

SUMMER 2020

Anton Art Center CENTERPIECE

IN THIS ISSUE

Programming Update • SUPER SatARTday • Worldwide Online Art Exhibit • ArtParty @ Home • Art Market • Conversations with Our Mentor • Donor Spotlight

Programming Reintroduced Online and Outside

By Mary Smith

No doubt, “When will the Art Center reopen?” is a question on the minds of many visitors and volunteers alike. But with COVID-19 cases continuing to trend upward in Michigan and across the country, the answer is: slowly, cautiously and in accordance with Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s **Michigan Safe Start Plan**.

“As it stands, we have postponed or moved online all of our exhibit programming through the end of September,” said Phil Gilchrist, the Art Center’s Executive Director. “Our galleries are likely to remain closed until the end of the year, but our Holiday Market is transitioning online.

The Anton Art Center, like the state, is currently in Phase 4 (Improving) in the six-part plan for reopening, which allows only small gatherings in inside spaces. This means that any of the Art Center’s scheduled onsite/inside programming has pivoted to either an online or outside format.

Some of the Art Center’s most popular activities are now accessible from the safe zone of home. The Gift Shop has shifted to an online marketplace, **the Anton Art Market Online**, offering either curbside pickup or home delivery. **The ArtParty**, the Anton Art Center’s largest fundraiser, will be held again in September, but in a virtual environment. See related stories in this issue for more details on both.

Still, a few onsite activities are beginning to get underway, preceded by the implementation of robust cleaning protocols. A few art classes have resumed, but are spread out across galleries in addition to the downstairs classrooms, and all participants are required to practice safe distancing and wear face coverings. The first students to return were those whose classes were interrupted in March, with hopes to soon begin registering students for the next session. A **SatARTday** is planned for Aug. 15, outside and likely at the Fountain Stage in downtown Mount Clemens. The featured artist will be a jazz quartet featuring local musician Tom Bartelmay.

Once there is a downturn in COVID-19 cases, the state and the Art Center will enter Phase 5 (Containing) of the reopening plan. Larger gatherings will be allowed, but social distancing and face coverings will still be required. It will not be until Phase 6 (Post-Pandemic) that the Art Center will be able to return to something closely resembling business as usual. But it’s anybody’s guess as to when that could happen.

“We are taking a slow approach to reopening,” acknowledged Gilchrist, “and don’t have one single date when our facility will open broadly to the public.”

Our facility is temporarily closed to the public due to COVID-19, but be sure to visit www.theartcenter.org and our social media for all of our virtual content!

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SUPER SatARTday Goes Virtual to Celebrate the Arts

By Peggy DiMercurio

The first annual **Super SatARTday** in 2019 brought together over 700 people to celebrate the arts in Macomb County with a drum circle, a variety of singing and dancing performances, demonstrations, giant bubbles, painting a car, make and take art projects and lots of fun with ceramics! It was such a great day to show off the art center and invite the community in to try their hands at making art and the committee could not wait to do it again in 2020! The planning was under way and performers, artists, instructors and volunteers were lined up to host a spectacular event.

And then, the pandemic hit.

The stay-at-home order went into effect March 24 with hopes to end by April 14. As the order was extended repeatedly and events across the state were canceled, the committee had to decide whether to cancel everything or come up with an alternative to an in-person event. The SUPER SatARTday team, chaired by Board Member **Alysa Diebolt**, met up on Zoom to brainstorm and the second annual Super SatARTday became **Super SatARTday @ Home**.

“With the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, we had to figure out what we’d be able to accomplish, if we weren’t all in the same room. Executing the plan, once it was decided on, was easier than figuring out the plan in the first place,” Diebolt explained.

Hoping to create the same spirit as the first SUPER SatARTday, the committee included the elements that made the first event so popular, but in a virtual format. Instead of preparing for demonstrations and performances in front of a live audience, the artists and contributors stepped out of their comfort zone and worked at their home studios to shoot videos and get them to Anton’s **Greg DeLauro** and **Conrad Schmerheim** for editing and uploading. The schedule included instructional videos with the center’s favorite instructors and volunteers, performances from return performers **Guy Louis** and **Postales de Flamenco**, demonstrations of resin pouring by **Sue Kimmen**, silk painting by **Mary Van Haaren** of Something Silk, an art presentation by the **Metropolitan Detroit Chorale** and even a bubble magic show hosted by the **Detroit Institute of Arts and Discovery Center of Macomb**. Of course, the day included lots of fun with pottery, including livestream videos from the Anton Art Center with **Deanna Clyne**, an amazing time-lapse video by **Erin Rutkowski** and online wheel throwing videos. To prepare for the big event, over 100 art kits were put together and safely distributed to participants so that they could watch



Logan Hewell, 7 of Clinton Township, following along with the CD art activity during Super SatARTday.

