



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**22ND ANNUAL MATTIE KELLY ARTS FOUNDATION
FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS SHOWCASES
NEARLY 200 VISUAL ARTISTS AND SIX MUSIC ACTS**

*The 2017 Festival welcomes nearly 200 artists from 13 states showcasing
original artwork representing 22 different mediums*

DESTIN, FLA. — (Oct. 3, 2017) Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) celebrates the cultural arts by enhancing the offerings of its annual Festival of the Arts set for Oct. 28-29 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 art exhibits of nearly 200 total artists (including the juried and collaborative exhibit) from 13 states showcasing a diverse palette of artistic styles in 22 different art mediums.

"The Festival is a true celebration of art, music, food and fun for all ages," said MKAF CEO Marcia Hull.

Festival of the Arts Artist Market Chair Deb Nissley said "This year we are absolutely thrilled to welcome 38 new artists — more than ever before. We will have all of the offerings our Festival fans look forward to each year, but with more than three dozen new artists joining some of our longtime artists — all showcasing beautiful, new original works of art accompanied by live music, makes the Festival a fresh, new experience all over again."

Art lovers of all ages will be able to watch artists create works during live art demonstrations, browse art from dozens of emerging 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.

A Celebration of the Arts

The 22nd annual edition of the Festival brings fresh art and new faces to the sugar-sand beaches of the Emerald Coast. This year, artists will be displaying everything from oil paintings and fine photography to mixed media, mosaics, sculpture, clay ceramics, jewelry and more. After 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 judging panel includes Claudia O'Steen, Post Doctoral Fellow at the University of West Florida in Pensacola and Ann Kozeliski, Art Director of the Lemoyne Center for the Visual Arts in Tallahassee. They 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 26 seasoned and emerging adult artists and 60 local student artists competing for the \$700 McIlroy Awards given in honor of the late Patricia McIlroy, Destin's first First Lady and an MKAF advocate and patron.

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. Several 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, fall-themed paintings, face painting, pumpkin painting and other fun crafts, not-to-mention adding 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 singer/songwriter **Drew Tillman** (9:30-11:30 a.m.) serves up a taste of bluesy rock and roll followed by **Jeff Glickman and the Panhandle All Stars** (noon-2 p.m.) a six-member ensemble with a lyrical, slice-of-life bluesy-rock sound, then traditional jazz and modern soulful blues by **Caravan** (2:30-4:30 p.m.). On Sunday, **a band TBD** (10-11 a.m.) will open the Festival, followed by **Roman Street** (11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.) — an internationally trained instrumental band specializing in improvisational fusion of Classical, Gypsy and Contemporary Jazz, Latin and Nuevo Flamenco performed by brothers Noah and Josh Thompson. Singer/songwriter **Melissa Joiner** (2-3:30 p.m.) closes out the Festival treating Festivalgoers to a performance infused with a unique twist on the Delta 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, street tacos from The Big Red Truck, delicious barbecue from Jim N' Nicks, sushi from Mas Wasabi along with sweet treats, snacks from Nuts for You, Blue Dot Gelato, Mark's Hawaiian Shaved Ice & Funnel Cakes 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 coastal-inspired artwork of Destin, Florida, husband-wife duo Tony and Vivian Zack, who will be exhibiting at the Festival. Signed and numbered poster prints and souvenir t-shirts featuring the Zack's whimsical mixed media mermaid artwork entitled "Can't Catch Me" 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 2017 Festival artists. The drawing will take place on Sunday, Oct. 29 at 3 p.m., but you do not need to be present to win.

Get the Guide — A complimentary four-color 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 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Daily admission is \$5. Proceeds from MKAF cultural events help fund arts education community outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs and military and veteran populations suffering with PTSD and TBI. The event is free to children 12 and under and MKAF members. Sorry, no refunds are given for inclement weather.

For more information, visit mattiekellyartsfoundation.org call (850) 650-2226 and follow us on Facebook.

PHOTOGRAPHY: [Follow this link for representative photos, logos and promo materials for MKAF Festival of the Arts.](#)

ABOUT MATTIE KELLY ARTS FOUNDATION

Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), a 501-c-3 not-for-profit charitable arts organization, was founded on the cultural, educational and spiritual beliefs of the late Destin matriarch, Mattie Kelly. MKAF's mission is Northwest Florida's champion of cultural arts and arts education for all. Since it formed in 1995, its art programs have reached and inspired more than 300,000 children in over 61 schools, and United Way agencies, children and adults with special needs, and wounded warriors.

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