

HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Friday, October 9, 2009

Artistic expression on a roll all over downtown Houston

Houston Business Journal

A yearly festival and a new exhibition will have downtown Houston awash in the arts this weekend.

The annual **Bayou City Art Festival** begins Oct. 10 in front of City Hall and around Hermann Square, as well as Sam Houston Park.

On Oct. 9, Houston will become the sixth American city to host the Cool Globes traveling exhibit when some 50 globes created by various artists officially go on display at Discovery Green.

Art for the ages

The 38-year-old Bayou City Arts Festival continues to improve with age.

The 2009 event hosted by the **Art Colony Association** attracted a record number of artist applications — 850 — vying for 300 juried spots.

Joe Pogge, president of the Art Colony board, notes 40 percent will participate in the fall festival for the first time, and most are from out of state.

He expects the fall festival to follow the success of the spring event, which set a new record for sales.

“This is a sign that the Houston audience knows what it wants when it comes to the festival,” says Pogge. “They are educated on the artists, what kind of art they do, and are hungry for it.”

Paid attendance is also expected to surpass the spring record-breaking crowd of 34,857, he says.

Three new sponsors — **Houstonian Lite Health Club**, **Cadillac** and **Texas Monthly** — have signed on to enter the picture this year, bringing with them new attractions.

Houstonian Lite will host a wine sampling and cooking demonstrations by chefs from local restaurants, along with exercise sessions to keep those wining and dining from putting on extra pounds.

The Cadillac area will give art-goers a look at the new 2010 SRX Crossover model, and the opportunity to test drive a 2009 CTS, Escalade Hybrid and 2010 Cadillac SRX.

Meanwhile, **Capital One Bank** is back as a sponsor of the Creative Zone, an interactive art area for children.

“The corporate world is being more selective with its sponsorship dollar,” Pogge says. “It’s not every day that a sponsor can reach about 60,000 people ages 25 to 54 with disposable incomes.”

Kim Stoilis, executive director, says the Art Colony Association has surpassed the \$2.6 million mark in money donated back into the community over the past 38 years.

Earlier this year, the festival in Memorial Park distributed the most funds — \$130,000 — to its 16 nonprofit partner organizations.

Admission is \$10 for adults and free for children 12 and under.

Christine Hall

Globes galore

Discovery Green will be rolling in globes of artistic expression for months to come.

The “Cool Globes: Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet” exhibit will run until Dec. 31 before traveling to Europe.

Five local artists have contributed globes measuring five feet in diameter and standing more than seven feet tall.

Displays include the works of Jerome Gray from Channel 2 and a team of students from the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

Local corporate sponsors Vestas Technology R&D Americas Inc., Silver Eagle Distributors LP and presenting sponsor Reliant Energy each commissioned a new globe, and the City of Houston is sponsoring a globe that has been traveling with exhibit.

The globes will join 45 others from national and international artists, each intended to represent what ordinary citizens can do to combat

global warming.

The Cool Globes Inc. nonprofit was founded by **Clinton Climate Foundation** veteran Wendy Abrams, and debuted in Chicago in 2007.

Since then the globetrotting exhibit has traveled to Washington, D.C., San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles. The Houston exhibit will run concurrently with a Copenhagen exhibit, timed to coincide with the December climate change meetings in Denmark.

Susan Bono of Mayor Bill White's environmental talk force met Abrams by chance while picking up her daughter from summer camp in Wisconsin. The two talked of a Houston stop on the tour and things progressed quickly from there.

"In Chicago, they had over 100 globes and auctioned off a bunch," Bono says. "Some of the bigger sponsors get to keep their globes."

Sponsorship money raised in Houston will help fund local environmental education.

The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts rarely picks up such outside projects, notes Eileen Montgomery, chair of the visual arts department.

In this case, she says students were interested in the concept from the beginning.

"The kids said everyone already knows about what they can do to save the planet but they aren't paying attention," Montgomery says. "People didn't realize how precious and nonrenewable our planet was."

About 25 students worked outside of class time to create a globe coated in gold leaf, which traditionally represents value in the visual arts world dating back to ancient Egypt.

Ford Gunter

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.