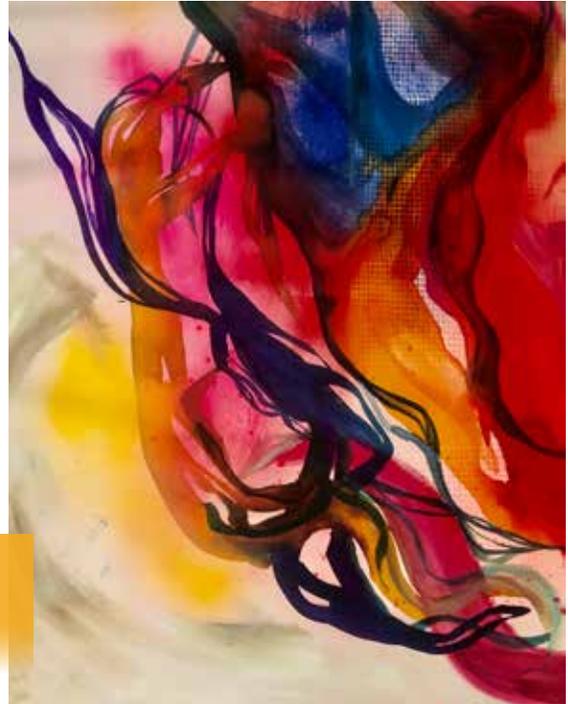
the videos and do art projects right at home with toilet paper rolls, yarn, googly eyes, CDs, origami paper, beads and construction paper.

The day’s festivities kicked off with a welcome from Executive Director Phil Gilchrist and an entertaining look back at the first SUPER SatARTday, including its walking tour of art in Mount Clemens. Throughout the day, prerecorded videos premiered on Facebook and YouTube and were interspersed with livestreaming from the art center, where the committee was running the show - wearing face masks, socially distancing and practicing strong handwashing and sanitizing. Participants connected through Facebook, YouTube or the Anton Art Center website. “It went great!” said Diebolt, “It’s interesting to hold a virtual event that would typically have an audience of several hundred folks when held in person. The great thing about how we executed it, is all of the content is available online whenever our patrons need something to do!”

Anton Art Center is thankful to everyone who made SUPER SatARTday @ Home a success including our presenting sponsor **First State Bank**, our sponsor **Consumers Energy**, our partners, artists, contributors, staff and volunteers. Hopefully SUPER SatARTday 2021 will be in person, but Anton Art Center is ready to do whatever it takes to deliver another great event and connect with the community!

Exhibit Connects Art Center With a World of Artists/Patrons

By Mary Smith



From left to right: "The Time When Flowers Bloom", Tju Hoang, Sterling Heights, MI, and "Chaotic", Parnika Mittal, New Delhi, India

When the COVID-19 Pandemic unexpectedly shut the doors of the Anton Art Center last March, Executive Director Phil Gilchrist and the rest of the staff immediately began considering other ways of using art to keep the community inspired and engaged. To say they thought big would be as much of an understatement as calling Michelangelo a house painter.

"Art has a unique way of connecting people, providing a way to communicate thoughts and feelings across the boundaries of location or language," said Gilchrist. "As we watched art centers, galleries and museums close up before our very eyes, it was clear that we had the ability to help fill an immediate need for exhibit 'space' and encourage creativity during a time of uncertainty."

The plan they developed was to host a juried, Worldwide Online Art Exhibit and an invite was sent out globally via the internet for entries. The response was staggering - more than 1,500 submissions from 518 countries.

"It is safe to say that the response far exceeded our expectations, and, frankly, took us by surprise," said Gilchrist. "The overwhelming number of entries required additional work to prepare the exhibit for online display, but even working remotely, our staff rose to the challenge and we are excited and proud of the show that emerged."

