



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:
Wordplay Ink
info@wordplayink.com
(850) 218-8805

**19TH ANNUAL MATTIE KELLY ARTS FOUNDATION
FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS SHOWCASES 100 VISUAL ARTISTS
FROM 13 STATES WORKING IN 20 DIFFERENT MEDIUMS AND SIX MUSIC ACTS**

***“Celebrity” appearances include international ceramist from Estonia and
Geoff McBride of NBC’s “The Voice” who closes out the Festival Oct. 26***

DESTIN, FLA. — (Sept. 16, 2014) After 19 years, the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) continues to celebrate the cultural arts by enhancing the offerings of its annual Festival of the Arts set for Oct. 25–26 at the scenic MKAF Cultural Arts Village in Destin, Florida, on the Northwest Florida Gulf Coast.

One of the Southeast's premier art festivals, the two-day signature event features exhibits of more than 100 juried artists from 13 states showcasing a diverse palette of artistic styles in 20 different art mediums. Art lovers of all ages will be able to watch artists create works of art before your eyes, browse art from dozens of emerging new and student artists, and get hands-on in the interactive children's art station. Beyond the visual arts, the Festival will feature two days of continual live music and a sampling of the local culinary arts scene. Entertaining street performers, lively art drawings and the sale of colorful keepsake souvenirs — all create a family-friendly festival feel.

“We are thrilled to return to our original roots when this Festival was first born in 1995 and billed as “art on the lawn” by Southern Living magazine. Today, the new Festival site portrays that ambience of a spacious green and one of the Emerald Coast’s largest entertainment stages for musicians to perform. Hospitality is our number one priority to create a pleasant environment for all of our artists and Festival fans,” said Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation CEO Marcia Hull.

A Celebration of the Arts

The 19th annual edition of the Festival brings fresh art and new faces to the sugar-sand beaches of the Emerald Coast. This year, 23 new artists will participate in displaying everything from oil paintings and fine photography to mixed media, mosaics, sculpture, clay ceramics, jewelry and more. After nearly two decades, this Festival has become a popular and proven showcase for some of the best artistic talent nationwide who venture to Northwest Florida to compete for \$10,000 in cash prizes — the most awarded to date.

Barbara Johnson Ross, chief curator, of the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi and Charles Carbia, an artist and adjunct art professor from Florida State University will award artist prizes in the juried and collaborative art categories. On Saturday, Festivalgoers are invited to vote for the “People’s Choice” Artist Award by casting a ballot located at the Main Festival Entrance.

One of the unique features of the Festival is the Collaborative Art Exhibit, which showcases the work of 60 student and adult artists — both seasoned and emerging — competing for the \$600 McIlroy Awards given in honor of the late Patricia McIlroy, Destin’s first First Lady and an MKAF advocate and patron.

A Festival first this year is the appearance of special “celebrity” guest artist Kadri Kaerma, one of the most known and recognized contemporary ceramists in Estonia. Several pieces of her award-winning work described as “colorful, humorous and unexpected” will be on display and available for purchase during the Festival weekend. Kaerma resides in Nõmme, Tallinn, which is a “sister city” to Destin, Florida.

Plein air is a French expression made popular in the late 1800s meaning “in the open air” used to describe the act of painting out of doors. Seven local plein air painters will add to the Festival atmosphere by taking advantage of each day’s natural light to capture the scenic views surrounding the Cultural Arts Village and still life vignettes on canvas.

The Festival provides opportunities for all ages to interact and immerse themselves in the vibrant art scene. A team of volunteers in the Kid’s ArtStop Tent will work with young aspiring artists to create hands-on interactive art activities, pumpkin paintings, other fun fall crafts, and invite them to add their individual flair to a large group mural on canvas.

A Celebration of Music

Six local and regional musicians and bands will perform live throughout the weekend on stage at The Dugas Pavilion. Saturday Coconut Radio Band featuring award-winning violinist Sue Kittredge and singer/songwriter Steve Reeths kick off the weekend (10 a.m.–noon) with an acoustic “trop-rock” session, followed by the Americana-country-folk music and comedy banter of Matt Hoggatt (12:30–2:30 p.m.) and ending the day in a harmonious groove thanks to Tallahassee’s Mr. Perfect’s featuring singer/songwriter Drew Tillman on rhythm guitar, Steve Taff on lead guitar, Randy Barnhill on bass and Kyle Aligood on drums.

