Make your plans to head downtown for Artisphere

By Bob Nachman

In just seven years, Artisphere has become a nationally recognized event. Our festival is now ranked a Top 20 Fine Arts Festival by Greg Lawler's Art Fair Sourcebook for two years running. The festival has, for the second year in a row, been designated a Top 20 Event in the Southeast by Southeast Tourism Society. Most recently, Artisphere was ranked a "100 Best Fine Art Show" by Sunshine Artist magazine.

All are accolades that draw the attention of both regional and national cultural tourists looking for a weekend getaway. And what a treat they will get when Greenville's arts organizations put their best foot forward at our community's largest arts celebration!

So what is Artisphere doing to present another top-notch event the weekend of May 13-15? Bringing back the favorites and adding exciting new features to create a crowd pleasing, unforgettable experience you won't want to miss.

Visual Artists Row: Just shy of 800 applicants from across the country competed for one of the 120 spots on Artisphere's Artists Row. Of course some of the crowd favorites will be back but an unprecedented 60 artists will be brand new to the festival.

New Artist Demonstrations: Local artists demonstrate throwing clay pots on a potter's wheel, encaustic painting (painting with wax), and Appalachian broom tying on the Culinary Arts Café Stage. Also demonstrating on site are Glass Blower, Ryan Gothrup from Richmond, Va., on the Main Street Bridge and Jeweler, Gabriel Craig from Ferndale, Mich., on Riverwalk.

Kidsphere: This free craft station has new arts activities every year. Kids can flex their creative muscles making their own mixed media collages, flowers sculptures and woven baskets, spattering paint and by creating a one-of-a-kind hat.

Speaking of splattering paint. Back by popular demand is Brian Olsen with his Art in Action on the stage in Falls Park. If you have not seen this before, it's worth a trip to Falls Park.

New Performing Artists: Three stages packed full of performances including musicians, dancers and theatrical performers from New York, Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston and Greenville.

Artisphere is greener. Recycling bins for plastic bottles have always been a part of the Festival. This year Artisphere food vendors will use recyclable paper products. Beer and wine will also be sold in recyclable cups.

No tickets are necessary. No more unused food and beverage tickets at the end of the Festival. Artisphere is accepting cash at all food and beverage booths! A mobile Carolina First ATM will be on site for your convenience.

Indoor Exhibits: If you need a break from the sun, head to the Chairman's Exhibit: A Gallery Showcase at the Loft at Falls Park. Featured Galleries this year are our own Hampton III as well as Blue Spiral from Asheville. At Centre Stage, 45 artists will be featured at the annual Artists of the Upstate Juried Exhibition.

We have a new website: www.artisphere.us has a new look and is full of information to help you plan your weekend at Artisphere. Check out the Visual Artists section so you know which artists' booths you don't want to miss. Visit the Art Around Town section to see what Greenville's arts organizations are doing around town to celebrate Artisphere. Peruse the Performing Arts section to find out when your favorite musicians are playing and don't miss the Culinary Arts Café section so you can plan your attack on the food court!

So circle the date and make plans to head downtown. You'll be happy you did!

GUEST COLUMN



Bob Nachman is president of the Artisphere Board of Directors and managing director of Nachman Norwood & Parrott Wealth Management Consultancy. For more information go to www.artisphere.us.