Juried by Gilchrist and Stephanie Hazzard, the Art Center's Exhibition Manager, entries represented a wide variety

of media and fell into three age categories: youth (age 12 and under), teen (ages 13-17), and adult (18+). Gilchrist selected a number of "Director's Picks" in each age category, and from those, Gilchrist and Hazzard selected first-, second-, and third-place winners. While no monetary prize could be offered, all entries that did not have objectional content were included in the exhibit, a meaningful show of solidarity with artists around the globe. The international exhibit will remain open virtually through at least the end of the year. Visit it on the Art Center's website: <https://www.theartcenter.org/>.

"I'm very appreciative of how the Anton Art Center staff managed to quickly and effectively adapt to changes to produce an engaging art opportunity for people around the globe," said Hazzard. "This exhibit is an extraordinary presentation of the human experience through artistic expression unique to these unprecedented times and serves as a shining example of the sincerity of the Anton Art Center's commitment to its mission."

And perhaps no one appreciated that sincerity more than the artists themselves.

"In this time of crisis and isolation, the role of art becomes more central to our lives," said Parnika Mittal, an adult artist who lives in New Delhi, India. "During these dark and gloomy times, I create art with sparks of hope on the horizon, believing that creativity keeps people connected during (this) pandemic that keeps us apart."

ArtParty Will Still Amaze in Online/Livestreamed Format

By Maggi Gawel

Each year attendees of the Anton Art Center “ArtParty” enter the marquee anticipating what the décor theme might be, which restaurants will be represented and who will be the musical performers. ArtParty Committee members were in the midst of planning for the 29th annual event when COVID concerns put a long column of question marks on the planners’ party checklist.

So, this time, ArtParty will be an ‘on-your-own’ event. No crowds, no parking worries, no designated drivers needed. But it will be nothing like the stay-at-home teas many of us remember from years ago! And don’t worry, if ArtParty night conflicts with what you planned as the last good-weather, up-north trip! This party will be all ‘teched’ out and can be carried with you, wherever you take your laptop, tablet or phone.

Traditional mailings, emails, Facebook and other social media posts, and information on the Art Center website will keep you up to date as details of the event are finalized. Here’s a little preview of what’s to come:

- **ArtParty Virtual Kickoff** – Don’t miss this livestream presentation on the Art Center Facebook page celebrating the beginning of this unique event. Join the fun at 6 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 13! Check out some great art how-tos and other exciting programming.

- **Online Auction** – Open to anyone and everyone, this event features high-value art by Michigan artists, as well as lifestyle items, such as John Danaher’s donation of a get-away stay at a cabin in Colorado! Online bidding for that perfect something you’ve been searching for will start with the Virtual Kickoff and stay open for bids until 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 24.

- **Livestreaming ArtParty** – On Sept. 24 (the original 2020 ArtParty date), view live art demonstrations, videos and much more on our Facebook page! Feel free to get all dressed up, open your favorite beverage, toss some tasty hors d’oeuvres on a platter (or sit in your PJs with a pizza, if you prefer) and party in support of art!

- **A Giving Opportunity** – Help the Art Center financially prepare for continuing to serve the Macomb County community through exhibitions, art classes for youngsters and adults, and enrichment events for the community.

Introducing the Anton Art Market Online

By Mary Smith

If there is a silver-lining to the COVID-19 cloud that closed the Anton Art Center last March, it’s the debut of the new **Anton Art Market Online**, selling select items from the onsite Gift Shop. “The idea of online selling has been talked about for years,” said **Nancy Garcia**, Gift Shop Manager.

“The closing of the Gift Shop until post-pandemic was the incentive to get the ball rolling.” The opening of the online market in July was a team effort. Items to be sold were selected by Garcia and **Phil Gilchrist**, Anton Art Center Executive Director. Gilchrist then created and populated the online store. Conrad Schmerheim, the Art Center’s resident graphic artist, took photos of each piece of artwork using a lightbox specially made by **Tom Mitchell**, a potter who sells his wares through the gift shop. “Because there are hundreds of individual items in the Gift Shop, I don’t foresee having everything online,” said Garcia. “To start, there are 50 items by 43 different artists, with more being added each week.”

The Anton Art Market Online is monitored daily by Garcia and **Sue Durbin**, Volunteer Coordinator. Preparing items to ship or for curbside delivery requires about five business days. “I am very excited,” said Garcia. “The Anton Art Market is already getting so much attention!”

