State of the Arts

Artists Apply for the Fall for Art Festival

Keith Guidry, curator
Opelousas Museum of Art

Fine artists will converge on the oak-shaded grounds of the St. Landry Parish Courthouse Square the weekend of Oct. 28-29. The public is invited to meet and greet more than 50 Louisiana artists and art galleries and purchase their paintings, photography and one-of-a-kind creations at the first annual Fall for Art Festival from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

The Louisiana Yambilee Festival coincides with the Fall for Art Festival. OMA Director Nan Wier decided to schedule OMA's festival to parallel the Yambilee to allow visitors and Opelousas residents the grand entertainment of two festivals in one weekend. Last year, the Yambilee drew in a crowd of more than 3,500 people and attained national attention from CBS. Festival organizers are expecting a heavy turnout at both events. But make no mistake, the Fall for Art Festival is focusing on quality rather than quantity.

The Fall for Art Festival originally was conceived as a benefit festival to raise donations for the Opelousas Museum of Art's annual programming. This event will provide a first class opportunity for Louisiana artists to reach a larger audience and a destination for Louisiana art collectors to purchase museum quality art. It is our hope that this will help to revitalize the use of the downtown square as a gathering place for the community.

According to Carola Hartley's Historic Opelousas, "St. Landry Parish records indicate the first courthouse in Opelousas was constructed in 1806, on a square in the center of town. Since that time, four other structures have been built on the same spot: one in 1822, one in 1847, one in 1888 and the present courthouse, constructed in 1939. Today, Opelousas continues to serve as the center of parish government, making this city one of the most important and historic areas in Louisiana."

The government of Opelousas has remained strong for more than two centuries. Now is the time that we celebrate our community strengths, too. This festival is an invitation to enjoy the fine culture of Louisiana; this is an invitation to see the best of the art of Louisiana and make it a part of your life. OMA invites you to come and celebrate under the oak trees with the best Louisiana artists we could gather. We expect that the weather will be cool, clear and breezy by late October!

Fine artists can still apply to participate in the Fall for Art Festival. The Artist Application deadline is Sept. 15 at midnight. Artists may submit three photographs of their original work, along with a photograph or diagram of how their booths/displays will be set up for the weekend. Live art demonstrations are welcome! For more information, visit the St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission's Web site www.cajuntravel.com for an application and guidelines.

Tell your favorite artists about this event and you just might see them at the Fall for Art Festival in October!