On Sunday, the bluesy Indie/Pop band Continuum opens the musical showcase (11 a.m.–1 p.m.) featuring Anthony O’Shae on vocals, Jessica Heit on vocals and violin, Hope Given on guitar and Caleb Schossow on the “cajon” box, followed by the award-winning jazzy sounds of The Season Ammons Band’s (1:30-3 p.m.) bringing to the stage a unique blend Texas country and classic rock. Finally, soul singer Geoff McBride (3:30-5 p.m.), a protégé of Arista icon Clive Davis who gained fame as a crowd favorite finalist on NBC’s “The Voice,” closes out the Festival treating Festivalgoers with his cool and classic rendition of Rhythm & Blues.

The Art of Dining

The Festival has expanded its culinary arts experience, too. Cuisine on the Green will serve up samplings of savory seafood from 790 On The Gulf, burgers from Tucker Dukes, tacos from The Big Red Truck and barbecue from Jim N’ Nicks along with tasty sweet treats by Rosey’s Kettle Corn, Mark’s Hawaiian Shaved Ice and Deep South Sno Treats among others. Foodies can toast the arts with select domestic and imported wine and beer in the newly expanded Wine Bar & Beer Garden. Gather with family and friends to enjoy your meal al fresco, while taking in the Festival scene and listening to the stellar music line up.

More Festival Amenities

Buy Festival Merchandise — This year’s official Festival guide, poster and t-shirt feature the whimsical artwork of Destin, Florida, folk artist Robin Cannon, who will be exhibiting at the Festival. Cannon’s vibrant and playful acrylic painting centers on an art festival dotted with colorful tents capped with flying flags flanked by musical instruments and paintbrushes. Signed and numbered poster prints and souvenir t-shirts will be available for sale in the Souvenir Tent.

Win Art! — Be sure to also visit the Art Drawing Tent and enter the charity benefit drawing for chances to win a range of original artwork generously donated by the 2014 Festival artists. The drawing will take place on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 3 p.m., but you do not need to be present to win.

Get the Guide —A free Festival Guide containing a roster of all artists, a map of the Festival site, the entertainment line up, a list of food & beverage vendors and other helpful hints on how to navigate through the Festival is available at the entrance.

Free Parking/Shuttle — Park for free at Grace Lutheran Church located adjacent to the Cultural Arts Village or at Emerald Coast Centre, located on Highway 98 near Beall's Department Store, and ride the free continuous shuttle service right to the main entrance. The Cultural Arts Village is designed as an ADA compliant venue with available handicap parking.

Convenient Art Pick Up — Purchasers of large artwork or multiple pieces can obtain an “art pickup” pass from the Festival Main Entry Tent. For Festival fans using the art shuttle, simply return to the satellite parking at Emerald Coast Shopping Centre to retrieve your vehicle and display your pass on your dashboard to gain access to the Festival entrance.

Get Involved — The Festival is sponsored, in part, by more than 30 local businesses and media partners, and is produced with the help of a team of more than 100 dedicated volunteers. Volunteer shifts are available by contacting Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Whidden at (850) 376-7391 or kathy@destinchiropractor.com.

The Festival is open to the public and runs Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Daily admission is \$3. The event is free to children under 12 and MKAF members. For more information, visit www.MattieKellyArtsFoundation.org, call (850) 650-2226 and follow us on Facebook.

PHOTOGRAPHY: [For representative photos of MKAF Festival of the Arts click here.](#)

About the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation's Festival of the Arts

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation presents the 19th Annual Festival of the Arts on Oct. 25-26, 2014 at the Mattie Kelly Cultural Arts Village in Destin, Fla. One of the Southeast's premier festivals, the event showcases the original artwork of more than 100 juried artists from across the U.S. who will compete for \$10,000 in cash award prizes. Festival features include a food bistro, wine & beer garden, live music, art activities for kids, souvenir posters and t-shirts, art drawings and more. Free shuttle service and parking is also available. Admission is \$3 for adult/non members and free to MKAF members and children under 12.

About Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), a 501-c-3 not-for-profit charitable arts organization, was founded in 1995 on the cultural, educational and spiritual beliefs of the late Destin Matriarch, Mattie Kelly. The champion of cultural arts and education in Northwest Florida, MKAF's vision is to impact lives through art and culture. For more information on how you can become a member of MKAF, provide a donation or explore opportunities to get involved on a committee or the Board of Directors, call (850) 650-2226 or visit www.mattiekellyartsfoundation.org.

###