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Detroit Artist is Inspiration Behind *Conversations with Our Mentor*

By Mary Smith

Charles McGee is an iconic figure in Detroit artists' circles. Painter, sculptor and a master of many mediums, he has served as an inspiration to generations of aspiring artists, as well as to the city of Detroit itself. Now, a virtual exhibit curated by the Anton Art Center explores his considerable influence on four female artists.

Conversations with Our Mentor features 49 works by **Linda Allen, Claudia Hershman, Christina Haylett** and **Nanci LaBret Einstein**, as well as McGee himself.

"The tie that binds us in this show is the formidable figure of artist Charles McGee," reads the collaborative artists' statement. "Each of us met him at different points in our careers and while our relationships with him may differ, we all share an avowed appreciation of him as an artist committed to his work. It is both an honor and a pleasure to show our art alongside Charles and each other."

McGee is a WWII veteran who attended the Society of Arts and Crafts (today's College for Creative Studies in Detroit) on his GI Bill benefits. From a family of sharecroppers, he moved from South Carolina to Detroit to live with his mother when he was 10 and has a long-standing affinity for his adopted city.

"Detroit really has been a heaven for me," said McGee, when he received the Kresge Eminent Artist Award in 2018. "It has given me dignity and treated me with respect."

Befitting a native son, McGee's work can be found in the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and the Detroit Institute of the Arts. He has taught at Eastern Michigan University, the University of Michigan and the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. And it is as a teacher that Allen, Hershman, Haylett and LaBret-Einstein first met him.

"I was struggling with a direction in my art. Charles came over to where I was working and looked at what I was doing, and he said to me that it looked like I liked being 'particular,'" related Haylett. "Prior to that, I was always trying to loosen up. Charles encouraged me to expand on what I liked to do most, and as a result my work became very dense with marks and texture and detail, and it became my own personal expression."

McGee, 95, completed one of his most ambitious projects to date in 2017: the 118-foot high, black and white mural *Unity* on the side of a 13-story building on West Grand Boulevard in Detroit. In 2019, he was honored with the Legacy Award from the Michigan Legacy Art



TOP: "It's Hot" by Nanci LaBret Einstein
BOTTOM: "Nature's Song" by Charles McGee

Park near Traverse City, which was founded by another iconic Detroit-area artist: **David Barr**.

"I'm the newest member of this group, having met Charles many years after Linda, Christina and Nanci," said Hershman. "I feel fortunate to have taken the last class that he taught and have been inspired by him over many conversations since then. My awareness has been heightened by his philosophy and the principles that govern his work. He is always encouraging and interested in what I do. He has been a wonderful teacher and mentor."

The exhibit, of which most pieces are available for purchase, will remain virtually available through at least the end of summer on the Art Center's website: <https://www.theartcenter.org/>

"The visual journaling style with bold mark-making and optimistic tone of this collection," said **Stephanie Hazzard**, Exhibition Manager, "is a shining example of the dynamic force of art in Detroit."

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Donor Spotlight: Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation

By Maggi Gawel

Anton Art Center would not exist without the generosity and support of its many partners and donors, and, since 2012, that distinguished group has included the **Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation**, which brings with it a history of philanthropy in Michigan.

Established in 1984, the Foundation's mission is to provide financial support for arts and cultural organizations, education, health care, human services and community development. The organization's founder, **Richard A. Manoogian**, served as President, CEO and Board Chair of Masco Corporation for many years. He is Chair Emeritus of the Detroit Institute of Arts and Masco Corporation and has served on more than 20 corporate and arts and education nonprofit boards over the years. He regards his volunteer service as a civic responsibility.

"I've always enjoyed the opportunity to share my art with museums around the country, as well as providing financial support, especially to Michigan-based art museums," explains Manoogian, a noted art collector. "We are indeed fortunate to have the Anton Art Center right here in our midst in Macomb County.

"Gallery exhibits, Holiday Market, and offsite educational and outreach programming have all been supported in part by Manoogian funding," says Art Center Executive Director Phil Gilchrist, who looks forward to continuing this successful relationship with the organization for future projects, including a traveling exhibit from the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA.) in early 2021.

"The Foundation has recently sponsored a traveling art exhibition partnering with the DIA at locations in both Michigan's Upper and Lower peninsulas," according to the Foundation's Secretary Eugene Gargaro. "Current plans call for the exhibition to be featured at the Anton Art Center."



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