Music

The Tennessee Valley Art Association will present Sharon Bounds and Smokin' Strings Quartet beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 24.

Sharon Bounds has played the fiddle since the age of 12. At 18, she won the Alabama State Fiddling Championship. Her flawless skill with the fiddle and wide variety of musical styles are sure-fire crowd-pleasers. Sharon's band consists of guitar, banjo and fiddle.

Smokin' Strings Quartet features Dillon Hodges, Tim May, Mark Evitts and Brad Leiter. Hodges plays guitar and won the National Champion Country Music Beginner in Flat Top Guitar competition and the International Bluegrass Music Museum "Future Hall of Famers" competition. May plays guitar, dobro and mandolin and has performed at the Grand Ole Opry, toured with Patty Lovelass and played and recorded with Charlie Daniels and Eddie Rabbitt. Evitts plays fiddle and has performed at the Ryman Auditorium with Phil Keaggy, Andy Osenga, Matt Slocum, Derek Webb and on albums with International Thumb-Picking Champion Kyle Reeder. Leiter plays bass and is tutored by the legendary Missy Rains.

Sharon will perform on Sunday, June 24 at 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Smokin' Strings Quartet will perform at 2:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m.

Artists' and Art Patron Awards

Artists' and Art Patron awards will be presented during this year's Festival of the Arts. Cash awards will be presented by Tennessee Valley Art Association judges that will include Best in Show, Awards of Distinction and Awards of Merit.



The Helen Keller Festival of the Arts is a showcase for jury-selected artists who create one-of-a-kind works of art. Festival of the Arts shoppers have the opportunity to become an Art Patron. Art Patrons agree in advance to spend a pre-determined amount to purchase art from a Helen Keller Festival artist. Art Patrons present an award ribbon and payment voucher to the artist(s) from whom they choose to purchase. Art Patrons keep their winning art piece while rewarding the artist for their talent. To become an Art Patron or for more information call 256.383.0533.

The Tennessee Valley Art Association

The Tennessee Valley Art Association (<http://www.tvaa.net>) is a non-profit regional organization providing cultural arts programs for the people of northwest Alabama. Visual and performing arts activities are conducted at the Tennessee Valley Art Center in Tusculmbia and at the historic Ritz Theater in Sheffield. Programming includes rotating exhibitions, juried art competitions, community theatre and workshops and classes for adults and children. An educational outreach program is conducted at the organization's facilities and in area schools. The TVAA is supported by grants from The Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information about The Tennessee Valley Art Association visit our website or call 256.383.0533.

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