



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

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JESSI QUEEN WINS ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART *CHALKFEST* BEST OF SHOW

Atlanta Chalk Artist Wins Professional Category for the Second Straight Year

[For Release November 22, 2022 – Albany, GA]—Atlanta chalk artist Jessie Queen also may be the queen of Albany Museum of Art *ChalkFest*. On Saturday, her work was recognized as Best of Show in the Professional Category, an award she also won at the 2021 festival.

Taking first place in the School Category was the Westover High School team. The top individual entry for amateur Community Artists was Amelia Curtis.

“We at the AMA look at this festival as a gift to the community,” Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. “The weather was beautiful, and it was heartwarming to see all of the smiling faces of people of all ages who were enjoying all of the unique art, as well as the music, food, and drink.

“We are entering the season when many people focus on gratitude, and we are thankful for the talented artists and musicians who participated, our partners, and the community who came out. And we are grateful to our generous sponsors who made it possible to offer *ChalkFest* with free admission.”

“None of this would have come together so beautifully without the support of our *ChalkFest* 2022 chairperson, the visionary Summer Cotten, an AMA Board Member, and, of course, our staff who contribute their time, energy, creativity, and good cheer to all they do day in, day out,” Wulf said.

This year, professional chalk artists were asked to use the theme *Heroes*, inspired by the exhibition *Fighters for Freedom; William H. Johnson Picturing Justice*, which is on view in the AMA’s Haley Gallery through Dec 10. The heroes created on the 200 block of South Front Street ranged in subject matter from well-known people, including Harriet Tubman and Maya Angelou, to personal heroes to fictional icons, such as Spider-Man and Thor.

Amateur participants were encouraged—but not required—to incorporate the *Heroes* theme. The Westover team’s piece was titled *Westover Forever*, and depicted the late Chadwick Boseman as his iconic Marvel movie character Black Panther, with wings and a halo. Amelia Curtis created an image of a mushroom in her piece.

Queen's winning entry was a portrait of Mahsa Asini, an Iranian woman who died under suspicious circumstances in September after she was arrested by the Guidance Patrol, the religious morality police in Iran, for not wearing a hijab. Iranian officials contend she had a heart attack, but other reports based on witness accounts and leaked medical scans assert she died from injuries caused by police brutality. Her death sparked widespread protests that have been met with a violent crackdown by Iranian security forces.

Queen said she wanted to help tell Asini's story and "uplift the voices of women who are suffering."

"I wanted to elevate the voices of other women who are over there struggling right now," she said. "There are a lot of protests going on, and their voices are being silenced. I just wanted to do something, to share about what's going on."

"Art can address difficult subject matter and community concerns," Wulf said. "Jessi Queen's portrait of Ms. Asini epitomizes the strength of the image to convey nobly the courage of women everywhere who struggle against persecution. Queen's work enriches our community through active art-making and the creative process while at the same time champions the emotional resilience of women today."

AMA officials said they were pleased with the turnout and the cool fall weather that had festival-goers in the mood to enjoy the art, music, craft beer, and activities that filled the day. New this year were steamroller printmaking by Andrew College Art Professor Chris Johnson, and glassblowing demos by art students from Georgia Southwestern State University.

"We had been on the 100 block of Pine Avenue since the beginning, so we were pleased that the move to the 200 block of South Front Street did not adversely affect the crowd," Wulf said.

Wulf noted that while images can be made of the artworks that were created on the street on Saturday, photographs cannot capture the full essence of pieces that are created with the knowledge that they are temporary. There also is no substitute for watching an artist create a work of art from a blank canvas—in this case, street pavement—in the span of a few hours, he said.

Queen expressed the same sentiment. "It's more about the experience than the actual piece itself," she said. "I really enjoyed this event, and I hope to come back next year."

Providing generous support for *AMA ChalkFest* were presenting sponsor Publix, stage sponsor the James M. Barnett, Jr. Foundation, save-the-date magnet sponsor Yancey Rents, *AMAZing Activities* sponsor Vine Vision, kids' chalk sponsor WebstaurantStore, and community/school artists sponsor Edward Jones, and sponsors Bridge Import Group, Synovus, Georgia Community Bank, Fleming & Riles Insurance, Phoebe, Adams Exterminators, F&W Forestry, Bishop Clean Care, Flint Community Bank, Albany Internal Medicine, JLA, J&J, Smile Doctors, and AB&T.

Partners for *AMA ChalkFest* were Flint River Entertainment Complex, Albany Beverage Company, Beverage South – Albany, Pretoria Fields Brewery, AAA Concrete, WALB, *The Albany Herald*, Eddie's Signs, *Southwest Georgia Living*, and Retro FM 102.1.

Wulf said planning for the fall 2023 *AMA ChalkFest* will begin soon.

AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *Fighters for Freedom: William H. Johnson Picturing Justice* is in The Haley Gallery, Sept 1-Dec 10, 2022. Organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Generous support is provided by Art Bridges.
- *Wayna: Her Dreams of Ethiopia, Works by Tracy Murrell* is in the East Gallery, Sept 1, 2022- Jan 7, 2023.
- *Georgia Artists Guild of Albany, 29th Juried Exhibition* is in the McCormack Gallery, Sept 1, 2022- Jan 7, 2023.
- *Forsaking All Comfort and Prosperity, Works by Maryam Safajoo* is in the Hodges Gallery, Oct 6, 2022-Jan 28, 2023.
- *Escape Plan, Installation by Elinor Saragoussi* is in the West Gallery.

AMA EVENTS

- *AMA ChalkFest*, Nov 19, 2022, 10 am-5 pm, Front Street and Veterans Park Amphitheater. Admission is free. www.amachalkfest.com.

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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