



ArtWalk events allows artists to get personal with festival goers

By MICHELLE GEORGE • The Eagle-Gazette Staff • July 21, 2010

LANCASTER -- Several years ago, while visiting family in Fairfield County, Amy Atkinson got her first taste of the Lancaster Festival's ArtWalk.

This year, the former California resident who now calls Lancaster home is gearing up to showcase her unique jewelry in the same event that captivated her interest years ago.

"When I was at ArtWalk, I knew this was something I would like to do someday," Atkinson said. "It's really a wonderful thing that Lancaster has this sort of art event that is held in conjunction with the festival."

Atkinson said she hopes the ArtWalk will help her get the word out about her business, Handful of Silver. Atkinson, who started making jewelry full time in 2009 and sells most of her work at shows and through her Web site, www.handfulofsilver.com, said she considers herself to be a jewelry artisan.

"I think of my work as artwork," she said. Atkinson's jewelry is made out of precious metal clay, which is composed of microscopic particles of silver mixed with a moist organic binder and pieces of glass. When the artwork is fired, the particles fuse together into .999 fine silver.

Atkinson is one of about 100 artists who will display artwork between 6 and 10 p.m. Friday at the ArtWalk. The annual event allows artists from Fairfield County and all over Ohio to showcase and sell their artwork in about 39 downtown businesses and venues.

The artists will have an opportunity Saturday to further acquaint themselves with the artists at the Meet the ArtWalk Artists Coffee Reception at the Fairfield County District Library.

Artist Liaison Trisha Clifford-Sprouse, who is helping to coordinate the 2010's ArtWalk, said both events will give residents the chance to talk with old ArtWalk favorites -- and check out new artists like Atkinson.

"We do have some new artists this year, as well as new venues," said Clifford-Sprouse, who noted that the clothing boutique Lolaleigh and In Bloom Maternity will open their doors to the ArtWalk this year. "All in all, there are going to be about 100 artists represented."

Hideaway Hills resident Terry McCray is one of those artists who is new to the 2010 show. McCray works with oils and pastels and is known at the Monarch Art Gallery in Lancaster for her dog and cat portraits.

"I've been around here for years and years but never entered the ArtWalk," McCray said. "I taught art for close to 20 years, but over the last 10 years, I've gotten away from it. But after I retired, I wanted to get back into it -- it's always been my passion."

Both Atkinson and McCray said they, like many of the other artists in the show, will be selling their artwork on the day of the ArtWalk. They also plan to be at the Meet the ArtWalk Artists reception the following day.

Clifford-Sprouse said she hopes to see a large number of people turn out for the event. In past years, as many as 7,000 people hit the streets to look at and purchase artwork.

"It's a great community event; a lot of the people enjoy it for the social aspect because they see people they don't normally get to see and many like to see the artwork, which is fantastic," Clifford-Sprouse said. "It's a nice representation of Ohio artists who are working currently working in the field."

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