



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

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AMA CHALKFEST HAS SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO DOWNTOWN ALBANY

Atlanta Artist Jessi Queen Wins Best of Show Award at 4th Annual Festival

[For Release Nov 16, 2021 – Albany, GA] — *AMA ChalkFest* returned to the streets of downtown Albany on Saturday, and Albany Museum of Art officials said they were “more than pleased” with the community response.

“We had a wonderful turnout for *ChalkFest*,” AMA Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. “The crowd was steady all day, and we estimate at least 2,500 people came through during the seven hours of the event. The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive.

“I want to thank our sponsors, partners, vendors, staff and volunteers for coming together to make this marvelous festival, which truly is a communitywide celebration, happen. It takes a great deal of hard work and the financial support of our sponsors, but the result is an event that uplifts everyone.”

Each year, *AMA ChalkFest* brings professional chalk artists from Georgia, Florida, Tennessee and Alabama, and as far away as Texas, to Albany on a fall Saturday to create ephemeral works of art on the pavement in the 100 block of Pine Avenue, which is closed off to motorists for the day. Those artists create artwork that captures the theme of each festival, and each piece covers at least 50 square feet of pavement. The theme for this year’s *ChalkFest* was *Masterpieces*, which connected with the *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection* showing at the AMA through Dec 23.

Community artists of all ages, individually or in teams, participate as well, creating smaller images on the pavement. Young kids who attend are given packs of chalk when they enter the festival grounds, which they use to draw on downtown sidewalks and the pavement.

In addition, *ChalkFest* features live music during the day, and adults can sample a wide array of craft beers and cocktails from around the Southeast at tasting tents starting at noon. Art and other vendors are on the grounds, as are food trucks. And there are numerous family-friendly art projects, games and things to do at the AMAzing Activities area.

"It was a truly enjoyable day," said Wulf, who "made a splash" with many festival-goers as the target in the Dunk the Director tank. "It got a little chilly in the dunk tank, but you could not have asked for bluer skies or more pleasant weather all day. We all have been curtailing activities for months because of pandemic spikes, and I think everyone was happy to be able to go out and socialize in a safe, fun environment."

Each year, one professional artist's work is judged Best of Show. At Saturday's *ChalkFest*, Atlanta artist Jessi Queen won the cash award with her artwork that was inspired by the image of Flora, goddess of flowers and spring, in Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera*.

Best of Show awards also were given in the Community Artist and School Artists categories.

Donna Fields, whose mother Lata Fields, of Hogansville, Ga., participated in the professional artist group, won in the Community Artist category with her untitled artwork, a fantastical image of eyeballs spouting mushrooms.

In the School Artists category, Radium Springs Elementary School won for their artwork titled *We Can Save the World*, which included a colorful depiction of the Earth wearing a COVID mask.

"We at the AMA have been gearing up for this event for several months, hoping and praying we can all congregate with our brothers and sisters from the region," Wulf said. "Things turned beautifully, and the works by these many talented individuals speak to the irrepressible creative spirit that has been merely postponed but certainly not defeated by the pandemic."

Wulf said he was happy the AMA was able to bring *ChalkFest* "to life" again after the pandemic forced the museum to make it a virtual event in 2020.

"Our hope is that *AMA ChalkFest* shall always be an in-person event," he said. "We are already looking ahead to next year."

The Albany Museum of Art would like to thank its sponsors and partners for their support of this community festival. "We could not have a festival like *ChalkFest* without our generous sponsors and partners," Wulf said. "They should be applauded for their investment in the community and its quality of life."

Sponsors for the 2021 *ChalkFest* were Publix, Tri-State Florist, Smile Doctors, Webstaurant Store, Vine Vision, Yancey Rentals, Adams Exterminators, Synovus Bank, Georgia Community Bank, Bridge Import Group, Phoebe, Albany Motorcars, BMW of Albany, the James M. Barnett, Jr. Foundation, F&W Forestry, Bishop Clean Care, Fleming & Riles Insurance, J&J, Albany Internal Medicine, JLA, MetroPower, Thirteenth Colony Distilleries, LRA Constructors, AB&T, Flint Community Bank, Hughey & Neuman, Beverage South, Southern Spine & Health, and Southern Point Staffing.

Partnering with the AMA on *ChalkFest* were the Flint RiverQuarium and the Artesian Alliance, the Flint River Entertainment Complex, WALB, *The Albany Herald*, Albany Beverage Company, Pretoria Fields Collective, *Southwest Georgia Living*, Eddie's Signs, Relative Media and Marketing, AAA Concrete, Locos Grill & Pub, Bottoms Up!, Downtown Albany, and Newk's Eatery.

CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection* is in the Haley Gallery Aug 26-Dec 23, 2021.

- *Horse Power: Works by Cedric Smith* is in the East Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021.
- *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times, New works by Sanaz Haghani* is in the McCormack Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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